

## Coates Wants Sweeping Anti-Doping Powers

The Olympic Chief of Australia wants the anti-doping body of the country to be given sweeping powers for forcing witnesses to give evidence in its fight against drug use in sport.

ASADA, the national anti-doping agency, came into action after former Olympic cyclist Matt White admitted involvement in the Lance Armstrong doping scandal. The life ban on the Texan rider relied on testimony from fellow riders in the absence of positive drug tests and national Olympic chief John Coates said the government should again consider strengthening the powers of ASADA for investigating allegations of doping practices. He added that the Australian Anti-doping Agency should have the power to compel witnesses to attend and give evidence and to produce documents relevant to such investigations.

President of the Australian Olympic Committee (AOC), Coates wrote his recommendations in a letter to Sport Minister Kate Lundy while responding to comments made by Lundy in which she said ASADA were "constantly improving their techniques" in the battle against substance abuse in sport. The call of Coates came as Australian Anti-doping Agency announced closer working ties with the Australian Crime Commission (ACC) for clamping down on doping cheats with greater efficiency and speed. The ASAD chief has been pushing for greater authority for investigators to get evidence since before the 2000 Sydney Olympics and remarked that many allegations of ADRVs (anti-doping rule violations) cannot be properly investigated and prosecuted without the power to compel the giving of oral and documentary evidence.

White said he had been part of a doping culture when he rode for the U.S. Postal Service team of [Lance Armstrong](#) from 2001 to 2003. Investigations into Armstrong was given a major boost by an initial federal grand jury probe that lasted for a period of two years and USADA pursued allegations of doping even after Armstrong was cleared of criminal charges in February. The anti-doping agency accused the 41-year-old Armstrong of being at the heart of the most sophisticated, professionalized and successful doping program ever seen in sport and the cyclist has always denied doping but decided not to fight the charges. ASAD officials revealed that they were aware of allegations made against White in 2010 by American cyclist Floyd Landis but were unable to probe the accusations until now due to a U.S. federal investigation and the subsequent USADA inquiry. The Australian Anti-doping Agency said it would be seeking further information from USADA and Cycling Australia and ASADA has a duty to be both thorough and accurate in its investigation.

Meanwhile, Betsy Andreu, the wife of Armstrong's teammate Frankie Andreu, labeled Armstrong as the 'Bernie Madoff of the sporting world' after the 41-year-old Texan rider was told to pay back every penny of prize money he won while using performance enhancing drugs. In another development, three-time Tour winner Greg LeMond is among those to call for a change of leadership at the governing body of cycling though president Pat McQuaid and his predecessor Hein Verbruggen, now honorary president, have stood firm. The UCI has come under intense criticism and scrutiny before and since the publication of USADA report that concluded Armstrong and his United States Postal Service team ran 'the most sophisticated, professionalised and successful doping programme that sport has ever seen'.