

MEDIA RELEASE (with photo, caption, results)
From Doug Laing, media officer, Shearing Sports New Zealand
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Caption:

Young shearer Liam Norrie who won the Marlborough A and P Show Intermediate final on Saturday, travelling more than five hours from his home in Cheviot. PHOTO/Doug Laing, SSNZ

A shearing marathon: 600kms each way

Canterbury shearers Ant Frew and Liam Norrie showed just about the ultimate commitment to their sport when they drove the earthquake diversion route across the top of the South Island to support the Marlborough A and P Show on Saturday.

For Open-class shearer Frew it was more than a seven-hour, 600kms drive from Pleasant Point in South Canterbury, and not much less for Intermediate Cheviot shearer Norrie, the two meeting "half-way" before hitting the highways across to St Arnaud and up through the Nelson Lakes National Park.

While they weren't so much paved with gold, it was a successful mission as they won their respective finals, at a show which with its continued isolation caused by the closure of State Highway 1 since the Kaikoura Earthquake 12 months ago attracted just 14 shearers across four grades.

Frew pocketed \$400 for an important win ahead of the Canterbury Show's Canterbury All-Breeds Circuit final and NZ Corriedale shearing and woolhandling championships this week and Norrie won \$150, but possibly more important were his points in the H D Dawson North Canterbury Development Circuit which provides the best young shearers from the region with trips and accommodation to the New Zealand championships in Te Kuiti in April.

While Frew was one of seven entries in the Open, Norrie had just one opponent, in Blenheim-based Havelock shearer Duncan Higgins, who along with sister, competition organiser and Senior runner-up Sarah Higgins has done more than his share of kilometres keeping up with other shows also made more distant by the State Highway 1 closure.

"It's a show I haven't been to before and Liam was keen," said Frew, who had left home at 3.30am. "If they can come to shows down here I can't see why we can't go up there."

Defending Marlborough Open champion and former Golden Shears Senior and PGG Wrightson National Circuit champion Angus Moore, of Ward, dominated the heats, and qualified almost six points clear of Frew, in what many would have seen as a sign of things to come.

But it was speed versus quality in the four-man final over 12 texel-cross lambs sheep each in sunny and warm conditions, and quality won. Moore beat Frew by almost two sheep, a time-points advantage of over 5pts, but Frew had the much better quality in the pen judging and won by 2.23pts.

Norrie relied on similar craftsmanship, finishing more than two minutes after Higgins, who shored the Intermediate event's five sheep in just under 7min 20sec.

Mitchell Murray, of Amberley, won the Senior title comfortably from a field of four, and farmer-shearer Emma Hodgkinson, of Tapawera, shored alone in the Junior class.

RESULTS of the Marlborough A and P Show shearing championships at Blenheim on Saturday November 11, 2017:

Open final (12 sheep): Ant Frew (Pleasant Point) 11min 31.5sec, 47.33pts, 1; Angus Moore (Ward) 9min 42.91sec, 49.56pts, 2; Paul Hodges (Geraldine) 11min 32.25sec, 51.96pts, 3; Chris Jones (Blenheim) 11min 42.5sec, 52.96pts, 4.

Senior final (7 sheep): Mitchell Murray (Amberley) 10min 43.44sec, 42.74pts, 1; Sarah Higgins (Havelock) 11min 16sec, 58.66pts, 2; Rob Aramoana 11min 17.22sec, 60.72pts, 3; Kaleb Avery (Blenheim) 11min 7.66sec, 61.81pts, 4.

Intermediate (5 sheep): Liam Norrie (Cheviot) 9min 33.34sec, 42.87pts, 1; Duncan Higgins (Havelock) 7min 19.47sec, 44.77pts, 2.

Junior (3) sheep): Emma Hodgkinson 8min 12.07sec, 49.27pts, 1.

ENDS

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