

South Africa's Foremost Cyclist Delivers Positive Test

David George, one of South Africa's foremost cyclists, has tested positive for the banned drug [Erythropoietin](#) (EPO) and will now face a charge of doping.

The South African Institute for Drug-Free Sport (SAIDS) chief executive, Khalid Galant said the blood test of George showed suspicious activity with regard to possible manipulation of the blood profile and a subsequent urine test came back positive for EPO. Gallant added that EPO testing gives a window of between six and 12 hours for testing and George's biological passport, which analyses the athlete's blood profile, indicated suspicious activity.

EPO artificially increases the red blood cell count and therefore increases the oxygen carrying capacity of the body and enhances performance and is extremely useful in endurance sports where athletes are competing over long distances in sports like cycling, running, and triathlon.

The cyclist admitted to doping and said he would not challenge the test by asking for the B sample to be tested. The cyclist, as a result of the finding, received a provisional suspension with immediate effect from competing in any event and the South African Institute for Drug-Free Sport will subject him to an independent tribunal to investigate the doping charge. The South African cyclist has a long record of achievement in local cycling circles after competing in three Olympics and finishing on the podium at the 2012 Absa Cape Epic.

William Newman, president of Cycling South Africa said the independence of the SAIDS process is respected by Cycling South Africa and the outcome will be respected and added that Cycling South Africa further reiterates its zero tolerance to doping in sport and confirms that there is no evidence of this being a problem in the sport in South Africa.

The suspension of George prompted Nedbank to immediately announce the suspension of Team 360Life - its sponsored professional cycling team. Tabby Tsengiwe of the bank's group communications said Nedbank has a zero tolerance towards the use of any banned substances or performance enhancing drugs and does not condone or support such use in any sport.

The cyclist teamed up with disgraced cycling icon Lance Armstrong when he competed for the US Postal Service cycling team between 1999 and 2000.

After the admission by George, Supplement supplier USN, one of SA's biggest cycling sponsors, announced that they had terminated their relationship with David George. The sponsor said USN has a zero tolerance policy on doping in sport and the commitment of the company can be measured from the fact that it only supplies its elite and professional ambassadors with products that have been certified as being free of prohibited substances on the World Anti-doping Association (WADA) list by HFL Sport Science in the United Kingdom. Meanwhile, organizers of the [ABSA Cape Epic](#) have confirmed that they will be consulting their lawyers and stakeholders to find out what steps to take against the top SA rider and former African Jersey winner, David George. Race founder Kevin Vermaak said the Absa Cape Epic will determine the appropriate steps to take with regards to George's titles and prize money that amounted to R142 500.