

Disgraced Cyclist Faces Possible Criminal Case In Spain

American former professional road racing cyclist Lance Armstrong is being investigated for possible criminal charges in Spain.

According to sources in the United States and Spain, the investigation relates to the doping activities of the disgraced cyclist who was accused by the [United States Anti-Doping Agency](#) of enforcing "the most sophisticated, professionalized and successful doping program that sport has ever seen."

It is believed the crimes may have been committed in Spain, a country often accused of being soft on doping, and they are under investigation to decide if charges should be brought by the winner of the seven consecutive Tour de France titles and Spanish associates who worked with him on the U.S. Postal Service cycling team. The investigation is ongoing in multiple regions of Spain -- Alicante, Valencia, Girona, and Tenerife and is described as being in a "very active and sensitive" phase.

The cyclist was a resident of Girona, Spain, for many years during his reign as the Tour de France champion. He lived in Spain with the singer Sheryl Crow in 2004 and his former teammate, Floyd Landis, said during that period he babysat the cyclist's "blood fridge" in Spain to make sure the temperature remained constant when the Texan rider traveled out of town with the singer.

Spanish laws don't make it a crime for athletes to use performance enhancing drugs for personal use though they be fined and their licenses may get suspended in some cases. However, the cyclist may get into bigger trouble if investigators can prove trafficking, distribution, and commercialization of doping drugs that carry a prison term of two years and fines of as much as 400,000 euros.

[Lance Edward Armstrong](#) had won the Tour de France a record seven consecutive times between 1999 and 2005 but was later disqualified from those races and received a lifetime ban from cycling for doping offenses. The cyclist was diagnosed with testicular cancer in October 1996 that had spread to his brain and lungs and was declared cancer-free in February 1997 after undergoing cancer treatments including brain and testicular surgery and extensive chemotherapy. The 41-year-old rider was a member of the US Postal/Discovery team between 1998 and 2005 and retired from racing at the end of the 2005 Tour de France, but returned to competitive cycling with the Astana team in January 2009.

In 1992, he began his career as a professional cyclist with the Motorola team and his breakthrough victory was the 1993 UCI Road World Championship held in Norway. Lance Armstrong became the first American to win the La Flèche Wallonne and finished 6th in the time trial and 12th in the road race in the 1996 Olympic Games. The American cyclist announced his retirement from competitive cycling on February 16, 2011, while still facing a US federal investigation into doping allegations. After denying doping allegations for a big part of his career, Lance Armstrong admitted to using drugs throughout his career and said he used EPO, blood transfusions, and testosterone but remarked he stopped doping for his 2009 and 2010 comeback Tour de France rides.