

MEDIA RELEASE

22 November 2007

Sports Tribunal suspends rugby league player for cannabis violation

The Sports Tribunal has suspended Wellington Orcas rugby league player, Joseph Flint, from participating in sport until 28 March 2008 because of an anti-doping violation relating to cannabis.

Mr Flint tested positive for cannabis while competing in a Bartercard Cup League match on 19 August 2007. Cannabis is a prohibited substance under the Prohibited List of the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA).

Mr Flint admitted the violation and stated he used cannabis while drinking with friends. The Tribunal accepted that Mr. Flint did not use cannabis with the intention of enhancing his sports performance.

The Tribunal considered aggravating factors were that he used cannabis two days before the match while aware that it was a banned substance and that he had previously signed a participation agreement acknowledging he was aware of the banned substances policy of New Zealand Rugby League. Mitigating factors included his young age (18) and that he missed out on being considered for selection for under 18 New Zealand and New Zealand Maori teams as a result of the positive test.

The Tribunal considered a suspension of approximately one month was appropriate in the circumstances. However, the rugby league season has now ended and does not start again until around 1 March 2008. Therefore, in order for the penalty to be effective, the period of suspension will run from the date of this decision until 28 March 2008.

The decision in this case is available for download from the website of the Sports Tribunal (www.sportstribunal.org.nz). See *Drug Free Sport New Zealand v Joseph Flint* (ST 18/07). Copies of the decision 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).