

Thursday 4 March, 2010

Ex-Champ Juggles Shearing with Parliament

KAIKOURA MP Colin King was among 40 contestants battling it out this afternoon in the grade one veterans shearing contest.

With three open final champion titles to his name plus a string of other shearing successes behind him, Colin King is no stranger to Golden Shears victory.

Colin is also one of a small number of left-handed shearers in the competition but says being a 'south paw' doesn't hold him back.

"Normally speaking, if you were a sheep farmer's son and you were left handed, you'd teach yourself to shear right handed. I was a dairy farmer's son and didn't think I would need to change so by the time I started shearing it was too late."

Despite the disadvantages of shearing left handed, where port holes and catching pens, traditionally designed for right-handers, can make life a little difficult, Colin pointed out that he is not alone with his handedness in reaching top level status.

"Samson Te Whata, Tom Brough, Jack Dowd, they were all guys who all started out left handed, swapped to right and have done very well in the Shears."

The other 'minority group' that Colin represents is the South Island shearer. But that group too has not let its minority status steal its glory. Colin was in fact the first 'mainlander' to win the open shearing final but several others have followed.

Colin was in between competition heats this afternoon when he took time to talk about his Golden Shears experience. Despite admitting he was "not particularly happy" with his performance in the first round, he's determined to make it to the top twelve.

He said the only training he managed to fit in this year was a competition in Blenheim. He was originally only in attendance to accompany champion shearer Paul Avery but got talked into taking part himself.

"I have to say it was very painful. We only shored ten sheep but the last five were particularly painful. I just lacked the fitness."

Colin said parliamentary responsibilities prevented him from doing more training.

Whatever the outcome might be of this afternoon's veterans finals, Colin said it has been great to be part of the Golden Shears 50th anniversary.

“The Golden Shears appeals to the curiosity of the public and it’s one of those truly pioneering activities,” he said.

“I take my hat off to the (Wairarapa) Young Farmers for putting an international event like this together. It’s a vision that is held in such high regard. In fact it’s held in higher regard now than ever.”

For more information and free higher resolution images contact the Golden Shears media group at goldenshears@pete.co.nz or phone 021 488 137. International callers phone 0064 21 488 137.

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