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## **Issued Decision**

### **Rugby Football Union and [Player Z]**

#### **Disciplinary Proceedings under Rugby Football Union Regulation 20**

This is an Issued Decision made by the Rugby Football Union ('RFU') pursuant to the Anti-Doping Rules ('ADR') of the RFU. It concerns Anti-Doping Rule Violations ('ADRVs') committed by [Player Z] contrary to the ADR and records the applicable Consequences.

Capitalised terms used in this Decision shall have the meaning given to them in the ADR unless otherwise indicated.

#### **Background and Facts**

1. The RFU is the national governing body for rugby union in England. UK Anti-Doping ('UKAD') is the National Anti-Doping Organisation in the United Kingdom. Pursuant to RFU Regulation 20, the RFU has adopted, as its own ADR, the UK Anti-Doping Rules in relation to all anti-doping activities carried out by UKAD.
2. [Player Z] is a [redacted]-year-old rugby union player at the [Club] Academy. At all material times in this matter, [Player Z] was subject to the jurisdiction of the RFU and bound to comply with the ADR. Pursuant to ADR Article 1.3.4(e), for the purposes of this case, UKAD has delegated Results Management responsibility to the RFU.
3. On 22 February 2026, a UKAD Doping Control Officer ('DCO') collected a Dried Blood Spot ('DBS') Sample from [Player Z], In-Competition, at [a venue].
4. When completing the Doping Control Form ('DCF'), [Player Z] was asked to declare any prescription/non-prescription medication or supplements that [they] had taken in the last seven days. In the declaration, [Player Z] listed ostarine.

5. On 25 February 2026, a UKAD DCO collected a urine Sample from [Player Z], Out-of-Competition, at [their] home address. Assisted by the DCO in attendance, [Player Z] split the urine Sample into two separate bottles which were given the reference numbers A8384293 (the 'A Sample') and B8384293 (the 'B Sample').
6. When completing the DCF, [Player Z] was asked to declare any prescription/non-prescription medication or supplements that [they] had taken in the last seven days. In the declaration, [they] also listed ostarine.
7. On 4 March 2026, following the declaration of ostarine on both DCFs, UKAD investigators attended [Player Z's] home. Forty-five white capsules and a bottle labelled 'ostarine' was voluntarily handed over by [Player Z] to the investigators. [Player Z] asserted to the investigators that [they] had taken ostarine for 'fat loss' reasons.
8. On 11 March 2026, [Player Z] attended an interview with UKAD. Following that interview, UKAD received two screenshot attachments via email. Those screenshots provided details of [Player Z's] bank account which included a bank transaction relating to [their] purchase of ostarine, dated 22 January 2026.
9. Both the DBS Sample and urine Samples were transported to the World Anti-Doping Agency ('WADA') accredited laboratory, the Drug Control Centre, King's College London ('the Laboratory') for analysis in accordance with the procedures set out in WADA's International Standard for Laboratories ('ISL').
10. Analysis of both the DBS A Sample and urine A Sample returned Adverse Analytical Findings ('AAFs') for the Prohibited Substance, ostarine.
11. Ostarine is prohibited under S1.2 of the 2026 WADA Prohibited List as an Other Anabolic Agent, namely a selective androgen receptor modulator ('SARM'). SARMS (such as ostarine) are non-Specified Substances that are prohibited at all times.
12. [Player Z] does not have a therapeutic use exemption ('TUE') for ostarine.

13. On 17 March 2026, following receipt of the results of the urine Sample collected on 25 February 2026, UKAD sent [Player Z] a letter (the 'First Notice Letter'). The First Notice Letter confirmed the imposition of a Provisional Suspension and formally notified [Player Z], in accordance with ADR Article 7.8.1, that [they] may have committed ADRVs pursuant to ADR Article 2.1 (Presence of a Prohibited Substance or its Metabolites or Markers in an Athlete's Sample) and ADR Article 2.2 (Use of a Prohibited Substance or Method).
14. On 1 June 2026, following receipt of the results of the DBS Sample collected on 22 February 2026, UKAD sent [Player Z] a letter (the 'Second Notice Letter'). The Second Notice Letter formally notified [Player Z], in accordance with ADR Article 7.8.1, that [they] may have committed ADRVs pursuant to ADR Articles 2.1 and 2.2.
15. [Player Z's] legal representative provided responses to both the First and Second Notice Letters. The responses outlined [Player Z's] position that while [they] accepted the ADRVs, they had not been committed intentionally. [Player Z] said that [they] had purchased the ostarine online in January 2026 ahead of trip to Spain in April 2026. [They] had taken two of the ostarine tablets each day for a period of eight days in the period preceding UKAD's two tests. [They] said [they] had taken the tablets with the sole intention of trying to lose weight because [they] felt self-conscious about [their] physique ahead of the trip which [they] expected would involve time on the beach with [their] friends. [Their] actions were not driven by any intention to gain a sporting advantage; rather, [their] sole intention was to 'slim down' ahead of the trip with friends. [They] said that this position was consistent with [them] taking the tablets at the end of [their] rugby season.
16. On 4 June 2026, UKAD issued the RFU with a Notification of Case to Answer providing the RFU with the authority to charge [Player Z] with ADRVs pursuant to ADR Articles 2.1 and 2.2, in accordance with ADR Article 7.11 and RFU Regulation 20.13.4.
17. On 20 July 2026, the RFU proceeded to issue [Player Z] with a Charge Letter in accordance with ADR Article 7.11.2. The Charge Letter asserted the commission of ADRVs pursuant to ADR Articles 2.1 and 2.2.

18. In the Charge Letter, UKAD asserted a total period of Ineligibility of four (4) years commencing on 17 March 2026 (i.e. the date the Provisional Suspension was imposed by UKAD) and expiring at 11:59pm on 16 March 2030.

**Admissions and Consequences**

19. On 7 August 2026, [Player Z] provided [their] response to the Charge Letter through [their] legal representative. [Player Z] admitted to the ADRVs charged and accepted the asserted period of Ineligibility of four (4) years.

20. ADR Article 2.1 provides that the following is an ADRV:

**2.1     *Presence of a Prohibited Substance or its Metabolites or Markers in an Athlete's Sample, unless the Athlete establishes that the presence is consistent with a TUE granted in accordance with Article 4.***

21. ADR Article 2.2 provides that the following is an ADRV:

**2.2     *Use or Attempted Use by an Athlete of a Prohibited Substance or a Prohibited Method, unless the Athlete establishes that the presence is consistent with a TUE granted in accordance with Article 4.***

22. ADR Article 10.2 provides as follows:

**10.2   *Imposition of a period of Ineligibility or the Presence, Use or Attempted Use, or Possession of a Prohibited Substance and/or a Prohibited Method.***

*The period of Ineligibility for an Anti-Doping Rule Violation under Article 2.1, 2.2 or 2.6 that is the Athlete's or other Person's first anti-doping offence shall be as follows, subject to potential elimination, reduction, or suspension pursuant to Article 10.5, 10.6 or 10.7:*

*10.2.1 Save where Article 10.2(a) applies, the period of Ineligibility shall be four (4) years where:*

*(a) The Anti-Doping Rule Violation does not involve a Specified Substance or a Specified Method, unless the Athlete or other Person can establish that the Anti-Doping Rule Violation was not intentional.*

*(b) [...]*

*10.2.2 If Article 10.2.1 does not apply, then (subject to Article 10.2.4(a)) the period of Ineligibility shall be two (2) years.*

*10.2.3 As used in Article 10.2, the term “intentional” is meant to identify those Athletes or other Persons who engage in conduct which they know constitutes an Anti-Doping Rule Violation or they know that there is a significant risk that the conduct might constitute or result in an Anti-Doping Rule Violation and they manifestly disregard that risk.*

23. In accordance with ADR Article 10.2.1(a), since this matter concerns a non-Specified Substance, the period of Ineligibility to be imposed shall be four (4) years, unless [Player Z] can establish on the balance of probabilities, that the ADRVs were not ‘intentional’ (within the meaning of ADR Article 10.2.3).

24. While [Player Z] initially asserted (in the responses to the First and Second Notice Letters) that the ADRVs were not intentional within the meaning of ADR Article 10.2.3, [they] did not seek to establish the same in [their] response to the Charge Letter.

25. Instead, [Player Z] admitted the ADRVs and accepted the asserted period of Ineligibility. Accordingly, [Player Z] has not established that the ADRVs were not ‘intentional’, and [they] are not entitled to a two (2) year period of Ineligibility pursuant to ADR Article 10.2.2, or any reduction pursuant to ADR Article 10.5 (No Fault or

Negligence) or ADR Article 10.6 (No Significant Fault or Negligence). Consequently, the period of Ineligibility under ADR Article 10.2.1(a) of four (4) years applies.

26. For the purposes of imposing a sanction, the ADRVs are considered together as a single first violation, pursuant to ADR Article 10.9.4, which states:

*10.9.4 Additional rules for certain potential multiple offences:*

*(a) For the purposes of imposing sanctions under Article 10.9, except as provided in Articles 10.9.4(b) and 10.9.4(c) an Anti-Doping Rule Violation will only be considered a second (or third, as applicable) Anti-Doping Rule Violation if UKAD can establish that the Athlete or other Person committed the additional Anti-Doping Rule Violation after they received notice, or after UKAD or its designee made a reasonable attempt to give notice, of the first (or the second, as applicable) Anti-Doping Rule Violation. Otherwise, the first and second Anti-Doping Rule Violations (or the second and third Anti-Doping Rule Violations, as applicable) shall be considered as one single first Anti-Doping Rule Violation, and the sanction imposed shall be based on the Anti-Doping Rule Violation that carries the more severe sanction, including the application of Aggravating Circumstance.*

**Application of ADR Article 10.8.1**

27. ADR Article 10.8.1 provides:

*10.8.1 One (1) year reduction for certain Anti-Doping Rule Violations based on early admission and acceptance of sanction:*

*Where UKAD sends an Athlete or other Person a Charge Letter for an Anti-Doping Rule Violation that carries an asserted period of Ineligibility of four (4) or more years (including any period of Ineligibility asserted under Article 10.4), if the Athlete or other Person admits the violation and accepts the asserted period of*

*Ineligibility no later than twenty (20) days after receiving the Charge Letter, they shall receive a one (1) year reduction in the period of Ineligibility asserted by UKAD. Where the Athlete or other Person receives the one (1) year reduction in the asserted period of Ineligibility under this Article 10.8.1, no further reduction in the asserted period of Ineligibility shall be allowed under any other Article.*

28. [Player Z] admitted the ADRVs and accepted the asserted period of Ineligibility of four (4) years on 7 August 2026 (having been sent the Charge Letter on 20 July 2026). Accordingly, ADR Article 10.8.1 applies and [Player Z] shall receive a one (1) year reduction to the period of Ineligibility of four (4) years. The period of Ineligibility to be imposed is therefore three (3) years.

#### **Commencement of period of Ineligibility**

29. ADR Article 10.13 requires that the period of Ineligibility starts on the date Ineligibility is accepted or otherwise imposed where there is no hearing.

30. However, ADR Article 10.13.2 allows for credit to be given against the total period of Ineligibility to be served where an Athlete has been provisionally suspended and has respected the terms of that Provisional Suspension.

31. [Player Z] has been subject to a Provisional Suspension since the date [they] received the First Notice Letter (17 March 2026) and, so far as the RFU are aware, [they have] respected the terms of that Provisional Suspension. Therefore, affording [Player Z] credit for the time [they have] spent provisionally suspended, [their] period of Ineligibility is deemed to have commenced on 17 March 2026 and will end at 11:59pm 16 March 2029.

#### **Status during Ineligibility**

32. During the period of Ineligibility, in accordance with ADR Article 10.14.1, [Player Z] is not permitted to participate in any capacity (or assist any Athlete participating in any capacity) in a Competition, Event or other activity (other than authorised anti-doping

education or rehabilitation programmes) organised, convened, authorised and/or recognised by:

- a) The RFU or any body that is a member of, or affiliated to, or licensed by the RFU;
- b) any Signatory;
- c) any club or other body that is a member of, or affiliated to, or licensed by, a Signatory or a Signatory's member organisation;
- d) any professional league or any international or national-level Event organisation; or
- e) any elite or national-level sporting activity funded by a governmental agency.

33. [Player Z] may return to train with a team or to use the facilities of an RFU club, or a Signatory's member organisation, during the last two (2) months of [their] period of Ineligibility (i.e., from 11:59pm on 16 January 2029) pursuant to ADR Article 10.14.4(b).

### **Summary**

34. For the reasons given above, the RFU has issued this Decision in accordance with ADR Article 7.12.2, and records that:

- a) [Player Z] has committed ADRVs pursuant to ADR Articles 2.1 and 2.2;
- b) In accordance with ADR Article 10.9.4(a), the ADRVs are considered as one single ADRV for the purposes of imposing a sanction;
- c) In accordance with ADR Article 10.8.1, [Player Z] is entitled to a one (1) year reduction to the asserted period of Ineligibility of four (4) years. A period of Ineligibility of three (3) years is therefore imposed;

d) Acknowledging [Player Z's] Provisional Suspension, the period of Ineligibility is deemed to have commenced on 17 March 2026 and will expire at 11:59pm on 16 March 2029.

35. [Player Z's] status during the period of Ineligibility shall be as detailed in ADR Article 10.14.

36. [Player Z], UKAD, World Rugby, and WADA have a right to appeal against this Decision or any part of it in accordance with ADR Article 13.4.

**27 August 2026**