



Bay excavator operator tops country again

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Napier excavator operator and contractor Steve Galbraith has been named New Zealand's best excavator operator for the second year in a row.

The award was made on Friday night after two days of competition involving 10 operators from throughout New Zealand during the Central Districts Fielddays at the Manfeild Autocourse in Feilding.

There were five exercises covering advanced skills of excavating during the Civil Contractors New Zealand (CCNZ) national competition, and Mr Galbraith was presented with the Cable Price NZ Number One Excavator Award.

He had first won the title at the CD Fielddays in March last year, after two previous third placings at nationals from five attempts. He worked for Gair Contracting for 20 years and was Napier operations manager before recently going out on his own and he has competed at the Hawke's Bay Excavator Competition 12 times.

Competition manager Malcolm Abernethy said Mr Galbraith's repeated participation in the event shows a very strong commitment as it a hotly contested event and competitors are under extreme pressure over the two days.

Mr Abernethy said Mr Galbraith had demonstrated a very high level of skill, knowledge and professionalism. He was strong in all events but did particularly well on the second day during the One Day Job section.

"Over the 23 years we've been running the competition, we've seen how it fosters enthusiasm for excellence among operators," Mr Abernethy said.

The exercises used three



DIGGING IN: Napier excavator operator Steve Galbraith (above) and (below) one of the pinpoint-accuracy tasks, excavator weightlifting, he had to complete on his way to winning the title.

PHOTOS/SUPPLIED



different-sized diggers and ranged from a more than a dozen pinpoint accuracy tasks in 60 minutes with a 13-tonne Hitachi excavator, through a one-day job project with a 5.5-tonne digger, planning, pricing and constructing two ponds to briefing children on the operation of a 1 tonne mini digger.

Runner-up was Sam Scott, of Palmerston North, and third was Brandon Crowley, of Whakatane.