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Sports Tribunal decides rodeo dispute involving eligibility for “New Zealand All Round Rookie of the Year” award

The Sports Tribunal has decided a sports-related dispute referred by agreement of the parties concerning eligibility for the New Zealand Rodeo and Cowboys Association’s “All Round Rookie of the Year” award.

The Tribunal decided that Klay Lanigan, who was Second Division in some rodeo events but had achieved Open status in other rodeo events in a previous season and held an Open card at the start of the season, was not eligible for the All Round Rookie of the Year award.

The Association’s Rules stated that “The only contestant eligible for this award shall be a Second Division contestant at the start of the season.” In 2004, a remit qualifying this was passed and ratified which included a rule stating: “The only contestants eligible for this award shall be Second Division Cardholders at the start of the season.” This remit had not been included in the current published Rules (2012). While the Association regretted that this rule hadn’t been included in the published Rules, it said that didn’t affect the validity of the rule which had been applied in previous years.

The Tribunal stated that in 2004 a valid remit was passed and subsequently ratified which limited participation in the All Round Rookie of the Year award to a contestant holding a Second Division card. The fact that the remit was not accurately published in 2012 did not affect the validity of the rule. It was accordingly a valid and applicable rule that had been applied by the Association over the succeeding years.

The Tribunal therefore concluded that Mr Lanigan, as an Open card holder at the start of the season, did not qualify for the award.

The Tribunal also stated that:

It is to the credit of both parties that they have responsibly agreed to have this question referred to, and determined by, the Sports Tribunal. It is also to the credit of both parties that the issue has been dealt with between the parties and before the Tribunal as an issue of principled interpretation. The Association has readily accepted, throughout the dealings over this issue, the talent and achievements which Mr Klay Lanigan (who is Mr and Mrs Lanigan’s son) has brought to the sport of rodeo.