



Nomination of

Paul Van Beers

from

New Zealand Fencing Competitions (NZFC)

For the

*2017*

*Federated Farmers  
Contribution to  
New Zealand  
Rural Sports Industry  
Award*



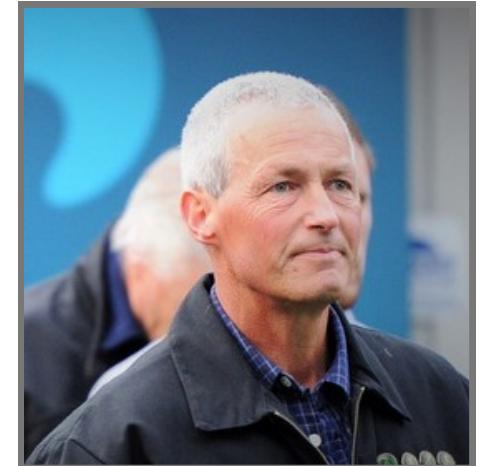
# Paul Van Beers

To the Norwood New Zealand Rural Sports Awards Judging Panel,

The name Paul Van Beers is synonymous with fencing competitions.

Through his hard work, dedication and perfectionism, Paul has become a fencing icon— epitomized by many, respected by all, yet he still remains modest and down to earth.

On the back of his 2016 retirement, and after notching up a phenomenal record setting 14 Golden Pliers wins, 12 Silver Spades titles and 2 World Fencing Championship titles, Paul has been giving back to the sport by heavy involvement within the national fencing sporting body that is NZFC— New Zealand Fencing Competitions.



Paul organizes and runs the fencing competition at Hawkes Bay Show annually, which includes sourcing local sponsorship, setting fence specifications, taking entries, assisting judges, hosting sponsors, and advertising. His record alone is a impressive draw card for the public to our nationwide events.

Paul was a main driver of the inception of NZFC- a competitive fencing organization who's focus would be to preserve the history of fencing competitions, yet move it with the times into the future, promote the sport, encourage new entrants to participate, and create a consistent level of high standards of fencing throughout competitions.

This lead him on to helping head a team of experienced competitors to define and regulate the current judging practices into more specific NZ National Judging Standards, which NZFC now uses across all of its competitions from grass roots to national level, and has the potential to be used on a world stage.

Paul's approachable, humble nature has always been his main attribute, and NZFC values him as a figure that many young fencers and industry supporters idolize. Many new competitors starting out at regional competitions can expect to be welcomed and encouraged by Paul.

He is a key sponsorship director, and secures sponsorship for our New Zealand National Fencing Championships with great success.

In acknowledging the many volunteer hours Paul puts in to our organisation, and the professionalism he represents, New Zealand Fencing Competitions- NZFC would like to submit to you his nomination for the Federated Farmers Contribution to the New Zealand Rural Sports Industry Award.

Founding member of NZFC

NZFC Committee member and volunteer

NZFC Hall of Fame member

Organizes and runs annual NZFC Regional Competition at Hawkes Bay Show

Welcoming and encouraging to new competitors

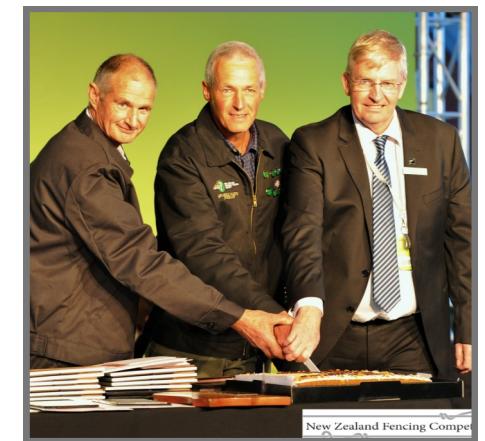
Instrumental in defining the NZ Judging Standards

Regular volunteer judge at NZFC competitions

NZFC's prominent sponsorship figurehead

Valued ambassador for fencing competitions

# Paul Van Beers



*Proudly nominated by New Zealand Fencing Competitions (NZFC)  
for the Federated Farmers Contribution to the New Zealand Rural Sports Industry Award*



**Golden Pliers champion Paul Van Beers  
Photo by David Broome**

# Fencer, farmer, multiple champion

Words by Debbie White

To win a national championship title 14 times is an incredible feat, regardless of the 'sport' and a record amongst any of the sporting greats.

**T**has dominated the WIREMARK® Golden Pliers, the pinnacle of the competitive fencing world, competing 28 times alongside the best New Zealand's fencers to achieve a mighty impressive 14 wins, seven seconds, and three thirds. Given that this is a one-off annual championship, if Paul was a Formula One driver, a tennis player or a racehorse; he would be more than a champion, he would be (and is) a legend.

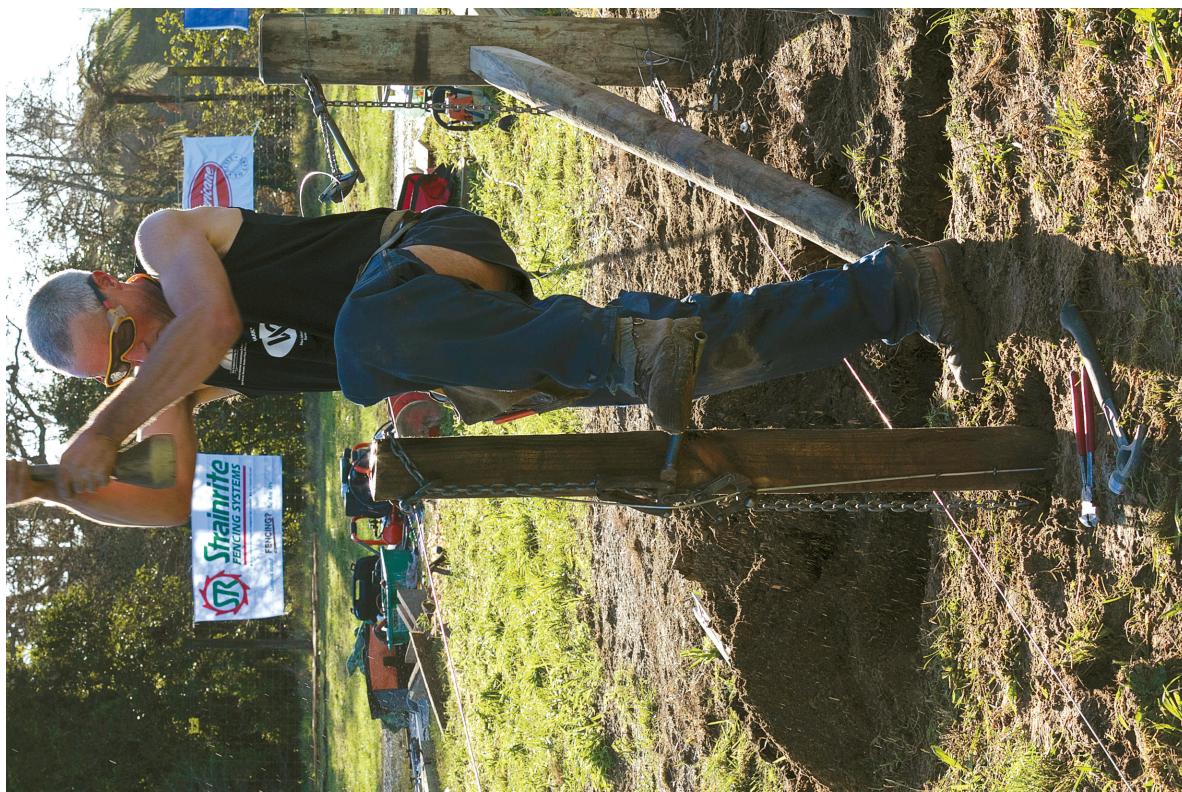
Added to this record are 12 wins with partners in the Fieldays Silver Spades, which are the doubles/team national championship titles. Nine of these were with partner Wayne Newdick, other wins were with Leonard Walling, Marty Sutherland and with son Jason

in 2014 – the first father/son team to win this doubles national championship.

Paul has competed four times in the invitational Patura Power Fencing World Championships in Germany for two wins, a second and a third.

For those who know Paul, he is widely known as a 'top person', just as much as he is for his fencing achievements. Paul and his wife Wendy are hard-working, determined and focused. They have fenced together, side-by-side in Tarankai and overseas.

Fencing and working hard enabled them to buy a farm; they own and run Te Manga Station in Porangahau, 800 hectares with 570 hectares effective. They run 1800 ewes, 50 head of beef stock and take in 500 dairy grazers.



When they bought the property 12 years ago, it had good building infrastructure and was well set-up with a central raceway. They set about with paddock subdivision, water systems and pasture improvements. They work the station themselves with little outside help except at shearing time. Paul's can-do attitude, focus, and eye for detail makes him a successful farmer, which can also be seen in competition. There's a reason why he's been at the top of the game throughout his years of fencing competitions.

Joe Corlett from Tarankai introduced Paul to fencing and fencing competitions. Joe hired Paul in his fencing business and Paul worked alongside Joe's wife Shirley. Joe was a Fieldays fencing judge and recognising Paul's potential, encouraged Paul to start competitive fencing. Paul entered his first Golden Pliers competition in 1985.

"There were over 45 men in the qualifying heats and Paul came 17<sup>th</sup>. 'It was a humbling experience. You watch from the sidelines and think you can do it but the first time you have a go is daunting, I was so nervous. It took many years before I could eat 12 hours before a competition, which didn't help my stamina,'"

Paul Van Beers (extract from the *Golden Pliers book*).

In 1989 Paul came second. In 1990 he won his first Golden Pliers. While Paul rates many of his fellow competitors, strong rivals include George (Alan) Schuler, Neville Prince, Trevor Woolston, Leonard Walling, Owen Peterson, Nick Liefting and Wayne Newdick. In recent years, the next generation is starting to make their mark, with Shayne Bouskill and Tim Stafford taking out recent titles.

Paul has noted changes in the competition line over the years.

"Standards have lifted, perhaps in part to the judging standards, speed is still a factor but there's more emphasis on quality, attention to detail is very important."

Paul believes the competitions are farmer market driven.

"The role of competitions sets competitors up for what the market wants. To do well, to win is a perfect balance of speed, quality, and strength of tensions. The industry wants the same- a timely process, good quality which results in fences that last."

Of the competition materials, Paul notes: "The sponsors' support is vital, it enables us

to use the best of material in the competitions, in return it enables product education, which is important as often farmers show respect for fencing contractors advice on materials."

In recent years, Paul has been instrumental in the formation of New Zealand Fencing Competitions, a national organisation empowered to run fencing competitions throughout New Zealand. Currently vice chairman, Paul works with sponsorship and developing national judging standards. He has also taken up teaming with young competitors in regional competitions. Following a fall off a horse in early 2015, Paul has found injuries he thought weren't too bad at the time, hard to overcome.

"My mind wants to compete but my body's not too sure."

With a determined crack to be had at this year's competitions, Paul is also mindful of supporting son Jason as he's coming through the ranks, having qualified for last year's Golden Pliers.

But blood aside and respect for the next generation of world leading fencers coming through, Paul remains the one to watch. ■