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MEDIA RELEASE

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Sports Tribunal Suspends Rugby League player for 2 years

The Sports Tribunal has suspended rugby league player, Para Murray, from participating in sport for two years because of an anti-doping violation relating to the prohibited substances D-Methamphetamine and D-Amphetamine.

Mr Murray tested positive to D-Methamphetamine and D-Amphetamine after playing a representative match for Northern in a national rugby league tournament.

Mr Murray admitted the violation which he stated was the result of recreational drug use. He made submissions, through his representative, seeking a modification of the normal penalty in light of his personal circumstances so that he could continue to actively participate in sport. Reference was also made to a perceived need for more drug education in his area.

While the Tribunal was sympathetic to these submissions, its only role was to decide the case on the basis of the Sports Anti-Doping Rules. The Tribunal had no discretion in a case such as this, where prohibited substances are involved and no defence available under the Rules (such as no significant fault or negligence) had been established, other than to impose the mandatory penalty of two years' suspension. Therefore, the Tribunal suspended Mr Murray for two years commencing from 18 November 2010 which was the date of his provisional suspension.

The Tribunal suggested to Mr Murray that there may be opportunities for him to take an active role in anti-doping education programmes, spread the message to others and achieve a positive result out of an otherwise bad experience.

The decision in this case will be made available for download from the website of the Sports Tribunal (www.sportstribunal.org.nz). See *Drug Free Sport New Zealand v Para Murray* (ST 22/10). Copies can also be obtained directly from Brent Ellis, Registrar, Sports Tribunal of New Zealand (telephone: 0800 55 66 80; e-mail: info@sportstribunal.org.nz).