

MEDIA RELEASE

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

Rare-breed herdwick at the ready for the weekend's Lakeland Shears in native Cumbria in the North of England. PHOTO/SUPPLIED

NZ-based Scots shearer breaks Kiwi stranglehold

Taranaki farmer and Scotland international Gavin Mutch has won his second Herdwick Lakeland Shears Open shearing title, breaking a New Zealand stranglehold on the event in the North of England.

New Zealand shearers had won the final nine times in a row but today (July 7) none reached the five-man final at Cockermouth, Cumbria,

The field of 32 included the CP Wool New Zealand UK Tour team of Nathan Stratford, of Invercargill, and David Buick, of Pongaroa, shearing between the first test, beaten by Scotland the previous weekend, and the second, against England at the Great Yorkshire Show on Wednesday.

Mutch, who won the title in 2008, mastered the Cumbria-native herdwick foragers to put together the best combination of speed and quality for victory by 0.75pts over runner-up and Welsh international Alun Lloyd Jones.

It was the latest warning of the Scot's claims to another World title in France next year, despite being still uncertain of a place in his country's team.

He won the in Masterton in 2012 but, bouncing-back from defeat in the Royal Highland Show's Scottish national final last month with a Scottish blackface championship win at the Lochearnhead Shears on June 30 and then today's victory, remains in a head-to-head Scottish circuit battle for the second berth with Hamish Mitchell, his teammate at the last five World Championships and in winning the 2014 teams title in Ireland.

Having turned 39 on the day of his Lochearnhead win, Mutch, who farms at Whangamomona, just pipped Jones for time honours by finishing the 20 sheep in 14min 13sec, and had second-best quality points behind Welsh shearer Richard Jones, who finished more than a sheep in arrears in 15min 23sec.

The original field included four other New Zealanders in Jack Fagan, of Te Kuiti, England-based former Northland and Hawke's Bay shearer Matthew Smith, James Ruki, also of Te Kuiti, and Turi Edmonds, of Raetihi.

Fagan was top qualifier in the heats, in which Te Kuiti-based Welsh shearer Delwyn Jones was third just days after arriving from New Zealand.

Along with Stratford and Smith they were eliminated in the semi-finals, but Jones, as a result of his performance in the heats, became a surprise member of a two-man Welsh team which then beat the England team of Adam Berry and Stuart Connor in a test match.

Result:

Herdwick Lake Land Shears Open final (20 sheep): Gavin Mutch (Scotland) 14min 13sec, 52.25pts, 1; Alun Lloyd Jones (Wales) 13min 15sec, 53pts, 2; Stuart Connor (England) 14min 57sec, 54.55pts, 3; Adam Berry (England) 15min 52sec, 54.75pts, 4; Richard Jones (Wales) 15min 23sec, 54.8pts.

ENDS

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