

**IN THE MATTER OF PROCEEDINGS BROUGHT  
UNDER THE BETTING RULES  
OF THE DARTS REGULATION AUTHORITY**



**BETWEEN:**

**DARTS REGULATION AUTHORITY (“DRA”)**

Governing body for Darts

**-and-**

**WESSEL NIJMAN**

Respondent

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**DECISION  
OF  
THE DRA DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE**

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**INTRODUCTION**

1. The Disciplinary Committee (the Committee) of the Darts Regulation Authority (DRA) convened for a hearing on 14 October 2020 by means of a video conference to consider the sanction on Wessel Nijman (Nijman). At Nijman’s request, he was accompanied by Jacques Nieuwlaat of the Professional Darts Players Association (PDPA) who also acted as a translator when required.
2. The hearing followed Nijman’s confirming his acceptance of a breach of DRA Rules that he had fixed the result and his exact score in a match against David Evans on 14 May 2020 during a DRA regulated event of the Modus Icons of Darts series: this being a tournament promoted by Modus Sports during the Coronavirus Lockdown whereby matches were streamed online and players were paid to participate and play from home against other professionals
3. The match had generated concerns about suspicious betting patterns and, following a thorough investigation by the DRA, on 18 August 2020 Nijman was charged with a breach of Section 2.1 of the DRA Betting Rules, namely:

*2.1 It shall be a breach of these Rules for a Participant to do any of the following:*

2.1.2. *Corruption: (i) to fix or contrive, or to be a party to any effort to fix or contrive, the result, score, progress, conduct or any other aspect of the Darts Event;*

2.1.3. *Misuse of inside information: (i) to use for betting purposes, or to provide to any other person for such purposes, any information relating to the Darts Event that the Participant possesses by virtue of their position within the sport that is not in the public domain or readily accessible by the public.*

4. Nijman admitted this breach during an interview with the DRA on 17 July 2020 and by means of a subsequent written statement signed by him. In summary, he stated that he had agreed with others to fix his match against David Evans by ensuring that he did not win any legs, thus enabling others to bet with certainty on a 0:5 outcome. Nijman agreed to do this for a payment of 10,000 Euros which he was to share with an associate who acted as a go between with the corrupt bettors.

### **SANCTIONS HEARING**

5. Nijman confirmed again at the Sanction Hearing his admission to the charge and the breach of DRA Betting Rules 2.1 (as charged under 2.1.1 and 2.1.2) was recorded as found proven. Written submissions on sanction were invited from both the DRA and Nijman. The DRA had pursuant to a Directions Order of 29 September 2020 lodged Submissions on Sanction and Costs dated 2 October 2020. Nijman attended the hearing and made personal representations.
6. In determining an appropriate sanction and penalty, the Committee was cognisant of the need to protect the integrity, image, and reputation of the sport of darts. In order to achieve this, it was considered that a sanction was required that:
- be sufficient to prevent a corrupt participant engaging in the sport;
  - deterred others from engaging in such conduct;
  - demonstrated an intolerance of corruption by its investigation, discovery, and sanction; and
  - was proportionate to the seriousness of the breach and its circumstances.
7. The Committee considered that the breach amounted to the most serious misconduct by a sportsman, striking at the heart of the ethos of competitive sport, and damaging the integrity and reputation of the sport. It had also been committed for personal gain.
8. The Committee also took into account the mitigation put forward in that Nijman had made an early and full admission of the offence and that he had not been the instigator of the corrupt scheme.
9. It was noted that Nijman's associate who was not subject to the DRA Rules still retained unspent 2000 EUR, the total sum in the event ultimately received from the relevant third parties. It was also noted by the Committee that the matters relating to this charge are being considered by the relevant Dutch law enforcement authorities. It was considered that the conduct of such an investigation and the disposal of any money generated as a result of potential criminal conduct is a matter for the Dutch authorities.

## **DECISION**

10. The Committee considered that a lengthy ban was appropriate, but that there were mitigating factors (as set out in paragraph 8 above) that should also be taken into account.
11. The Committee decided that an appropriate sanction in this case was to suspend Wessel Nijman from the sport (from playing, attending or being involved in any way in any darts connected events) for a period of five years from 18 August 2020 (the date of his suspension by the Chairman of the DRA pending formal proceedings) until midnight on 17 August 2025.
12. The Committee also considered the submissions of both the DRA and Nijman in relation to Nijman's expressed desire and willingness to use his experience to educate other players. Consequently, two and a half years of the playing ban will itself be suspended on the condition that Nijman undertakes and fully engages in such player education and anti-corruption measures as set out and arranged by and agreed with the DRA and that this is completed before 31 December 2021.
13. If Nijman has complied with this condition by 31 December 2021, he will be allowed to play in and be engaged in darts events from 18 February 2023 onwards. Should he not do so, the suspension will remain in place until 17 August 2025. This issue will be further considered and determined by the Committee on or shortly after 31 December 2021.
14. Additionally, Nijman was ordered to pay costs in the sum of £2,455.74. These costs to be paid by 31 December 2021.

## **SUMMARY**

15. Nijman found to have breached Rule 2.1 of the DRA Betting Rules.
16. Nijman suspended from playing or being engaged or involved in any darts activities until midnight on 17 August 2025, such suspension itself suspended for the period from 18 February 2023 provided he (i) undertakes by 31 December 2021 player education measures as identified by and agreed with the DRA and (ii) does not commit further breaches of the DRA Rules in the period up to 17 August 2025; and
17. Costs payable to the DRA in the sum of £2,455.74 by 31 December 2021.

**Tim Ollerenshaw, Chair**  
**Richard Gardner**  
**David Jones**

27 October 2020