

MEDIA RELEASE

The following is a summary of the decision of the Sports Dispute Tribunal of New Zealand in the case of ***Boxing New Zealand Inc v Alex Mene*** (SDT/13/04), an anti-doping violation application. This is not the written decision of the Tribunal for the purposes of Rule 24.3 of the Tribunal's Rules.

The Sports Disputes Tribunal has reprimanded and given a warning to Alex Mene. Mr Mene tested positive for the presence of cannabis after he won the Super-Heavyweight Title in the NZ Boxing Championships on 25 September 2004. The cannabis use was "recreational". Mr Mene used the cannabis at a party two weeks before the tournament. It was unrelated to the competition. The Tribunal accepted Mr Mene's evidence that he does not take performance enhancing drugs and that he was unaware cannabis was a banned substance under the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) Prohibited List. Mr Mene apologised and expressed concern at the damage he may have caused Boxing NZ and his sport.

The Tribunal considered that a warning and reprimand was the appropriate penalty as the cannabis use was unrelated to the sport, was not taken for performance enhancing purposes, did not represent a danger to others and there were no other aggravating factors. This approach is consistent with that taken in similar cases in Canada.

The Tribunal indicated that athletes should be aware that the fact cannabis is used "recreationally" and unrelated to their sport does not prevent an athlete from committing a violation under the WADA Code as amended by WADA in its Prohibited Lists of 2004 and 2005. Athletes who use cannabis recreationally risk damaging their sporting careers and the reputations of themselves and their chosen sport.

For further information, contact Brent Ellis, Registrar, Sports Disputes Tribunal of New Zealand (telephone: 0800 55 66 80; e-mail: info@sportstribunal.org.nz).