

Sanction On Bassons Dropped From One Year To One Month

Cyclist Christophe Bassons who was banned for one year after he missed a post-race control in the French mountain bike marathon championships has a sigh of relief after the ban was reduced on appeal to just one month. However, the 38-year-old rider said he will fight on and seek to have the sanction overturned on a point of principle.

Bassons remarked that he was hypoglycemic at 25 kilometers from the finish and missed the last refuelling point and had nothing to eat. He further added that his car was not parked far from there as he had ridden the last twenty kilometers the previous day and therefore he decided to leave. The cyclist said he received a phone call two hours later saying that he had been selected for a post-race doping control and he had half an hour to return for the test and remarked that he was already too far away. Bassons added that the communication was going badly and the person on the phone calling for the test never heard his answer. He therefore decided to stop on the highway and called back with his professional phone as his personal phone's battery was empty but he was unable to reach him. As a result, Bassons was given a ban of one year and protested that the organizers should have contacted him much earlier than they did; the cyclist also objected to the severity of the punishment.

Though the sanction was reduced dramatically, the cyclist while accepting that he made a mistake said the reduction of the ban by the [French cycling federation](#) (FFC) is an admission of sorts that he was not guilty of an offense. Christophe Bassons is also emphasizing on clearing his name for another reason. He spoke against doping thirteen years ago in the 1999 Tour de France and was bullied off the race by [Lance Armstrong](#) and others. Bassons had a reputation as a clean rider but he was marginalized and his career eventually petered out because of his stance on doping. His stance was recognized in November 2012 by Sports Illustrated writer Alexander Wolff who said that the stance had assumed a new and important significance in the light of the Lance Armstrong doping scandal and named Bassons as his own nomination for Sports Illustrated Sportsman of the Year. Wolff said the example of Christophe Bassons is good for cycling and he is my Sportsman of the Year for his courage, principle, and symbolism.

Armstrong was banned by the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency after swearing testimonies from 11 of his former teammates that he used and encouraged the use of performance enhancing drugs to stay on top of cycling.

Bassons said the federation may have reduced the sentence from one year to one month, but this sanction remains completely absurd in principle. He added that he will be making an appeal to the administrative court and will counter attack. Between 1996 and 2001, cyclist Christophe Bassons raced as a professional and was part of the Festina team between 1996 and 1998, and was named by many on the team as being the one rider who never took banned substances.