SPORTS TRIBUNAL
of New Zealand

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Proposed 2027 Sports Tribunal Rules: Summary of changes and questions

The Sports Tribunal of New Zealand has reviewed its 2024 Rules and is now seeking public feedback on the proposed changes ahead of the new 2027 Rules taking effect from 1 January 2027.

The Tribunal considers most of the proposed amendments are **minor drafting changes** intended to make the Rules clearer, simpler and easier to use. These include modernising terminology, removing outdated wording, and improving consistency throughout the Rules.

The principal substantive changes are summarised below.

1. Anti-doping proceedings: Part B

Part B of the 2027 Rules has been revised to reflect the anti-doping framework applying from 1 January 2027, including the 2027 WADA Code and 2027 Sports Anti-Doping Rules.

The main amendment has been the change to the process required by the 2027 WADA Code where provisional suspensions can now be imposed by the Commission with the Athlete having the ability to apply to the Tribunal to have a provisional suspension lifted in accordance with the Sports Anti-Doping Rules.

Further amendments update and modernise terminology and procedures to reflect current practice, such as revising the provisions relating to the commencement and service of anti-doping proceedings and participation by respondents.

Reason for change: *The amendments are required to ensure the Tribunal's procedures comply with and implement the anti-doping framework applying from 1 January 2027.*

2. Challenges to Tribunal panel members

A new provision expressly allows a party to challenge the appointment of a Tribunal member on conflict of interest grounds. It provides a seven-day period for bringing a challenge after the grounds become known and identifies the principles that will guide its determination, including the IBA Guidelines on Conflicts of Interest in International Arbitration and the High Court Recusal Guidelines.

Reason for change: *This new provision formalises a process for parties to raise conflict of interest concerns, reflecting matters that the Tribunal already actively monitors and manages.*

3. Privacy and publication of decisions

The Rules concerning privacy and publication have been clarified. Proceedings under Parts C, D and E of the 2027 Rules are expressly private and confidential, subject to the Tribunal's ability to direct a public hearing in appropriate circumstances. The Rules also expressly provide for the Tribunal to redact or anonymise decisions before publication where appropriate.

Reason for change: *To make the Rules relating to privacy and publication clearer and easier for parties to understand.*

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4. Recording and transcription of proceedings

The Rules now set out more clearly when Tribunal proceedings will be recorded and how recordings and transcripts may be used. Virtual substantive hearings will generally be video recorded, while pre-hearing conferences will not. The Rules also expressly allow the Tribunal to use AI or other automated transcription technology for its own purposes and make clear that an AI-generated transcript is not an authoritative record. They also clarify when recordings or transcripts may be released and how long substantive hearing recordings are retained.

Reason for change: *These changes ensure the Rules better reflect the Tribunal's current practice for recording and transcribing proceedings, while making parties' rights clearer.*

5. Other procedural and drafting changes

A range of smaller amendments are proposed throughout the Rules which are intended to improve the clarity, accessibility and practical operation of the Rules rather than alter the substance of the Tribunal's existing procedures.

Please note: The numbering of the draft 2027 Rules, including internal cross-references, has not yet been finalised. Numbering will be reviewed and corrected once consultation has concluded and the final form of the 2027 Rules and Forms settled.

Questions

The Tribunal welcomes feedback on any aspect of the proposed 2027 Rules set out above. In particular, the Tribunal would welcome views on the following questions:

1. Numbering of Tribunal Forms

The draft proposes renumbering the Tribunal's Forms so that they follow a more logical sequence corresponding with Parts B to E of the Rules. The proposed Form numbering is shown on the final page of the 2027 Rules.

Question 1: Do you support the proposed renumbering of the Forms? If not, is there another approach you would prefer?

2. Bias as a ground of appeal in selection disputes

Rule 53(g)(iii) currently provides, as one of the additional grounds of appeal in a selection dispute, that *"the selection decision was affected by actual bias"*.

The Tribunal considers that limiting this ground to **actual bias** may now be somewhat out of step with New Zealand law, which recognises both actual and apparent bias. **Please note: No change to this provision is proposed as part of the 2027 Rules.** However, the Tribunal is seeking views to help inform a future review of this rule.

Question 2: Should rule 53(g)(iii) be reviewed in the future to expressly recognise both actual and apparent bias? Are there any other considerations the Tribunal should take into account when reviewing this provision?

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3. Future review of the Tribunal Rules

This review has primarily focused on modernising and simplifying the Rules and making the changes required for the 2027 anti-doping framework.

Question 3: Are there any other Rules, procedures or aspects of the Tribunal's processes that you consider should be reviewed or modernised as part of a future review? If so, please tell us which provisions you think should be considered and why.

Feedback due 5pm, Tuesday 24 November 2026

Thank you for taking the time to consider the proposed 2027 Rules. The Tribunal welcomes your feedback on any aspect of the proposed Rules, including the specific questions outlined above.

Please send any comments or submissions to info@sportstribunal.org.nz by **5pm on Tuesday, 24 November 2026.**