

MEDIA RELEASE

From Doug Laing, Golden Shears Media Group, media officer Shearing Sports New Zealand

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Caption

World woolhandling champion Joel Henare celebrates his 100th open-class win by claiming a sixth consecutive Golden Shears Open woolhandling title. PHOTO/Pete Nikolaison Golden Shears Media Group

The ultimate rousie hits a century

It may have taken more than 30 years but a woolhandler was the genuine star of the final night of the 58th Golden Shears in Masterton tonight as ultimate rousie Joel Henare overshadowed the performance of shearing phenomenon Rowland Smith.

The two each lived up to the tag of hot favourites for their successful defences of the Open woolhandling and shearing titles, but Henare just went one step better, scoring his 100th Open-class woolhandling win, at the age of just 26.

It was an emotional Henare who stood as he was saluted with the powerful Ngati Kahungunu haka Tika Tonu and presented with a commemorative cake, by mum Greta Davoren and fellow woolhandlers Candy Hiri and Nicole Petuha.

It was with similar emotion he paid tribute to some of the tutors he had in his younger days where he grew up around the woolsheds of Otago – including late former Golden Shears Open champions Joanne Kumeroa and Gina Nathan.

The victory was his sixth Golden Shears Open title, a record sequence and equalling Kumeroa's record for the most Golden Shears Open woolhandling titles.

Henare, from Gisborne and mainly of Ngati Porou heritage, said he plans to defend his New Zealand championships title in Te Kuiti next month, and follow other top shows next year in the hope of defending his World title in France in July 2019.

He has however taken a job in a Motueka fish processing plant, and is no longer working fulltime in the wool industry.

Despite the shadowing of the moment, the 31-year-old Smith, who lives at Maraekakaho, near Hastings, was hardly any less impressive, becoming the third most successful shearer in Golden Shears Open final history, with five wins in six years, behind only Sir David Fagan's 16 and Snow Quinn's six.

Astoundingly it was his 36th consecutive win in Open-class finals in New Zealand, during which the only blemish was being eliminated from one competition in a semi-final.

He was put under pressure by Pongaroa farmer David Buick in tonight's 20-sheep final, Wairarapa's biggest hope of a first Golden Shears Open title for the host region looking a distinct possibility as the pair finished the race almost together. Buick was first to the button in 16min 29.618sec, and had the better points in the judging on the shearing board.

It was left to the judging in the pens, many surprised Smith had ultimately won by more than two points.

Reigning World champion John Kirkpatrick, of Napier, unloaded another "burden" when he won the PGG Wrightson Wool National Circuit final for a second time, meaning he and Smith will again be in the New Zealand team for next season's trans-tasman test series.

With teammate Nathan Stratford, of Invercargill, they were however heavily beaten by Australians Shannon Warnest, Daniel McIntyre and Jason Wingfield in a test match tonight, although Kiwi woolhandlers Henare and Maryanne Baty balanced the international ledger with a win over their counterparts, Melanie Morris and Sophie Huf.

More than 20 titles were decided during the three-day championships which attracted almost 400 competitors.

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