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Wexford Man's Success At World's Premier Shearing Contest

WEXFORD shearer Brendan Graham has only been in New Zealand for three weeks but has already shorn his way to success at the world's premier shearing contest.

Graham, 19, earned an appropriately green ribbon when he placed fourth in the 49th Golden Shears in Masterton, New Zealand today.

The Golden Shears is recognised as the world's toughest shearing contest with shearers travelling from around the globe to compete in the iconic event.

The only Irish competitor in the novice grade, Graham shone well in his heat and was the second to top qualifier going into the final.

Shearing on stand two in the final he shone for quality, taking his time with careful blows, a fluid style and a cool head.

Graham finished fifth of six on time but the quality judging in the pens when the clock had stopped proved his method and earned him fourth place.

"I didn't think I'd make it to the finals, let alone fourth," said a rapt Graham after the finals shear.

He said began shearing with his father back in Ireland.

"I started with me father about two years ago, just part-time and after school."

Kiwi shearers in his father's gang organised work for Graham in New Zealand and piqued his interest in the Golden Shears.

"So I came over here to shear better and get some more experience," Graham said.

Today's outing was only his second competition shear and Graham said he was fairly nervous taking the stand under the bright lights and in front of a large crowd.

But after his success he said he'd have to enter again.

"I'm here for a year so I'll be back next time for sure," Graham said.

The Golden Shears is regarded as one of New Zealand's iconic events and is closely associated with a country where one of the most significant industries and exports is wool.

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

For further information and free higher resolution images contact the Golden Shears Media Group at goldenshears@pete.co.nz or phone 021 488 137 or 027 5788 137. International callers phone 006421 488 137 or 006427 5788 137.

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CAPTION:

WEXFORD'S Brendan Graham shears his way to success in the novice competition of the world's premier shearing contest, the Golden Shears, in New Zealand today.