

## **Australian Cycling Legend Admits To Doping**

[Stuart O'Grady](#) has admitted to using banned blood-booster EPO before the 1998 Tour de France. Confession by the Australian cycling great comes just a few days after the 39-year-old Olympian and 17-time Tour rider announced his retirement from the sport, a day after completing a 17th Tour de France.

The 39-year-old equaled the record of American George Hincapie of 17 appearances in the [Grande Boucle](#), the most prestigious cycling race in the world. At the time of announcing his retirement, the Orica-GreenEdge rider said he has always wanted his career to end with something truly special and this year's Tour de France has given me that.

O'Grady won four Olympic track cycling medals from 1992 to 2004, including gold in the Madison in Athens. O'Grady also won Paris-Roubaix in 2007 and claimed victory in four Tour de France stages (including two individual stages and two team time trials) wearing the yellow jersey for three days in 1998 and six days in 2001, while winning the Tour Down Under in his homeland in 1999 and 2001.

The Australian cyclist admitted that he made a decision leading into the 1998 Tour de France and sourced EPO himself. He added that there was no one else involved and the team was not involved in any way and remarked he just had to drive over the border and purchase EPO at any pharmacy.

The Australian Olympic Committee (AOC) has called for O'Grady to resign from its Athletes' Commission since the news broke. The AOC released a statement in which it was confirmed that O'Grady has been asked to resign from the Athletes' Commission. OC President John Coates said members of our London Olympic Team who elected Stuart to the Athletes' Commission are entitled to be angry knowing they had supported an athlete who had cheated. Coates added that members of the athletes' commission are chosen for their qualities of integrity and leadership and by his admission Stuart does not deserve to be a member of that group. The AOC President added that there was no excuse for O'Grady's actions and the 1998 Tour was a shameful period for the sport of cycling which has been well documented, that is no excuse for the decision taken by Stuart O'Grady, and one can only hope that cycling and especially the Tour de France is cleaner as a result of today's revelations and the Lance Armstrong saga.

The former track cyclist who won medals at three Olympics took the first of his four career Tour stage wins in 1998 in a race that was overshadowed by the Festina doping scandal. O'Grady was

recently named in a French Senate inquiry into sports doping which looked at the 1998 Tour and found the top three finishers, Italian Marco Pantani, Germany's Jan Ullrich, and American Bobby Julich, were taking EPO.

Meanwhile, O'Grady's most recent team, Orica GreenEDGE, has released a statement supporting his decision, saying that one mistake should not tarnish an exceptional career. General manager Shayne Bannan remarked ORICA-GreenEDGE supports Stuart O'Grady's decision to step forward and place the findings of the French Senate Report of today into perspective regarding his own past and added that like the majority of the riders in his generation, he was also exposed to the issues and wrongdoings of the sport and made some wrong choices in that environment.