

PGG Wrightson National Shearing Championship

By Doug Laing

The PGG Wrightson National, first contested as the McSkimming Memorial Triple in 1973, is New Zealand's premier all-breeds title, with the winner each year taking one of the three places in the New Zealand team for the home-and-away trans-tasman tests.

Expanded over the years, it now covers five qualifying rounds, with entrants amassing points based on placings in the open heats at the New Zealand finewool Merino championships in Alexandra, the New Zealand Spring Shears in Waimate and the national Corriedale championships before Christmas, the national lambshearing championships in Raglan in January, and last Sunday's Pahiatua Shears.

The top 12 qualify for the semi-finals to be held at the Golden Shears, leading to the final on Saturday night.

The 19 shearers in this year's series do not include David Fagan, who last year won the title for the ninth time and then gifted his place in the NZ team for the tests against Australia, in Hay (NSW) in November and here at the 2009 Golden Shears, to nephew James Fagan, who was runner-up.

But they do include John Kirkpatrick and Paul Avery, who were exempted from the otherwise compulsory opening round in Alexandra, which was held on the same weekend they were winning their World titles in Norway.

Placings and points before the final qualifying round on Sunday were: 1 Nathan Stratford 35, 2 James Fagan 32, 3 Tony Coster 30, 4 Grant Smith 24, 5 John Kirkpatrick 21, 6 Alton Devery 19, 7 Sam Lewis 16, 8 Adam Brausch 15, 9 Colin O'Neill 14, 10 Cam Ferguson 13, 11 Gavin Mutch 11, 12 equal Dion Morrell/Chris Brears/Paul Avery 9, 15 equal Paerata Abraham/Matt Timu/Matthew Tumohe 6, 18 Chad Waihape 4, 19 Roger Neil 3.

For all other results and archived video action see <http://www.goldenshears.co.nz>.

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