

Thursday February 28

COMPETITION was fast and furious on opening morning of the world-famous Golden Shears today.

New Zealand's premier shearing competition began with a bang with big crowds, close competition and entries well up on last year.

Commentator Koro Mullins said this morning saw the biggest crowds in 15 years for a Golden Shears opening day and he estimated entries were up 15 percent on last year. The Department of Labour Novice Shearing Event kicked off the contest, culminating in an exciting final with local Masterton shearer Cushla Gordon showing the boys how it was done.

"Shearings never looked so good," commented a spectator when Gordon came forward for the trophy.

Her graceful style on the stands drew plenty of praise from the commentators for quality and the home crowd was pleased to see Jimmy Peneha of Masterton in second and Martinborough's Richard Mills at third.

Motueka shearer Shilo Karaheke was fourth with his big, no-sweat style, followed by Danniverke's Jason Henry in fifth and Richard Falloon of Masterton in sixth.

The Golden Shears runs from Thursday February 28 to Saturday March 1 and sees competitors from New Zealand, Norway, Australia, the UK, Ireland, Canada, and South Africa battle for the top titles.

Thursday sees a full day and evening of heats. Then pared-down competitor groups continue into quarter finals and then finals in some categories throughout Friday.

Friday night fires up when New Zealand versus Australia in the Wool Handling Test.

Saturday sees semi-finals and finals throughout the day, culminating in the Trans-Tasman Shearing Test and Open Shearing Final.

For a full programme and live video action see www.goldenshears.co.nz.

For free images or further information contact the Golden Shears Media Group at goldenshears@pete.co.nz or phone 021 488 137 or 027 5788 137.