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Weightlifter suspended for 8 years for anti-doping violations

The Sports Tribunal has suspended weightlifter Andrew Ciancio for 8 years.

Drug Free Sport New Zealand (DFS) brought anti-doping proceedings in the Tribunal against Mr Ciancio in 2014. The Tribunal ordered that Mr Ciancio be provisionally suspended in June 2014.

The New Zealand proceedings were adjourned while other unrelated anti-doping proceedings against Mr Ciancio were being heard and decided by the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) in Australia. In a decision dated 20 April 2015, CAS suspended Mr Ciancio for 7 years, commencing from 24 November 2012.

The New Zealand proceedings subsequently recommenced and the Sports Tribunal heard the matter on 22 June 2015 and issued its decision on 24 June.

The Tribunal found Mr Ciancio committed the six anti-doping violations alleged against him. These involved evading sample collection or tampering with sample collection contrary to the Sports Anti-Doping Rules. He did so by giving false and misleading information as to his whereabouts for availability for drug testing and changing his whereabouts for availability for drug testing with the intention of evading sample collection. These breaches took place on various dates between July and October 2013.

The New Zealand violations occurred significantly after the Australian violations. The New Zealand violations counted as a second anti-doping violation. Mr Ciancio could have been liable for a lifetime ban if the Tribunal applied the 2013 Anti-Doping Rules.

However, the Tribunal decided it was appropriate to apply the current 2015 Anti-Doping Rules, which DFS accepted would be the orthodox position, which provided for a suspension of 8 years for a second violation of this kind.

The Tribunal therefore suspended Mr Ciancio for 8 years commencing from 4 June 2014 (the date he was provisionally suspended).

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 Andrew Ciancio* (ST 03/14). Copies 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).