

MEDIA RELEASE

USE OF DIURETIC BY A BODYBUILDING COMPETITOR SPORTS TRIBUNAL IMPOSES PENALTY

The Sports Disputes Tribunal of New Zealand has handed down its latest decision involving anti-doping cases.

The most recent incident involved the diuretic Furosemide for which the athlete Annette Sloop tested positive at the North Island Bodybuilding Championships in Auckland on 10 July 2004. Diuretics are on the World Anti-Doping Authority (WADA) banned list, not because they are performance-enhancing but because they can be used as masking agents.

The Tribunal observed that although the case against Annette Sloop did not involve allegations that she used a performance-enhancing drug, it was nevertheless accepted by her that she had used a drug on the banned list. The athlete explained to the Tribunal that she was not aware that the diuretic was on the list and she had not used it for any enhancement purposes but rather to manage a fluid retention problem from which she was suffering prior to the championships.

The Tribunal's decision notes that Annette Sloop was strongly critical of herself over the incident and was embarrassed by it. She had apologised to the sport and its administrators and she accepted her transgression. She made an early decision not to compete in the National Championships nor in any other event pending the outcome of the Tribunal's deliberations.

At a hearing before the Tribunal, Ms Sloop put forward a full explanation of the circumstances surrounding her conduct. The Tribunal acknowledged the credit to which the athlete was entitled by reason of her acceptance of the test and acknowledgment of her breach.

The Tribunal emphasised that while sports administrators must take all steps available to bring banned substances documentation to the attention of athletes, it was ultimately the athlete's responsibility to control and manage what was in their body and to ensure that no banned substances were present.

The Tribunal banned the athlete from competing in any NZFBB or International Federation of Bodybuilding competitions for two years commencing 10 July 2004.

For further information, contact Brent Ellis, Registrar, Sports Disputes Tribunal of New Zealand (telephone 0800 55 66 80).