

TDU Race Director Launches Defamation Lawsuit

Mike Turtur, the man behind Tour Down Under, has launched Supreme Court action against Australia's multicultural broadcaster SBS over allegations that he covered up [doping in professional cycling](#).

The [Tour Down Under](#) race director has sought unspecified damages, costs, and interest. Turtur remarked in his statement of claim that an online story titled *TDU officials cover up doping positive* was defamatory. He further alleged that this story suggested he practiced, participated in, or engaged in a cover-up of a positive drug test that was returned by Italian cyclist Giampaolo Caruso after his 2003 Tour Down Under stage victory. The 55-year-old Turtur also asserted that the story's updated headline *TDU officials criticized as going easy on doping positive* further suggested the TDU race director did not take seriously the problem of illegal drugs in professional cycling.

Turtur also asserted that the comments of readers about the readers suggested that he was bringing shame on the image of Australia as a drug-free sporting nation and he deliberately concealed a positive drug test by a cyclist from the public. Turtur also expressed displeasure over a statement made during a television broadcast by Cycling Central co-presenter Anthony Tan.

The TDU chief remarked both the website and the program attracted a large audience of visitors and viewers, particularly having a special interest in the sport of cycling. He added the report and the published comments suggest he was corrupt and rotten to the core, practicing or participating in a code of silence about drug cheats in professional cycling, and deliberately concealing from the public a positive drug test by a cyclist.

In the past, Turtur has remarked he did not believe it was his duty to publicize Giampaolo Caruso's positive test for [Nandrolone](#). At that time, Turtur said he doesn't believe it was up to the Tour Down Under to publicize the fact that Caruso returned a positive dope test after winning the Willunga Hill stage in 2003. The cyclist tested positive for a banned drug and fined \$2000 and suspended for six months. His name later emerged in Operación Puerto but he was acquitted by the Court of Arbitration for Sport. Turtur while defending himself said race organizers don't go around publicizing or advertising or making a point of any doping infringements because it's not their job or their responsibility and the positive drug test story would have been published on the (International Cycling Union's) UCI website that he was found to be in violation of the code and that's how it's dealt with.

Turtur added at that time he can't see the point in making any other public comment in regard to anything that might happen in that area other than the process taking its natural course with the UCI and the anti-doping agencies. Turtur was criticized in the past for not backing away from his support of Lance Armstrong and he defended himself by saying he didn't believe in anything what Tyler Hamilton and Floyd Landis said as they have no credibility whatsoever.

Meanwhile, SBS has denied the allegations and remarked the story, comments, and broadcasts are "not capable of being, and are not, defamatory."