

MEDIA RELEASE

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

Cheyenne Walker, of Masterton, achieves an ambition to shear at the Golden Shears, with nan Rewa Walker as her woolhandler. PHOTO/PETE NIKOLAISON Golden Shears Media Group.

Shearing to make family proud

Making the semi-finals of the Golden Shears Novice shearing event is a bonus for Masterton hopeful Cheyenne Walker. She's shearing just to make the family proud.

And on the opening day of the 58th championships today in Masterton's War Memorial Stadium there was even greater pride as she shored on Stand 5 in the first heat.

As it happened, her stadium woolhandler was nan Rewa Walker, a veteran of over 30 years at the Golden Shears and returning after a brek to fight an apparently successful battle against cancer.

The 21-year-old Cheyenne – born and bred in Masterton and an ex-pupil of Wairarapa College - says she's "the last of the line" of the whanau and wants to keep up the family tradition by learning to shear.

"I'm the last of the Walkers," she said. "I'm trying to carry it on."

"Grand-dad passed away in 2014, so I thought I've got learn to shear."

She entered the Golden Shears in 2016 in his honour and was runner-up in the Novice woolhandling.

Now she's shearing at the 2018 championships as a tribute to her Nan and her battle to overcome her illness.

She has taken the backstop approach of getting a career qualification behind her. On February 16, she qualified from a 36-week course with Wellington enterprise Cut Above Academy, as a barber.

Her great-grand parents worked in the shearing industry and her Nan and late grand-dad Hoani (Wonnie) Walker were shearing contractors in Wairarapa for more than 20 years, but Cheyenne's two older brothers both chose to go into the logging industry.

She's worked "on-and-off" in the woolsheds over the last six years, mainly for Wairarapa contractors Shear Expertise, but also spent a season working out of Cromwell in the South Island.

Asked before her appearance in the semi-final today what her ambition would be, she said: “Just to make my Nan proud.”

“I am that,” said her Nan. “I am very proud. Out of all my family she’s the only one that’s entered.”

Her only advice to the mokopuna going into the semi-final was to mind those second-cuts. “If you have to leave them on,” she said, “do. They can be pretty costly.”

The semi-finals and final are to be held this afternoon.

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Further photos available go to www.goldenshears.co.nz media gallery 2018:

For further information:j

Doug Laing

Media Officer

Shearing Sports New Zealand

Ph 0274-690644

media@shearingsports.co.nz

Website: www.shearingsports.co.nz

