

MEDIA RELEASE

22 May 2008

Sports Tribunal suspends Touch player for cannabis violation

The Sports Tribunal has suspended Touch player, Ted Hunia, from participating in sport because of an anti-doping violation relating to cannabis.

Mr Hunia tested positive to cannabis while playing in the Touch New Zealand National Championships.

Mr Hunia admitted the violation and explained that he had taken the cannabis to relieve pain from his injured back. The Tribunal accepted that, although it was used to relieve pain, it was not used for performance enhancing purposes.

The Tribunal considered aggravating factors were:

- Mr Hunia was an experienced player.
- He was fully aware that cannabis was banned and admitted players had been told so by the coach and manager.
- He had signed a participation agreement pledging drug free participation.
- He had used cannabis the night before the tournament.

The Tribunal considered mitigating factors were:

- Mr Hunia's frankness with the Tribunal.
- His significant contribution (actual and intended) to the sport particularly with young people.

Taking these factors into account, the Tribunal decided that a suspension of six weeks was appropriate and suspended Mr Hunia from participation in sport from 21 May up to and including 2 July 2008.

The decision in this case will be made available for download from the website of the Sports Tribunal (www.sporttribunal.org.nz). See *Drug Free Sport New Zealand v Ted Hunia* (ST 03/08). 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).