

MEDIA RELEASE (4 photos, captions at end)  
From Doug Laing, media officer, Shearing Sports New Zealand  
April 7, 2018

## Smith bags first leg in triple titles defence

Shearing juggernaut Rowland Smith launched his defence of the New Zealand Shearing and Woolhandling Championships three Open-class shearing titles in style when he won the North Island Shearer of the Year final in Te Kuiti last night (Friday).

Resisting the temptation to chase notorious speedster Digger Balme in the six-man showdown over 10 ewes and 10 lambs each, Smith kept it all under control to leave no doubt at the end that his quality would dominate the result, for his sixth win in the event.

Balme shored the 20 sheep in 15min 24.17sec, beating Smith by a minute, but was never going to be in it at the final count, 2014 World champion Smith ultimately taking the victory by 2.354pts over runner-up, and reigning World champion, two-times North Island Shearer of the Year winner and fellow Hawke's Bay shearer John Kirkpatrick.

Taranaki farmer, Scots international and 2012 World champion Gavin Mutch was third just 0.174pts further back but still without a win at Te Kuiti in almost 20 years shearing in New Zealand.

It was Smith's 22<sup>nd</sup> win in 22 finals this season, and his 41<sup>st</sup> final win in a row in New Zealand since he was last beaten in a final just over 14 months ago.

A warm TAB favourite to win, Smith will try to complete a repeat treble in the NZ Shears Circuit and New Zealand Open championships today.

The other big winner on the night was Winton shearer Brandon Maguire Ratima who completed a Golden Shears and New Zealand championships Intermediate titles double, winning a six-man Te Kuiti final over 8 sheep each by a comfortable 3.321pts from northern rival Daniel Seed, of Woodville.

It was the well-travelled Maguire-Ratima's 13<sup>th</sup> win in his last 14 finals, but Seed's 11 wins and other points since the start of October enabled him

to end the season as Shearing Sport's No 1 ranked Intermediate shearer for the 2017-2018 season.

Smith and Kirkpatrick had further success when they were joined by Pongaroa shearer David Buick and woolhandlers Sheree Alabaster, of Taihape, Eramiha Neho, of Dannevirke, and Hanatia Tipene, of Te Kuiti, in a North Island team which beat the South Island in an inter-island teams match.

Buick made it two-from-two in teams matches by leading NZ Shears Te Kuiti to victory in a transtasman shearing match against a makeshift Warrnambool Show combination. Joined by Mark Grainger, of Te Kuiti, and Masterton-based Senior shearer and 2017 New Zealand Intermediate champion Sean Gouk, Buick's team won by 30 points from the visiting team of Roger Mifsud, from Mortlake, Vic, Lee Harris, of Hamilton, Vic, and Benn Heinrich, of Burra, South Australia, who was called-in while working in King Country, as a last-minute replacement for a team member who had been unable to travel.

Harris shored the four merinos and four crossbreds in 11min 29.75sec, about 38 seconds quicker than second-man-off Buick, a two-times winner of the Warrnambool show's crossbreds final who overcame the less familiar finewool obstacles of this Friday night challenge to take individual honours by a whopping 14.241pts.

RESULTS from the night session on the second day of the New Zealand Shearing and Woolhandling Championships in Te Kuiti on April 6, 2018: Shearing:

Transtasman (4 merinos, 4 second-shear per shearer): NZ Shears Te Kuiti 235.113pts (David Buick 12min 7.43sec, 62.122pts; Mark Grainger 13min 11.2sec, 79.435pts; Sean Gouk 16min 41.12sec, 93.556pts) Warrnambool Show Vic 266.986pts (Lee Harris 11min 29.75sec, 76.263pts; Roger Mifsud 14min 28.2sec, 93.91pts; Benn Heinrich 18min 11.75sec, 96.713pts) by 31.873pts.

North Island Shearer of the Year final (10 ewes, 10 lambs): Rowland Smith (Maraekakaho) 16min 24.42sec, 55.471pts, 1; John Kirkpatrick (Napier) 16min 38.49sec, 57.825pts, 2; Gavin Mutch (Scotland/Whangamomona) 16min 15.97sec, 57.999pts, 3; David Buick (Pongaroa) 16min 26.62sec, 58.581pts, 4; Mark Grainger (Te Kuiti)

16min 49.86sec, 59.443pts, 5; Digger Balme (Te Kuiti) 15min 24.17sec, 62.709pts, 6.

New Zealand championships:

Intermediate final (8 sheep): Brandon Maguire-Ratima (Winton) 11min 56.72sec, 41.336pts, 1; Daniel Seed (Woodville) 11min 53.42sec, 44.546pts, 2; Paora Moanaroa (Eketahuna) 11min 21.13sec, 45.682pts, 3; Steve Hakaraia (Rotorua) 12min 34/18sec, 48.834pts, 4; Liam Lowry (Glen Murray) 13min 12.3sec, 53.49pts, 5; Trent Hewes (Pukekawa) 13min 43.38sec, 53.669pts, 6.

Contractors Relay (8 sheep): Barrowcliffe No 1 (Kaleb Foote, Craig Fagan, Catherine Mullooly) 11min 23.21sec, 46.061pts, 1; McSkimming Shearing 12min 25.55sec, 48.078pts, 2; Fagan No 2 12min 21.54sec, 49.177pts, 3; CT Shearing Te Kuiti 13min 2.85sec, 51.843pts, 4; Fagan No 1 13min 29.43sec, 53.572pts, 5; Barrowcliffe No 2 17min 20.89sec, 64.845pts, 6.

Shearing and Woolhandling:

Inter-Island Teams Challenge (6 second-shear sheep per shearer): North Island (shearers Rowland Smith, John Kirkpatrick, David Buick; woolhandlers Eramiha Noho, Hanatia Tipene, Sheree Alabaster) 255pts beat South Island (shearers Andy Main; and, Nathan Stratford, Shaun Mathieson; woolhandlers Joel Henare, Pagan Karauria, Chelsea Collier) 310pts.

Captions

Rowland Smith

All-conquering shearer Rowland Smith on his last sheep in his successful defence of the North Island Shearer of the Year title on the second night of the three-day 2018 New Zealand Shearing and Woolhandling Championships in Te Kuiti last night (Friday). PHOTO/Doug Laing SSNZ

Brandon Maguire Ratima, of Winton, holds the South Island pride up by winning the New Zealand Intermediate shearing title in Te Kuiti last night (Friday), to go with his Golden Shears title won in Masterton five weeks ago. PHOTO/Doug Laing SSNZ

img 0320

The wool flying as the North Island wraps up another inter-island shearing and woolhandling match in Te Kuiti last night. PHOTO/Doug Laing SSNZ

img 0325

It's all over as South Island woolhandlers Chelsea Collier (left) and Joel Henare (right), watched by the already finished North Island opposition, signal an end to the interisland shearing and woolhandling match won by the North in Te Kuiti last night (Friday). PHOTO/Doug Laing SSNZ  
ENDS

Doug Laing,  
Media Officer  
Shearing Sports New Zealand  
mobile 0274-690644, home (64) 06-8436656







