

Lifetime Bans For Doping Imposed By Cape Epic

In the wake of the first high-profile doping case in South African mountain biking, the Absa Cape Epic is tightening its rules regarding anti-doping by introducing a lifetime ban for future offenders.

Race founder Kevin Vermaak said any athlete (professional or amateur) as of January 1, 2013 caught using performance enhancing substances, whether at another event or out of competition, will be banned for life from participating in the Cape Epic. Vermaak added that the athletes found doping will not only be stopped from participating (as an amateur rider or UCI-licensed elite), but the individual will also be banned from being involved on any level including as a team manager. He went on to add that this is harsher than what is required currently by any federation, but is our considered opinion of what should be enforced even on a wider scale with regards to event participation of convicted dope cheats.

The South African Institute for Drug-Free Sport (SAIDS) in November made an announcement that top cyclist and Cape Epic contender, [David George](#), had tested positive for the banned drug, EPO (Erythropoietin) and would face a charge of doping at an independent tribunal. The cyclist was officially given a ban of two years and he has been prohibited from cycling professionally for this time period. It was indicated by the SAIDS that only results dating back to August 29 this year can be erased, which means that the 2012 Cape Epic results of David George will remain unaffected. George has finished in second place overall in this year's Cape Epic with his riding partner Kevin Evans that was George's best performance in the event to date. The South African cyclist has also won the African Jersey at the Cape Epic three times (2008, 2009, and 2012) and, together with Evans, was a strong contender to be the first all South African team to win the race next year.

The race founder of the [Absa Cape Epic](#) also remarked that we have chosen not to apply this retrospectively because we believe that would be naive. He said cycling has a dark past as has been exposed in the recent months and many riders from the previous era has rediscovered the joy associated with cycling as mountain bikers and participate in the Cape Epic as their expression of riding clean. Vermaak further added that previous offenders, who have served their suspension term, may ride future Cape Epics and we want to a part of the new era of cleaner cycling, and therefore only future offenders will receive the lifetime bans. He also remarked that the Cape Epic has invested more than R800,000 into its anti-doping program at the race since it was awarded UCI HC status and to date have only recorded one positive in-competition test at the event by an amateur. The positive test delivered came from amateur cyclist Wayne Collin, who tested positive for the anabolic agent Boldenone and a diuretic Hydrochlorothiazide in the most recent edition. The cyclist is set to appear before the SAIDS tribunal on January 24, 2013.