



# HAMILTON BOYS' HIGH SCHOOL

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New Zealand

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Mr Bruce Tong (Chair)  
Schools' Committee  
New Zealand Secondary Schools Rowing Association

26 July 2023

Dear Mr Chairman,

## **APOLOGY FROM HAMILTON BOYS HIGH SCHOOL FOR BREACHES OF NZSSRA RULES AND REGULATIONS**

I write in relation to the recent proceedings, instigated by the New Zealand Secondary Schools Rowing Association (**NZSSRA**), against Hamilton Boys High School (**HBHS**), in relation to breaches of NZSSRA rules and regulations pertaining to the entry of rowers in various schools' regattas in the period 2020 to 2023.

HBHS fully acknowledges that incorrect entries into regattas were made during this time. Specifically, that two novice rowers rowed in place of the rowers entered by the School in the 2021 Maadi Cup and the 2022 North Island Secondary School Rowing Championships without any substitutions being made. Those failures amounted to clear breaches of NZSSRA rules and regulations.

HBHS also acknowledges that those breaches were compounded when the two rowers in question were subsequently entered as "novice" rowers in the 2022 North Island Secondary School Rowing Championships, the 2022 Maadi Cup and the 2023 North Island Secondary School Rowing Championships, when they had, in fact, already rowed in the previous year. Again, it is acknowledged that the entry and rowing of those rowers as 'novices' amounted to further breaches of NZSSRA rules and regulations.

All up, HBHS acknowledges that the actions as described above amounted to 17 breaches of NZSSRA rules and regulations, including for failure to enter the correct rowers, false declarations, failure to substitute rowers, and the rowing of ineligible rowers.

We were devastated to learn of the breaches and apologise unreservedly to all the schools participating in the regattas involved. Our rowing programme has grown significantly in recent years, and we clearly did not have sufficient systems in place to make sure such breaches do not occur. These breaches also occurred during the COVID period, which exacerbated the problem. We deeply regret the impact this has had on the students at other schools and can assure everyone that we are making significant changes to our rowing programme to make sure it never happens again.

The breaches do not reflect the school's approach to sport, and were, regrettably, the result of very poor judgment by one person in our rowing programme. At no point in time did the school deliberately set out to breach NZSSRA's rules and regulations. The staff member concerned was at all times trying to provide opportunities for boys to row – including during the very difficult period when regattas were significantly impacted by COVID-19. However, that is not an excuse for the breaches. It is not acceptable that any school, and in particular one with such a strong rowing heritage at HBHS, breaches the rules in this way. We are sorry that we did not do better as the NZSSRA and our fellow schools are entitled to expect from us.

Moving forward we are making changes to our rowing programme to ensure that breaches of this kind do not occur again. To start with, we are going to have less crews and rowers compete, so that the administrative burden on our coaching and administrative staff is reduced. In addition, we are now going to require multiple layers of sign-off for crew entry, and substitution, instead of leaving that as effectively the responsibility of one person. We hope that these changes are seen for what they are, a genuine and committed effort to ensure that mistakes of the kind made are not repeated.

Finally, let me close by once again apologising to NZSSRA, our fellow member schools and to all the students impacted by these breaches, for what occurred.

Yours Faithfully

Susan Hassall  
Headmaster, Hamilton Boys High School