

MEDIA RELEASE (includes results and file photos)
From Doug Laing, media officer, Shearing Sports New Zealand
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Captions.

1. Te Kuiti shearer Mark Grainger, whose win in the Stratford A and P Show Open final on Saturday was just his sixth win in over 70 Open finals. He was pictured last April when fifth in his third New Zealand championships Open final. PHOTO/Doug Laing SSNZ.
2. Lionel Taumata, of Taumarunui, who scored his third Senior shearing final of the season st Stratford on Saturday. He was pictured a week earlier when third in Waipukurau. PHOTO/Doug Laing SSNZ.

Story folls.....

Perseverance pays off for Te Kuiti shearer Grainger

Te Kuiti shearer Mark Grainger gained another reward for perseverance when he successfully defended the Stratford A and P Show's Open title against former World champion Gavin Mutch on Saturday.

Now in his ninth season in the top class, 28-year-old Grainger has shorn more than 70 Open finals, but was scoring just his sixth win.

As happened a year ago, Mutch won the race in the three-man final over 15 sheep each. He finished in 13 minutes, 16 seconds ahead of Grainger, with third finalist Jack Fagan, of Te Kuiti, finishing the event in 14min 41sec.

The better board and pen points enabled Grainger to overcome the time points deficit for a win by 1.267pts over the Whangamomona-based 2015 Golden Shears Open champion Mutch, who has shorn six World Championships finals, defined by his win in 2012 and second placings in both finals since then.

Grainger's biggest Open win was his first in 2014 when he beat multiple Golden Shears winners David Fagan and John Kirkpatrick and then soon-

to-be World champion Rowland Smith in the Taumarunui Open final.

He went almost two years before his next wins at Tauranga and Te Puke, his other win being at Te Puke again last February.

He's shorn three New Zealand championships Open finals in Te Kuiti for three fifth-placings, but with placings in the Golden Shears Junior, Intermediate and Senior finals in successive years to 2009 still yearns for a place in the Golden Shears Open final which father Paul Grainger won in 1985.

He has however had three wins in the YFC Open final at the Golden Shears, in 2012-2014, emulating the feat of his father who won that event also three times, in 1985-1987.

Taumarunui shearer Lionel Taumata, who was a Golden Shears and New Zealand championships' finalist as a Junior in 2014, when he was runner-up in both championships as an Intermediate in 2016 and as a Senior last season, scored his third win of the season and his fourth in Senior ranks, by 7.7pts from runner-up Catherine Mullooly, of Matawai, near Gisborne. Third was local shearer David Gower who'd beaten Taumata off the board by 22 seconds, finishing the 10 sheep in 11min 26sec.

Daniel Seed, of Woodville, was first off the board in the Intermediate final by over a minute and it was enough to hold-out Southland visitor Brendon Maguire Ratima, completing for Seed a pre-Christmas assignment in which he made all six North Island Intermediate finals, for a record of four wins, one second placing and one third.

Jonathan Painter, from Palmerston North, won the Junior final by 2.2pts from Liam Pritchard, of Pongaroa. It was 22-year-old Painter's third win in five finals this season,

Open final (15 sheep): Mark Grainger (Te Kuiti) 13min 16sec, 48.066pts, 1; Gavin Mutch (Scotland/Whangamomona) 13min, 49.333pts, 2; Jack Fagan (Te Kuiti) 14min 41sec, 51.716pts, 3; Floyde Neil (Taumarunui) 4; Mike Fabish (Stratford) 5; Hayden Tapp (Taihape) 6.

Senior final (10 sheep): Lionel Taumata (Taumarunui) 11min 48sec, 43.2pts, 1; Catherine Mullooly (Matawai) 12min 6sec, 50.9pts, 2; David Gower (Whangamomona) 11min 26sec, 53.2pts, 3; Connor Puha (Kimbolton) 4; Naki Maraki (-) 5; Andrew Brown (Inglewood) 6.

Intermediate final (6 sheep): Daniel Seed (Woodville) 7min 55sec,

35.416pts, 1; Brandon Maguire Ratima (Winton) 9min 5sec, 36.913pts, 2; Jayden Paul (Hawera) 9min 19sec, 37.116pts, 3; Quinton Chase (-) 4; Elis Ifans (Wales) 5; Brent Bellamy (Strathmore) 6.

Junior final (4 sheep): Jonathan Painter (Palmerston North) 10min, 38.5pts, 1; Liam Pritchard (Pongaroa) 10min 34sec, 40.7pts, 2; Daniel Biggs (-) 10min 21sec, 42.5pts, 3; Topia Barrowcliff (Pio Pio) 4; Ifan Jones (Wales) 5; Sam Pritchard (Pongaroa) 6.

Novice: (1 sheep): Niwa Dix 3min 35sec, 61.75pts, 1; Reuben Benton 3min 40sec, 81pts, 2.

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