

Winning Without Doping Was Not Possible, Says Armstrong

In an interview with *Le Monde*, [Lance Armstrong](#) brought the dirty past of the Tour de France by saying he could not have won the Tour seven times without doping.

The disgraced cyclist said he still considers himself the record-holder for Tour victories, even though all seven of his titles were stripped from him last year for doping. Armstrong also added that his life has been ruined by the investigation of the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency that exposed as lies his years of denials that he and his teammates doped.

The American rider claimed that it was "impossible" to win the Tour without doping when he was racing and also said he was not the first athlete to dope and there would always be a doping culture but cycling was being made a "scapegoat" for the practice in all sport. When asked if it was possible to perform without doping, *Le Monde* quoted Armstrong as saying ""*That depends on which races you wanted to win. The Tour de France? No. Impossible to win without doping. Because the Tour is a test of endurance where oxygen is decisive.*"

Armstrong's comments were sharply criticized by American rider Tejay van Garderen of the [BMC team](#) who said if he's saying things like he doesn't think that it's possible to win the Tour clean then he should be quiet - because it is possible while UCI President Pat McQuaid called the timing of the comments as very sad. In a statement, McQuaid said I can tell him categorically that he is wrong and his comments do absolutely nothing to help cycling and went on to add that the culture within cycling has changed since the Armstrong era and it is now possible to race and win clean. The UCI President also remarked that riders and teams owners have been forthright in saying that it is possible to win clean - and I agree with them.

The American former professional road racing cyclist's comments were also criticized by Australia's Cadel Evans who rubbished the claims of Armstrong by saying he had shown it was possible to triumph without cheating by winning the Tour in 2011. The Australian BMC rider said he sometimes reads in the press what Armstrong says and he respects him as a human being but really I just focus on doing my own job as best I can and fortunately we are supported by a great group of people.

These comments were enough for Lance Armstrong to retract from his statement and say that his claims only applied to the period in which he dominated the sport. Last year, Armstrong was exposed as a serial drug cheat in a devastating US Anti-Doping Agency report that plunged cycling into crisis about the extent of performance enhancing drugs in the peloton. Armstrong,

who won the Tour a record seven times between 1999 and 2005, was stripped of his Tour titles and banned from the sport for life. He later admitted in a television interview that he used a cocktail of drugs, including the blood booster EPO, testosterone, and blood transfusions, to win the Tour.