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New Zealand Olympic Middle- and Long-Distance Runner suspended for 8 years for anti-doping rule violations

Athlete Zane Robertson has been suspended by the Sports Tribunal for eight years for the presence and use or attempted use of the prohibited substance Erythropoietin (EPO), and for tampering, or attempted tampering, with any part of the doping control process.

Mr Robertson was provisionally suspended without opposition for the first two anti-doping rule violations (ADRVs) on 20 September 2022. This followed an Adverse Analytical Finding (AAF) from an In-Competition doping control test at the Manchester Great Race in May 2022. Mr Robertson elected to have his 'B' sample tested and this confirmed the original result. He subsequently accepted the presence of the prohibited substance but asked to be heard in relation to sanction.

Mr Robertson filed evidence which was contested by Drug Free Sport New Zealand (DFSNZ), and which led to the allegation of tampering.

The parties subsequently filed a joint memorandum stating Mr Robertson did not contest the tampering breach and was no longer seeking a reduced sanction for the original ADRVs. The memorandum proposed a period of ineligibility of eight years, with credit for the period of provisional suspension he has already served.

The Tribunal agreed with the joint proposal given that Mr Robertson was not contesting the breaches nor offering evidence to support a reduced sanction. The eight-year period of ineligibility was the only sanction available to the Tribunal as the first two ADRVs attracted a sanction of four years, and the tampering violation attracted a four-year period which must be served in addition to the four years for the original ADRVs.

The decision in this case can be found at www.sportstribunal.org.nz *Drug Free Sport New Zealand v Zane Robertson (ST 06/22)*.

Additional information about prohibited substances, ADRVs, and sanctions can be found in the WADA Prohibited List (www.wada-ama.org/en/prohibited-list) and the Sports Anti-Doping Rules (www.drugfreesport.org.nz).