

MEDIA RELEASE

From Doug Laing, Golden Shears Media Group, media officer, Shearing Sports New Zealand

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Former woolhandling champion collapses at Golden Shears

A former two-times Golden Shears woolhandling champion is in Wellington Hospital after collapsing in front of about 800 spectators while competing in a Veterans event at the 58th annual shearing and woolhandling championships in Masterton last night.

Mii Nooroa, also known as “Mic” and aged about 61, grew up in Masterton and has been a competitor almost from the time woolhandling competition was formally added to the programme in 1985. He won the Junior woolhandling title in 1988, and in the Open championship was fourth the following year and third in 1991, before becoming Golden Shears Open Woolhandling champion in 1992.

In that 1992 final the runner-up was eventual multiple World and Golden Shears champion Joanne Kumeroa.

Veterans events have been held occasionally at Golden Shears to meet demand from former competitors and also people still working in the industry, with many around the country known to be regularly shearing or woolhandling till well over the age of 70.

Nooroa had finished competing in the final of this year’s veterans woolhandling event, for competitors aged over 60 years, when he collapsed on the stage.

One of more than 20 events to be decided during the three-day championships, which have attracted almost 400 shearers, woolhandlers and woolpressers, it was the last scheduled on the second night.

The programme coming to an abrupt end as an on-site medic and others, including a trained nurse, worked frantically on veteran. A defibrillator was also on-hand in the Masterton War Memorial Stadium, where the Golden Shears have been held every March since the event was established in 1961.

The final prizegiving of the night, including that for a trans Tasman woolhandling test match, was held over till today as a consequence of the emergency.

Golden Shears president Phil Morrison, who has known Nooroa for most of the 30-plus years of the woolhandler's involvement, said everyone was hoping for a speedy and full recovery. "We are thinking of Mii and the family and friends, and wishing them all the best."

"The whole shearing industry and sport, around the World, is one big family," he said. "Obviously everyone is feeling for the wellbeing of Mii Nooroa."

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