

MEDIA RELEASE

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Sports Tribunal suspends rugby league player for cannabis violation

The Sports Tribunal has suspended Central Falcons rugby league player, Timoti Broughton, from participating in sport for one month because of an anti-doping violation relating to cannabis.

Mr Broughton tested positive for cannabis while competing in a Bartercard Cup League match on 30 June 2007. Cannabis is a prohibited substance under the Prohibited List of the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA).

Mr Broughton admitted the violation and stated he used cannabis while at a party. The Tribunal accepted that Mr Broughton did not use cannabis with the intention of enhancing his sports performance.

The Tribunal noted that in recent cases of cannabis violations, it had imposed penalties of suspension ranging from one month and two months. In this case, there were mitigating factors that made a penalty at the bottom of this range appropriate. These were:

- Mr Broughton had already been severely penalised as the result of the provisional suspension imposed upon him by New Zealand Rugby League (NZRL) and he had missed a number of matches and had missed possible selection for the Maori Rugby League team.
- The match in which Mr Broughton was drug tested was his first Bartercard Cup match and, despite signing a participation agreement a few days before the match acknowledging he was aware of NZRL's banned substances policy, he had not received the usual pre-season education on NZRL's banned substances policy that other more experienced players had received.

Given these factors, the Tribunal considered a suspension of one month was appropriate. Because of the effect of the provisional suspension, the Tribunal decided the one month suspension it imposed would commence from the date of the Tribunal's decision rather than at a future date.

The Tribunal warned that although it had given consideration to the lack of education Mr Broughton had received in relation to NZRL's banned substances policy, it did not follow that any players testing positive in the future would receive the same consideration.

The decision in this case is available for download from the website of the Sports Tribunal (www.sportstribunal.org.nz). See *New Zealand Rugby League Inc v Timoti Broughton* (ST 14/07). Copies of the decision 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).