

Cycling Australia Shattered By O'Grady's Doping Admission

Cycling Australia (CA) says the doping admission of Australian cyclist [Stuart O'Grady](#) is a "real disappointment" but expressed confidence that cycling can regain public confidence.

The cyclist admitted to using the banned blood boosting agent Erythropoietin (EPO), just three days after he announced his retirement from cycling. The 39-year-old cyclist had been 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. The cyclist remarked he used EPO in the 1998 Tour de France that was overshadowed by the Festina doping scandal. The celebrated cyclist recently announced his retirement after helping his GreenEdge team to a time trial victory in this year's Tour, his 17th appearance tying the record of American George Hincapie. The Australian cyclist was among 12 riders whose tests were said to be "suspicious" and the 39-year-old did not waste time confirming he had used EPO.

[Cycling Australia](#) chief executive Graham Fredericks says his organization was shocked by O'Grady's admission and added this is a real disappointment to us as a custodian of the sport. He added Cycling Australia can only take a fairly hard line in response to this news overnight. Immediately after his confession, the Australian Olympic Committee (AOC) called for him to resign from its Athletes' Commission. However, his most recent professional team, GreenEDGE, released a statement supporting his decision to admit to doping, and said it is now O'Grady's responsibility to help rebuild the public trust in the sport. The statement also said that one mistake should not tarnish an exceptional career.

A six-time Olympian and world champion on the track, O'Grady insisted his doping in 1998 was a one-off bad decision. Cycling Australia chief executive Graham Fredericks however said the decorated career of the cyclist would remain clouded and remarked Stuart has been one of Australia's most enduring road riders who appear to have made a poor decision which will regrettably now have an impact on the legacy of his career.

The cyclist may be stripped of his Olympic medals after admitting to using performance enhancing drugs at the 1998 Tour de France. Australian Olympic Committee (AOC) spokesman Mike Tancred remarked it's a matter for the international federation in regard to the medals, so the UCI (International Cycling Union) will consider the medals and they will then make some recommendation to the IOC (International Olympic Commission). O'Grady may also stand to lose his three national citations, which include an Order of Australia Medal awarded in 2005.

Cycling Australia however declined to condemn O'Grady, blaming the era and the European "environment". In a statement, the governing body said the late 1990s was clearly a dark period in cycling's international history. AOC president John Coates said in a statement remarked the "everybody else was doing it" line was no defense for cheating and remarked this 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.