CAS Appeal Panel: Knighton Failed to Establish His ADRV Was Not Intentional

21 OCTOBER 2025, MONACO: The Athletics Integrity Unit today publishes the decision of the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) Panel which upheld the AIU's appeal in the case of World silver and bronze medallist, Erriyon Knighton, and imposed a four-year ban on the US sprinter after he tested positive for a metabolite of Trenbolone in an out-of-competition test in March 2024.

Trenbolone, used by athletes to enhance muscle mass and strength, is classified as an anabolic steroid on the WADA Prohibited List and is banned in and out of competition. It is also used in the US meat industry to promote muscle growth and mass in cattle.

The matter was initially heard by a sole arbitrator in the United States in June 2024, who accepted that 21-year-old Knighton had eaten contaminated oxtail purchased from a Florida restaurant capable of causing his positive test, and that he therefore bore No Fault for his violation and should serve no period of ineligibility.

The AIU and the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) both appealed the US decision, contending that the concentration of Trenbolone in meat obtained by the US Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) from the same restaurant could not have caused the concentration found in Knighton's sample and that his evidence fell "short of the required proof of source on a balance of probabilities".

The three-member CAS Panel, headed by Jacques Radoux, agreed that Knighton had not established the source of his Trenbolone finding. The Panel concluded that some of the assumptions made by Knighton's experts were "highly unlikely", and that the evidence did not show that imported meat was likely to contain Trenbolone residues at the level required to cause the finding, or that animals were injected/treated in a way that could have caused such residue levels. Therefore, whilst the contamination scenario put forward by Knighton was not "scientifically impossible", it was not "plausible" on the evidence and "certainly not more likely than not".

The Panel also found that Knighton had failed to prove a lack of intent in the absence of being able to establish source, because intentional use cannot be ruled out by: a low concentration of the substance in question; negative tests in proximity to the positive test; a lack of evidence of doping doses or of performance enhancing effect; a negative hair analysis or a negative polygraph test.

The Panel concluded that Knighton failed to rebut the assumption according to which his ADRV was intentional and imposed a four-year ban on him with credit for the period of provisional suspension he served between 12 April 2024 and 19 June 2024. The Panel also disqualified the athlete's results between 26 March 2024 and 12 April 2024, the date of his provisional suspension.

ABOUT THE ATHLETICS INTEGRITY UNIT

Link: HTTPS://WWW.ATHLETICSINTEGRITY.ORG

The Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) is the independent body created by the World Athletics that manages all integrity issues – both doping and non-doping – for the sport of athletics. The remit of the AIU includes anti-doping, the pursuit of individuals engaged in age or competition results manipulation, investigating fraudulent behaviour with regards to transfers of allegiance, and detecting other misconduct including bribery and breaches of betting rules. It is the AIU's role to drive cheats out of our sport, and to do everything within its power to support honest athletes around the world who dedicate their lives to reaching their sporting goals through dedication and hard work.

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