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Runner suspended for 4 years for anti-doping rule violation

The Sports Tribunal has suspended Brendon Keenan, a long-distance runner, for a period of four years for possession and attempted use of erythropoietin (EPO), a non-specified substance prohibited all times under class S2 of the 2017 Prohibited List.

This case arose from an investigation by Medsafe into Mr Keenan's online purchase of EPO from a website trading as DRS Labs on 7 September 2017. The parcel was intercepted by NZ Customs and referred to Medsafe which, following its investigation, passed the information to Drug Free Sport New Zealand (DFSNZ).

Mr Keenan was provisionally suspended without opposition on 24 May 2018. On 21 June 2018 Mr Keenan admitted the violation and asked to be heard as to the appropriate sanction. Mr Keenan said he had purchased the EPO to address a medical condition and provided his medical history in support. DFSNZ provided EPO internet search results and medical information in response to Mr Keenan's medical information and blood test results.

On 19 July 2018 a joint memorandum was provided to the Tribunal on behalf of DFSNZ and Mr Keenan. In the memorandum Mr Keenan accepted his conduct was in breach of the Code and that he was subject to a four-year period of ineligibility. It was proposed the period of commencement should be backdated given his prompt admission.

Having considered all available material, the Tribunal imposed a four-year sanction backdated to commence from 7 September 2017.

The Tribunal further ordered that Mr Keenan's results at the 2018 NZ Masters Track Championships and the 2018 NZ Marathon Championships, including any medals or prizes, are disqualified.

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 Brendon Keenan* (ST 06/18). Copies can also be obtained directly from the Registrar, Sports Tribunal of New Zealand (telephone: 0800 55 66 80; e-mail: info@sportstribunal.org.nz).