

Notes of the USNZ Disciplinary Committee Hearing

Held at Midday on Thursday 17 April 2008

At the NZU Games Headquarters, Novotel Hotel, Rotorua

Committee:	Hamish Hopkinson Geoff Simons Kathryn Prescott	- USNZ President (Chair) - HQ volunteer and former Games Manager - Australian University Sport volunteer
Defendant:	Massey Albany Ultimate Frisbee Team – represented by Team Manager Adele Adamson	
Complainant:	Melita Martorana, AUT Team Manager	

The Complaint

1. The AUT complaint alleged that during an Ultimate Frisbee competition game between Massey Albany and Auckland on Wednesday 16 April that alcohol was consumed during and on the field of play. This, they complained, is against the USNZ 'code of conduct' and therefore both teams should be disqualified from the competition.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. The following course of events was conveyed by Jeremy Snook, the Competition Manager for Ultimate Frisbee, via email:
 - a. Massey Albany and Auckland University were competing in the final round of the day. Auckland was coming first in the competition and were taking the competition seriously. Massey Albany was coming last and were not so serious.
 - b. Jeremy saw Massey Albany bring a keg onto the field at the start of the final game of the day.
 - c. Jeremy warned them that USNZ would not be happy and that this was not allowed and that they would be in big trouble if it was found out. A tarpaulin was used to cover the keg.
 - d. Jeremy took no further action at that point citing that it was the last game of the day, the lack of spectators and the noted that the field was obscured from the road. Jeremy left the game to attend to others.
 - e. When Jeremy looked back over he noticed that the Massey Albany players had taped bottles (of Scrumpy) to their hands and were playing one handed. Jeremy did not notice any Auckland players doing this at that time.
 - f. At some point later in the game the Auckland players also started to drink.
 - g. Late in the game there was 'more silliness' when Jeremy noticed players playing without their shirts on and throwing mud at each other while the rest were 'just generally being silly.' Jeremy told them to stop throwing mud and they did.
3. The Chair noted that a similar incident happened at the 2007 Games – as witnessed by himself. The situation was dealt with informally, the alcohol removed from the field and the team manager was informed. It was also noted that when this happened the largest funder of the 2007 Uni Games witnessed it. The events this year were witnessed by the key stakeholders in the 2009 Uni Games who had travelled up from Taranaki.

RESPONSE AND DEFENCE

4. It was noted that Adele had been a **member** of the Disciplinary Committee the day before on a separate matter.
5. It was understood that the 'game of scrumpy hands' was when players taped bottles of Scrumpy (cider and refilled with beer) to their hands while competing in the competition one-handed. If players drop the frisbee they are required to skull a portion of the bottle.
6. It was pointed out that an image of Team Albany 'playing scrumpy hands' in 2007 was used in the 2008 NZU Games handbook. It was suggested to the Committee that this created a tacit endorsement/acceptance of the activity/behaviour by USNZ. The Chair rejected this argument and pointed out that only those who recognised the photo (namely Team Albany members) would understand it to be a drinking game.
7. Adele talked about the internal standards set within the team this year – particularly in light of last year's events. A formal Frisbee team meeting had been held where they were firmly told off by Adele and staff. A full Team Albany meeting followed, where Adele reminded everyone of the rules and showed our disappointment of the students involved. The rest of team Albany also showed their disappointment by shunning an Ultimate team chant. Adele reported that the Ultimate team had been punished by being ostracized on a social level within the team – partly by having to share the keg with the rest of the team.
8. A short typed written letter of apology was presented to the Committee from what appeared to be the instigator of the on field drinking. Adele explained that the author wanted to attend the hearing with her. Given his attitude and demeanour Adele thought it best he did not attend. The Committee concurred as it found the letter to be insulting, rude and arrogant.
9. The Chair thanked Adele for her thoughts and asked her to leave while the Committee considered its position.

THE COMMITTEE DECISION

10. The Committee considered this to be a very serious situation – particularly in light of what occurred in 2007. What occurred was against the code of behaviour, was dangerous and was detrimental to the reputation and image of the event and students.
11. The Committee agreed on the following punishment:
 - a. The Massey Albany Ultimate Frisbee team was immediately disqualified from the 2008 Uni Games.
 - b. That Massey Albany was banned from all Ultimate Frisbee competitions within USNZ events until 30 April 2009.
 - c. USNZ to send a report to Massey Albany with the recommendation that it carries out its own investigation with the suggestion to identify the instigator(s) and take appropriate action (if required).
 - d. A letter of apology was expected from Massey Albany to USNZ with information on what internal disciplinary processes (if any) had occurred and what would be done to avoid this situation occurring again in the future.

It was noted that a separate disciplinary process and hearing would follow to deal with the involvement of Auckland University regarding the above issue.