

**MEDIA RELEASE 1 December 2014**

**Weightlifting Coach Suspended for Attempted Trafficking in Prohibited Substances**

The Sports Tribunal has suspended weightlifting coach Daniel Milne for attempted trafficking in, and possession of, prohibited substances.

Mr Milne admitted both charges. In December 2012, Mr Milne offered to supply steroids and other performance enhancing prohibited substances to a 19 year old weightlifter (X) he was coaching so that X could improve his competitive weightlifting performance. Mr Milne held a party at his house where he showed X some of these products, offered to source them for X and show X how to use them. X subsequently declined and told another coach. This led to Drug Free Sport New Zealand carrying out investigations and ultimately referring the matter to the Tribunal on 6 October 2014.

This is the first anti-doping violation of attempted trafficking in New Zealand.

The minimum penalty for attempted trafficking is 4 years' suspension from sport with a maximum penalty of a life ban. Overseas cases have imposed penalties ranging from 4 years' suspension to a life ban, depending on the circumstances of each case.

The Tribunal noted there were aggravating factors here including that: the violations happened within an athlete and coach relationship; X was a young man who should have received mentoring and support and not been encouraged to take prohibited substances; and this was not a one off spontaneous mistake but reflected Mr Milne's unacceptable attitude towards use of prohibited substances then. In the Tribunal's view, without considering any mitigating factors, a starting point of 7 to 8 years' suspension would apply in these circumstances.

However, there were mitigating factors. Mr Milne eventually admitted the violations and accepted responsibility for what occurred, meaning X and other witnesses didn't have to give evidence at the hearing. He was contrite and ashamed. He made positive and constructive contributions to the sport over the years but regrettably a period occurred where he lost focus and sound judgement. He was still a relatively young man with some personal difficulties but still with clear potential.

The Tribunal was satisfied Mr Milne's frame of mind in which the offending occurred is now history but stated that "the fundamental attack on the integrity of all sporting contests demands that the breach is not minimised".

The Tribunal concluded that a suspension of 6 years was appropriate in all the circumstances. The Tribunal ordered the 6 year period start from 1 January 2014 to take account of the delay in the matter being referred to the Tribunal.

The decision in this case is 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 Daniel Milne* (ST 11/14). 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).