

Ex-UCI Head Says Riders Were Warned

The world governing body of cycling warned Lance Armstrong and other riders when they came close to testing positive for performance enhancing drugs, according to the former President of UCI, [Hein Verbruggen](#).

Verbruggen, in an interview with the Dutch magazine Vrij Nederland published on Wednesday, said dozens of the top riders and team managers were invited to the headquarters of the UCI in Aigle "one by one", where the chief doctor of the cycling body, Mario Zorzoli, gave them presentations on its anti-doping strategy and information about suspect values. The former UCI President this was part of a conscious strategy to try to reduce doping.

Verbruggen justified his defense of Armstrong during his tenure despite the fact that the world governing body of cycling warned him about his red blood cell values being suspect. He further added that he is not responsible if a cyclist is tested 215 times and he is always negative and the problem lies in the test itself.

The Australian anti-doping expert instrumental in developing the biological passport for the UCI between 2008 and 2012 before he resigned, [Michael Ashenden](#), remarked he was not aware of any other international federation pursuing a similar strategy.

The World Anti-Doping Agency and the United States Anti-Doping Agency have refused to cooperate with the independent commission set up by the UCI to look into claims that the governing body covered up a positive drug test in 2001 in return for a donation of \$125,000 from Lance Armstrong. Meanwhile, Brian Cookson, the president of British Cycling, has remarked that he is fully supportive of UCI president Pat McQuaid who since his election in 2005 has done an impressive job in frequently difficult circumstances and added that it is absolutely vital for the future of our sport that we all remain united.

Verbruggen, who is still an honorary president of the UCI, and his successor, Pat McQuaid, have been under intense pressure ever since the Lance Armstrong doping scandal wherein the disgraced cyclist was stripped of his seven Tour de France victories and admitted doping throughout each of them. A lifetime ban was imposed on the cycling icon by the UCI after the United States Anti-Doping Agency submitted its reasoned decision that was supported by the testimony of many of Armstrong's former teammates (Frankie Andreu, Michael Barry, Tom Danielson, Tyler Hamilton, George Hincapie, Floyd Landis, Levi Leipheimer, Stephen Swart, Christian Vande Velde, Jonathan Vaughters, and David Zabriskie).

The evidence brought forward by USADA included direct documentary evidence including financial payments, emails, scientific data, and laboratory test results that proved the use, possession and distribution of performance enhancing drugs by Lance Armstrong and confirmed the deceptive activities of the USPS Team.

After this, Lance Armstrong and two other members of the USPS Team, Dr. Michele Ferrari and Dr. Garcia del Moral, also received lifetime bans for perpetrating this doping conspiracy while three other

members of the USPS Team (Johan Bruyneel, the team director; Dr. Pedro Celaya, a team doctor; and Jose "Pepe" Marti, the team trainer) decided to contest the charges and take their cases.