

MEDIA RELEASE

From Doug Laing, media officer, Shearing Sports New Zealand
April 6, 2018

PHOTO: Joel Henare (right) and Pagan Karauria (centre) in the Open woolhandling competition won by Karauri at the Royal Easter Show in Auckland on Sunday. The two face-up again in the New Zealand championships final in Te Kuiti tomorrow night (Saturday).
PHOTO/Doug Laing SSNZ

Henare still warm favourite

World and Golden Shears champion Joel Henare remains a warm TAB favourite to win a fifth New Zealand Open woolhandling championship and his fourth in a row after a shaky path going into the final in Te Kuiti tomorrow night (Saturday).

Quoted by the TAB at \$1.30 to win before the 2018 national shearing and woolhandling championships started yesterday, Henare drifted slightly to \$1.35 after the heats, quarter-finals and semi-finals left a top-quality field of five for the showdown of six second-shear sheep each.

Unusually, Henare was headed in all three elimination rounds – second in the heats and the quarter-finals and fourth in the semi-finals.

By contrast he was top at all four stages in successfully defending the Golden Shears title in a final of six longwool and four second-shear sheep in Masterton on March 3, and on the heats of the longwool and first Royal Easter Show woolhandling competition on Sunday, where he was subsequently third in the final won by top South Island hope Pagan Karauria, of Alexandra.

In TAB odds today (<https://www.tab.co.nz/sport/#8071>) Karauria and seven-times title winner Sheree Alabaster (Taihape) were each paying \$4.00 to win, and local hope Keryn Herbert and top-qualifier Logan Kamura, of Marton, were both at \$10.00.

The TAB is also running win pools on the three Open shearing titles at the championships, the last of 57 shearing sports shows throughout the 2017-2018 season.

The North Island Shearer of the Year final will be held tonight (Friday) and the New Zealand Shears Circuit and New Zealand Open shearing championship finals will be shorn tomorrow night, with Hawke's Bay and former Northland gun Rowland Smith a warm favourite to successfully defend all three titles.

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