

MEDIA RELEASE

21 December 2012

Powerlifter Suspended for Cannabis Anti-Doping Violation

The Sports Tribunal has suspended powerlifter, Scott Parsons, for four months for testing positive for cannabis after competing in the New Zealand Bench Press Championships.

Mr Parsons admitted the violation and stated it was due to him smoking a cigarette he was offered while celebrating at his birthday party. He was later informed by the person who gave it to him that it was laced with cannabis oil/hash. His evidence was backed up by a witness. A representative from New Zealand Powerlifting Federation also stated he had known Mr Parsons for 15 years and that these actions were out of character.

The Tribunal accepted there was no intent to enhance his sports performance. In these cases, the Tribunal has adopted four months' suspension as the starting point when imposing a penalty for a cannabis anti-doping violation. This can be increased or decreased depending on whether there are any aggravating or mitigating factors.

The Tribunal thought that there were both aggravating and mitigating circumstances in this case. Mr Parsons was not exercising appropriate control and care when offered the cigarette. He is also an experienced power lifter who has represented New Zealand and is well aware of the anti-doping regime. On the other hand he did not know that the cigarette had been laced with cannabis oil/hash as a result of an action of a third person.

The Tribunal thought that the aggravating and mitigating factors balanced themselves out and that in the circumstances four months suspension (starting from the date of his provisional suspension on 4 December 2012) was appropriate.

The decision in this case is available for download from the website of the Sports Tribunal (www.sporttribunal.org.nz). See *Drug Free Sport New Zealand v Scott Parsons* (ST 06/12). 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).