

## **National Women's League Football Player Banned**

Drug Free Sport New Zealand has announced the case of a footballer banned for six months for unintentionally taking a [banned substance](#) truly suggests that athletes are required to exercise "utmost caution" with medications.

National Women's League (NWL) footballer Kelsey Kennard was banned by the New Zealand Sports Tribunal after she returned a positive sample for [Probenecid](#) last November. Kelsey was provisionally suspended without opposition on December 23 after she admitted the violation. The Football South player will be eligible to play again on June 1.

In a statement, the Sports Tribunal said the National Women's League football player had no intention of playing football for the next few months and it was because of this reason that she did not tell the doctors treating her that she was subject to the anti-doping testing regime. The statement also added Kennard also did not make inquiries about what medication she was being given. Kennard was persuaded shortly after to play football and she started training for the 2015 NWL competition. The Football South player was tested at her last NWL game of the season.

Kennard attended an Urgent Doctor's clinic On 10 September 2015 and was diagnosed with a bad case of cellulitis. The NWL footballer was administered the protocol treatment for cellulitis, which are antibiotics taken together with Probenecid for boosting the effectiveness of the antibiotics. Kennard made a return to the clinic the following two evenings and the same treatment was provided to her, including a further dose of Probenecid on each occasion.

The punishment of Kennard was reduced to six months after the Tribunal was satisfied Kennard established no significant fault to the violation. The standard suspension for the unintentional use of Probenecid is two years under the under the Sports Anti-Doping Rules 2015. The New Zealand Sports Tribunal took exceptional circumstances of the case into account, including the emergency nature of the treatment and the clear therapeutic reason for taking the substance and also said it believed Kennard when she said there was no intention to play in the National Women's League at the time she took

the substance. The Tribunal also considered the length of time Probenecid remained in her system as well as her switch from non-national level athlete to the national level between the time of taking it and the time of testing.

Graeme Steel, the Drug Free Sport NZ chief executive, remarked this case emphasized the requirement for athletes to understand the [anti-doping rules](#) around medications. Steel also added Drug Free Sport NZ stresses that athletes need to check whether a medication is prohibited in sport before they take it. The Drug Free Sport NZ chief executive added Kelsey Kennard has learned a hard lesson for not doing this and we would hope that other athletes learn from her mistake and take action to check the status of medications before they take them. He also remarked athletes could check the status of medications on the website of Drug Free Sport or by checking with their medical professional.