

Players Interviews To Be Stopped By ASADA

The doping investigation of the Australian National Rugby League has taken a new twist with the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority (ASADA) terminating attempts to interview Cronulla players.

NRL chief executive Dave Smith defended his organization as news of ASADA's decision broke against accusations of inaction over the investigation which has been under way for more than three months. The chief executive came under intense pressure after explosive details from a document reportedly written by the former ASADA deputy chair Dr Tricia Kavanagh in March following her independent investigation of alleged doping breaches at the Cronulla club in 2011 were published by News Ltd.

The document revealed Cronulla employed a systematic regime of peptides in the year 2011 in a program of injections, tablets and creams over a period of 11 weeks while sports scientist [Stephen Dank](#) was linked to the Sharks. The Kavanagh document quoted that club players were injected for three straight weeks and at least three players were given tablets of Humanofort, which included the WADA-banned [growth hormone IGF-1](#) and all these three players showed abnormal levels of bruising after matches. The document also details a heated discussion between former Sharks doctor David Givney, and performance manager Trent Elkin.

It seems like ASADA has lost its patience after being left frustrated in its attempts to interview a number of Cronulla players because of legal argument about what they were obliged to reveal and therefore decided to pursue the doping investigation without them, at least for the time being.

The football general manager of Cronulla, Steve Noyce, revealed their decision and admitted he was not sure of what will happen next. Noyce remarked the solicitors of ASADA advised the legal representatives of the team that they will not be proceeding with the interviews and that is all he really knows. He however remarked the investigation is still ongoing and processes are still in place and have to be correctly followed.

The Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority got the opportunity to speak to players from Cronulla a few weeks back but the meeting ended abruptly when lawyers from both parties failed to agree with the line of questioning. The fact that ASADA doesn't have the power to ban players is a big hurdle though it can advise the National Rugby League what kind of infraction notice to issue.

National Rugby League chief Dave Smith said the reports reinforce what we have said from the outset which is that these matters are serious and we are confident that ASADA will push on with

the investigation through whatever means they determine to be the best and it is worth noting that ASADA has had the Kavanagh report longer than we have and it is significant they have not been able to issue an infraction notice on the basis of that report, so there can be no suggestion that we could have acted on it independently. He also added that we are fully committed to assisting ASADA and seeing this through to the right conclusion.