



Press Release

I.J. Visagie Ruling

The IRB Anti-Doping Advisory Committee (IRB Advisory Committee) has unanimously decided that the case concerning I.J. (Cobus) Visagie should not be referred to a Board Appeal Committee for further consideration and as a consequence the player remains eligible to continue playing.

Last October a Disciplinary Tribunal ruled that Visagie had contravened the anti-doping procedures of both the IRB and the South African Rugby Football Union (SARFU). Subsequently a SARFU Drugs Appeal Committee upheld Visagie's appeal by a majority of 2 to 1, having considered that there were irregularities in the laboratory analytical/testing procedure.

It is as a result of these irregularities that the IRB Advisory Committee decided not to refer the case for further consideration. However, the SARFU Appeal Committee had also expressed some concern in relation to the so called 'Nandrolone Controversy'. The IRB Advisory Committee specifically addressed this issue in its decision.

The IRB Advisory Committee reaffirmed the application of the strict liability principles in relation to Doping Offences and reconfirmed that the mere presence of a Prohibited Substance in a player's urine constitutes a Doping Offence.

With regard to Nandrolone, in particular the IRB Advisory Committee reaffirmed its satisfaction with the approach adopted by the IOC, the reporting policy of which requires laboratories to issue an adverse report if concentration of the metabolite 19-Norantosterone is in excess of the prescribed limit of 2ng/ml. This IOC recommendation will continue to be IRB Board policy and applied strictly.

The IRB Regulations are based on the IOC Anti-Doping Code and are designed to promote consistency and to facilitate a coherent world wide Rugby specific Anti-Doping Programme, applicable to all players at all levels of the Game. The intention is to provide that each rugby player undergoing a drug test anywhere in the world, is subjected to the same Regulations, List of Prohibited Substances, procedures and guidelines.

Even though the SARFU Regulations were described as "complementary" in this case, unnecessary and avoidable arguments arose as a result of differences between IRB Regulations and those adopted by SARFU. In future this should be avoided and the IRB Advisory Committee has reminded Unions of their obligation to comply with IRB Anti-Doping Regulations, procedures and guidelines.

Full details of the decision can be found on the IRB Website www.irb.org.