

Jobe Watson To Return Brownlow Medal

Essendon Football Club bedrock Jobe Watson has decided to hand his 2012 [Brownlow Medal](#) back to the Australian Football League.

Jobe remarked he does not want the specter of the club's [doping scandal](#) looming over his win. In a statement, Watson remarked he will be handing back the sport's highest individual accolade "with mixed emotions," and added it is now up to the league to decide what to do with the medal. Referring to the recent decision of a Swiss court not to hear an appeal from the Bombers deemed to have broken doping guidelines, Watson said it has been incredibly distressing for him to have people question his integrity and infer an intention to act against the spirit of the game, a spirit that is intrinsically a part of who he is. Jobe added the basic principle behind this prestigious award is to honor the fairest and best and added if there is a question in peoples' minds as to whether the 2012 award is tainted, the fairest and best thing to do is to give it back and honor the history that has gone before him. Watson added giving the award back was the only thing to do in the spirit of the Brownlow Medal.

Watson, who served a year-long suspension because of findings of the Court of Arbitration for Sport, said this decision does not change his stance that ruling of the CAS was based on "perception rather than evidence." Watson was scheduled to face the AFL Commission next week regarding his award and decided to bring an end to a a long period of speculation regarding what would become of the medal.

In a statement, the AFL's chief executive officer Gillon McLachlan acknowledged the decision of Watson. McLachlan remarked Jobe, in his own words, is honoring the history of the medal and putting the interests of the game first, and this is an honorable position for him to have taken. The AFL CEO added AFL Commission would hold its regular scheduled meeting in Melbourne next Tuesday and will consider the statement of Jobe before formally ruling on the future of the 2012 award.

New West Coast midfielder Sam Mitchell declined to comment about the possibility of becoming the official 2012 Brownlow Medalist. Mitchell finished second to Watson in the

2012 vote while playing for Hawthorn. The midfielder remarked he had not heard about the decision and therefore did not want to comment on it.

Essendon chairman Lindsay Tanner said the Australian Football League club took responsibility for placing its captain in this position. In a statement, Tanner remarked Jobe has remained unassailably dignified under the most extraordinary pressure over the past four years and added the club takes responsibility for placing Jobe in this position and unreservedly apologizes to him and his family. Tanner also commented that Jobe is a person of the highest integrity and character and has the total support and admiration of our membership, staff, executive and board and also said the [Essendon](#) family has been, and will continue to be, incredibly proud of Jobe Watson.