



Notes of the USNZ Disciplinary Committee Meeting

Held at 6.30pm on Thursday 20 April 2006

At the NZU Games Headquarters, Basin Reserve, Wellington

Committee:	Jim Ellis	-	Executive Director	(Chair)
	Joey Randall	-	USNZ Executive	
	Jenny Cuthbertson	-	USNZ Executive	
	Priscilla Mint	-	Team Manager	(Massey PN)
University Reps:	Sandra Lay	-	Team Manager	(Auckland)
	Chris Thornton	-	Team Manager	(Lincoln)
	Jo Meyer	-	CDO	(Lincoln)
	Hilaire Carmody	-	Team Manager	(Otago)
	Brent Hayward	-	Team Manager	(Victoria)

1. DISCIPLINARY MATTER

- 1.1 USNZ had charged Auckland, Lincoln, Otago and Victoria Universities with breaching the NZU Games 2006 Code of Behaviour 4.1(g) – “acting in a manner which brings the event, USNZ, and/or hosts or partners into disrepute”.
- 1.2 The charge related to incidents in the penultimate race (men’s intermediate quad sculls) of the Games Rowing Regatta staged in Wanganui on Saturday 15 April 2006.
- 1.3 Four crews (Auckland, Lincoln, Otago & Victoria) were alleged to have rowed with at least 2 crew members naked throughout the course of the race.
- 1.4 The hearing would be held under the rules of the USNZ Disciplinary Policy endorsed by the USNZ Executive on 11 February 2006. The Universities were informed of the processes under which the hearing would be held and the appeal process should they wish to contest the decisions of the committee.

2. UNIVERSITY REPRESENTATION

- 2.1 The 4 Universities were all represented at the hearing and chose to put their cases collectively.
- 2.2 The Universities accepted that their crews had rowed naked as per the charge in 1.3 above.
- 2.3 The Universities offered the following in mitigation of their crews' actions:
- a) It was argued that their rowers had been encouraged to race naked by the media group from Moa Productions who had been engaged by USNZ to cover the event. Prizes had apparently been offered.
 - b) It was argued that USNZ's appointed event officials, the Wanganui Rowing Association, had after initial discussion agreed to start the race and that a white flag had been shown at the conclusion suggesting the Chief Umpire was happy with the conduct of the race.
 - c) It was suggested that USNZ's Competition Manager had been present at the start of the race and had not sought to have the race stopped or delayed. It was noted that the Competition Manager had been taking photographs at the time the race started.
 - d) It was suggested that the crews had not been instructed to put their racing kit back on by event officials.
 - e) It was suggested that some of the crews were attempting to put their kits back on when the race was started.
 - f) It was argued that by allowing the race to start USNZ was implicitly accepting the conditions under which the teams were racing.
 - g) The Universities suggested that USNZ had not complied with its own Disciplinary Policy in the manner in which the Universities were notified of the hearing and alleged breach of code of behaviour.
 - h) It was suggested that USNZ should have informed crews at the end of the regatta that the hearing would take place and that staging the hearing five days later was inequitable in so much as the rowers were not able to be present to present their own defence.
 - i) The Universities presented a joint letter highlighting the points made verbally at the hearing.
 - j) Otago University noted that the offending rowers from their University had been required to undertake work for the rowing club already as sanction for their action.
- 2.4 The Universities were thanked for attending the hearing and left the meeting at this stage.

3. COMMITTEE DECISION

- 3.1 The Disciplinary Committee considered the arguments of the Universities and noted that they had confirmed that the breach had occurred.
- 3.2 The committee were informed of the verbal complaint received by USNZ from the Regatta Secretary (Wanganui Rowing Association) during and after the race.

- 3.3 The committee noted that the coverage of the Regatta in the Wanganui Chronicle (and syndicated on several news websites) had been dominated by the incident as opposed to the rest of the rowing.
- 3.4 The committee were informed of feedback received from both the Rowing Competition Manager and the President of the NZU Rowing Council regarding the incident. The committee noted a possible conflict of interest involving the latter.
- 3.5 The Committee agreed that a breach of the Code of Behaviour rule 4.1(g) had occurred by the relevant rowing crews of Auckland, Victoria, Lincoln and Otago Universities.
- 3.6 The committee made the following comments:
- a) The committee noted that each of the competitors had signed the Code of Behaviour and had a personal responsibility to ensure that they complied with its contents.
 - b) While not accepting that incitement was an excuse for their actions, the committee acknowledged the role of the media group in encouraging crews to row naked.
 - c) It was agreed that the waving of a white flag by the Chief Umpire at the conclusion of the race was not an acceptance of the full conditions of the race, merely the technical rowing aspects.
 - d) Noting c) the committee agreed that in their opinion the race should not have been started or started with only the fully clothed crews.
 - e) The committee also noted that the regatta commentary had not been helpful in encouraging competitors to engage in other activities throughout the day.
 - f) The committee considered amending the results of both the race and the overall regatta but agreed that this option was not appropriate in this instance.
- 3.7 The committee agreed the following sanctions:
- a) USNZ be censured as the overall event organisers, for failing to provide proper commentary throughout the day of the regatta.
 - b) USNZ be instructed to improve the training of event officials to ensure that they are aware of the Code of Behaviour and its implicit rules as well as their sports specific regulations.
 - c) That USNZ ensure greater training of its competition managers to ensure they are fully aware of their responsibilities with regard to both the Code of Conduct and the Disciplinary Policy.
 - d) That USNZ censure the media group as to its future behaviour at USNZ events and to consider asking media personnel to sign a Code of Behaviour.
 - e) That each of the competitors who rowed naked (4 from each of Otago, Victoria and Auckland and 2 from Lincoln) write letters of apology to the Wanganui Rowing Association. These letters to be sent to USNZ and received no later than Monday 15 May 2006.
 - f) That the letters of apology be accompanied by a letter to the Wanganui Rowing Association from each relevant Students' Association

acknowledging and apologising for the action of their crew in the race. Letters to be sent to USNZ and received no later than Monday 15 May 2006.

- g) That each of the Students' Associations involved (AUSA, OUSA, VUWSA & LUSA) be fined \$500, with the amount being reduced to \$150 if appropriate letters received by 15 May deadline.
- h) The committee recommended that each Students' Association consider its own action against the rowers concerned noting that Otago had already undertaken this.
- i) USNZ was criticised for failing to follow its procedures correctly and strongly urged by the committee to ensure systems were in place to allow for hearings to be held immediately after the event had taken place.

4. CLOSE OF MEETING

There being no further business the Chair thanked the members for their attendance and closed the meeting at 8.00pm.