

Team Sky Drop Sergio Henao

Colombian rider Sergio Henao has been withdrawn from racing by [Team Sky](#) to conduct further tests after questions over his blood values were provoked by the team's monthly review.

According to Team Sky, the 26-year-old Henao will be subject to an “*altitude research program*.” Meanwhile, the rider has been withdrawn from racing for a period of eight weeks that means Henao is unlikely to start the opening Grand Tour of the season, the Giro d’Italia, which begins in Belfast on May 9th. A biological passport violation may lead up to a ban of two years for a first-time offense.

Henao, whose younger cousin, Sebastian, joined Team Sky for 2014, was believed to start the Tour de France as a support rider for [Chris Froome](#), the defending champion. Henao was expected to race the Dauphiné Libéré stage race in June and then was believed to make his debut in the Tour in support of the title defense of Froome.

Team Sky Principal Sir Dave Brailsford said our experts had questions about Sergio’s out-of-competition control tests at altitude - tests introduced this winter by the anti-doping authorities and we need to understand these readings better. Brailsford added we contacted the relevant authorities - the UCI (International Cycling Union) and CADF (Cycling Anti-Doping Foundation) - pointed to these readings and asked whether they could give us any insights. The Team Sky principal also remarked we have also taken Sergio out of our race program whilst we get a better understanding of these profiles and his physiology and said we want to do the right thing and we want to be fair and it is important not to jump to conclusions.

Brailsford went on to add that our own understanding is limited by a lack of scientific research into ‘altitude natives’ such as Sergio, who was born at altitude in Rionegro, near Medellín, at an altitude of 7,000 feet and lives & trains in the region outside of the racing season. He also remarked we are commissioning independent scientific research to better understand the effects of prolonged periods at altitude after returning from sea level, specifically on altitude natives and added the independent experts are looking to use WADA-accredited laboratories and Team Sky will make the data and findings available to the World Anti-Doping Agency, the UCI, and the Cycling Anti-Doping Foundation (CADF).

Sir Dave Brailsford also said Sergio will help with this program and we expect him to be out of the race schedule for at least eight weeks and once we have completed our assessment, we’ll decide on the right steps and give a full update.

Team Sky's move was supported by the UCI that said we as a matter of principle are supportive of teams pursuing a policy of closely monitoring their athletes. A UCI spokesperson said this is something that has been monitored by the team and this is Team Sky’s own program and that’s very important.

This is the second blood anomaly involving Team Sky after anti-doping disciplinary action was faced by Jonathan Tiernan-Locke, the 2012 Tour of Britain winner, after his blood passport data was found to contain anomalies.