

MEDIA RELEASE

From Doug Laing, media officer, Shearing Sports New Zealand
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Caption:

The two top contender for the PGG Wrightson Wool National shearing championship, John Kirkpatrick (shearing) and Nathan Stratford (watching from the catching pen) pictured when winning the World teams title for New Zealand at last year's World shearing and woolhandling championships in Invercargill. PHOTO/Pete Nikolaison.

World champs set to fight-out major NZ shearing title

World teams shearing champions and former PGG Wrightson Wool National Shearing Circuit winners John Kirkpatrick and Nathan Stratford have been confirmed as favourites in the battle for the 2010 circuit title during the Golden Shears in Masterton this week.

They head the 12 named to contest the national multi-wools championship after the five-round qualifying series ended at the Pahiatua Shears on Sunday.

The 58th Golden Shears start on Thursday and the circuit's semi-finals will be held on Saturday. The top six then contest the final on Saturday night, the winner gaining automatic selection in the 2018-2019 transtasman series team, along with the winner of the Golden Shears Open Championship, which is also being decided on Saturday night.

The PGG Wrightson Wool circuit incorporates the McSkimming Memorial Triple Crown, which was first presented in 1973, and in a qualifying series spanning five months entrants amass points for placings in the heats of competitions at Alexandra (finewool), Waimate (full-fleece strongwool), Christchurch (coirriedale), Marton (lambs) and Pahiatua (second-shear).

But the points are abandoned for the final stages where placings are based on shearing time and quality points, the final being shorn over 15 sheep each, comprising three of each of the wool types.

Kirkpatrick, a four times winner of second-shear event the Golden Shears Open Championship, won the circuit final in 2013, and Stratford, his teammate in a World Championships teams triumph in Invercargill in February last year, won the circuit in 2014.

They are the only former winners in the top 12, with 2017 final winner Rowland Smith not contesting the circuit this year.

Kirkpatrick is the \$2.40 first favourite at the TAB, Stratford the second-favourite paying \$2.80.

The 12 qualifiers are in order: John Kirkpatrick (Napier) 40pts, 1; Nathan Stratford (Invercargill) 36pts, 2; Ringakaha Paewai (Gore) 34pts, 3; Ethan Pankhurst (Masterton) 34pts, 4; Jack Fagan (Te Kuiti) 32pts, 5; Paerata Abraham (Masterton) 30pts, 6; David Buick (Pongaroa) 25pts, 7; Colin O'Neill (Alexandra) 24pts, 8; Grant Smith (Rakaia) 23pts, 9; Ant Frew (Pleasant Point) 22pts, 10; Turi Edmonds (Raetihi) 19pts, 11; Stacey Te Huia (Te Kuiti NZ/Forbes NSW) 15pts, 12. (Troy Pyper, 20pts, withdrew from the series).

TAB odds: \$2.40 John Kirkpatrick; \$2.80 Nathan Stratford; \$9.00 Jack Fagan; \$12.00 Paerata Abraham and Ringakaha Paewai; \$15.00 David Buick; \$17.00 Colin O'Neill and Grant Smith; \$21.00 Stacey Te Huia; \$31.00 Ethan Pankhurst; \$41.00 Ant Frew; \$101.00 Turi Edmonds.

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