

MEDIA RELEASE

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Sports Tribunal suspends rugby league player for cannabis violation

A County Manukau Jets rugby league player, Jason Morehu, has been declared ineligible by the Sports Tribunal of New Zealand to participate in sport until March 31 2008 because of an anti-doping violation relating to cannabis.

Mr. Morehu tested positive for cannabis while competing in a Bartercard Cup League match on 11 August 2007. Cannabis is a prohibited substance under the Prohibited List of the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA).

Mr Morehu admitted the violation and explained he had used cannabis on a social occasion. He acknowledged that he knew it was a prohibited substance. The Tribunal accepted that Mr. Morehu did not use cannabis with the intention of enhancing his sports performance.

The Tribunal considered a one month suspension would ordinarily be an appropriate penalty in the circumstances of this case. However, the rugby league season has now ended and does not start again until around 1 March 2008. In the present case, the Sports Anti-Doping Rules (2007) require the period of ineligibility to commence from the date of the Tribunal's decision.

Therefore, in order for the penalty to be effective, the period of suspension will run from the date of this decision until 31 March 2008.

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 Jason Morehu* (ST 17/07). 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).