

MEDIA RELEASE – 22 October 2025

Tribunal Allows Appeal in Judo NZ Selection Dispute

The Sports Tribunal released a Reasons decision concerning the selection appeal by Vincent Dalzell against a decision of Judo NZ to select two other athletes (naming Mr Dalzell as the reserve) to attend the Oceania Open Gold Coast 2025 in the u100 kg category.

The Tribunal had earlier released a Result decision for this proceeding given the urgency associated with a registration deadline for the Gold Coast event.

Mr Dalzell's ground of appeal was that the applicable selection criteria had not been properly followed and / or implemented, arguing that he was the only athlete that met the eligibility criteria. Judo NZ maintained that the selection decision was made in good faith, transparently, and in line with the established policy and requirements of the Judo NZ Bylaws.

Following a virtual hearing held on 10 October 2025, the Tribunal found that none of the three athletes considered for selection – Mr Dalzell, Mr Sexton, and Mr Rowley – met the eligibility criteria set out in Judo NZ's Bylaws. The Tribunal determined that the selectors had misapplied discretionary provisions intended for selection decisions to eligibility determinations. The Tribunal held that the only valid discretion open to Judo NZ for eligibility purposes was under Bylaw clause 2.7.6.B, which requires approval from the President of Judo NZ. While the President also happened to be a selector, there was clear evidence that no such approval under the relevant provision was considered or given by the President in this case.

As a result, the Tribunal allowed Mr Dalzell's appeal, and referred the matter back to Judo NZ to reconsider the eligibility and selection of all three athletes in accordance with the correct provisions of the Bylaw.

The Tribunal also issued guidance to Judo NZ on how to properly exercise the discretion under clause 2.7.6.B, including: considering the impact on fairness and the integrity of the selection process; assessing each athlete's circumstances individually; and taking into account any prior advice given to athletes about qualifying events.

The Tribunal emphasised that it had no concerns about the integrity or good faith of the selectors but noted that Judo NZ's Bylaw structure and its communications to athletes regarding eligibility for selection could be improved for clarity. It recommended that Judo NZ address these issues as part of its ongoing Bylaw review.

The decision in this case can be found at www.sportstribunal.org.nz – see *Vincent Dalzell v Judo NZ* (ST07/25).