

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Sports Tribunal suspends boxing champion for anti-doping violation**

The Sports Tribunal has suspended New Zealand boxing champion Dawn Chalmers from participating in sport due to an anti-doping violation involving furosemide.

Mr Chalmers tested positive to furosemide after winning her weight division at the New Zealand Boxing Championships in October 2009. The Sports Tribunal provisionally suspended her on 21 December 2009.

Ms Chalmers admitted the violation and gave evidence, accepted by the Tribunal, that she had consulted her doctor about a medical condition and he prescribed furosemide to treat this. The doctor misstated the status of furosemide when he advised her not to take it “close to” or “around competition” when in fact furosemide is a prohibited substance in sports not to be taken *in or out* of competition. Ms Chalmers accepted this advice and confirmed it with a pharmacist but took no further steps to check this advice with Drug Free Sport New Zealand (DFS) or clarify what were the parameters of “close to” or “around competition”.

Furosemide reduces fluid retention and can reduce weight and potentially have performance enhancing consequences for a boxer trying to fit in a certain weight division. However, the Tribunal accepted Ms Chalmers’ evidence that this was not the case and the furosemide was taken to treat her medical condition and was not intended to enhance her sports performance.

Ms Chalmers is a senior athlete who had received appropriate drug education, and been supplied with educational material, on these matters by DFS. She had the principal responsibility to ensure she did not take a prohibited substance and failed in her obligation by not checking further the status of furosemide with DFS. While the doctor had given her mistaken advice about furosemide, she had been explicitly alerted that it should not be taken close to or around competition but did nothing to clarify what this meant. On the positive side, the Tribunal took into account her openness and prompt admission of fault, that she knew she was likely to be tested if she won, and that she received mistaken advice from her doctor and pharmacist.

The Tribunal regarded this case as more serious than other cases it had dealt with concerning prohibited substances being mistakenly prescribed because of Ms Chalmers’ explicit knowledge that there was an issue about Furosemide and her failure to clarify the position. Ms Chalmers had been provisionally suspended for approximately two months at the date of the hearing. The Tribunal suspended her for a further three months from the hearing date, making her ineligible to participate in sport until the night of 16 May 2010.

The decision in this case will be made available for download from the website of the Sports Tribunal ([www.sporttribunal.org.nz](http://www.sporttribunal.org.nz)). See *Drug Free Sport New Zealand v Dawn Chalmers* (ST 13/09). Copies can also be obtained directly from Brent Ellis, Registrar, Sports Tribunal of New Zealand (telephone: 0800 55 66 80; e-mail: [info@sporttribunal.org.nz](mailto:info@sporttribunal.org.nz)).