

MEDIA RELEASE

The following is a summary of the decision of the Sports Dispute Tribunal of New Zealand in the case of ***New Zealand Rugby League v Vince Whare*** (SDT/14/04), an anti-doping violation application. This is not the written decision of the Tribunal for the purposes of Rule 24.3 of the Tribunal's Rules.

The Sports Disputes Tribunal has reprimanded and fined Vince Whare of Christchurch, who tested positive for the presence of cannabis during a Pacific Rim Rugby League tournament on 23 October 2004. The Tribunal was satisfied that the use of cannabis was not intended to enhance sport performance, and was prior to his selection for the New Zealand Maori team. Cannabis was not used by him during the tournament at which he was tested, but his prior use accounted for it.

As in the case of ***Stewart*** (STD/11/04) the Tribunal observed that the use of illegal recreational drugs is a serious matter, and the response of the Tribunal turns on the facts of each case. Here the use of cannabis was for recreational purposes and unrelated to competition.

The Tribunal took account of the provisions of the World Anti-Doping Code, and concluded that in this case a period of ineligibility from participation in the sport should not be imposed both to achieve consistency with ***Stewart*** and because the athlete has already been suspended from participation in training for some weeks.

He was warned that a further doping offence would result in a substantial period of ineligibility.

Consistent with ***Stewart***, a sanction was imposed to mark the disapproval of the use of illegal drugs, and to act as a deterrent. The Tribunal has recorded the remorse shown by the athlete, and his frankness in representations to the Tribunal.

The Tribunal reprimanded Mr Whare and fined him \$250, and he was ordered to pay costs of \$250 to NZRL.

For further information, contact Brent Ellis, Registrar, Sports Disputes Tribunal of New Zealand (telephone: 0800 55 66 80; e-mail: info@sportstribunal.org.nz).