

Former Champions Say Armstrong's Tour De France Victories Should Stand

According to 12 of the 25 surviving winners of cycling's biggest race, Lance Armstrong should be handed back his seven Tour de France titles. The former cyclist was stripped of his seven Tour de France titles and banned for life after being found guilty of using banned performance enhancing drugs.

These comments were made by Dutch newspaper *De Telegraaf* that published the results of a survey with the surviving winners of the race. Only Ferdi Kubler and Roger Walkowiak failed to respond while the 23 more than half were of the opinion that American should be rewritten into the history books. Irishman Stephen Roche, who won the Tour in 1987, said Armstrong should stay on that list and remarked you cannot not have a winner for seven years in the 100-year history of the race. Roche said [doping](#) has been part of sport, not only for cycling, for decades and went on to remark that there are doubts that Jacques Anquetil won clean and how did Richard Virenque manage to get to keep his polka dot jerseys.

Riders such as [Felice Gimondi](#), Federico Bahamontes, Jan Janssen and 1980 winner Joop Zoetemelk felt that the cyclist should keep his titles. Zoetemelk said they should never have erased Armstrong from the list and added you can't change results 10 years later. He further remarked of course it's not good what he did but you can't rewrite history. Andy Schleck and Oscar Pereiro also supported Armstrong and said who remembers who was second place in those races and added you can't have seven races without a winner, so just leave Armstrong on the list.

British winners Chris Froome, Sir Bradley Wiggins, and Australian Cadel Evans said the Armstrong years (1999-2005) should serve as a reminder to current riders. Froome said those seven empty places symbolize an era and we should leave it like it is. Both Evans and Wiggins remarked sending back the yellow jerseys might be a symbolic gesture. There is little chance that titles of Armstrong would be reinstated and Armstrong said he would keep it to himself for now when contacted by *De Telegraaf* for a reaction.

In another development, Brian Cookson, the president of the UCI, admitted to errors in the UCI's handling of the controversy over Chris Froome's use of a [Therapeutic Use Exemption](#) for corticosteroids. The World Anti-Doping Agency cleared the UCI's decision to grant the Therapeutic Use Exemption to Froome for treating a chest infection during his Tour of Romandy win earlier this year. It later emerged that the Therapeutic Use Exemption was signed off by just one man, the UCI's chief medical officer Dr Mario Zorzoli, rather than by a committee of experts, as recommended. Cookson explaining the delay in the UCI's response to the controversy said he wanted to make 100 per cent sure that the TUE committee did exist and that its members were aware that they were members. Cookson remarked we have checked that through now and they do exist and they have all reaffirmed their willingness to participate in that process. The UCI President added we have reinforced and reinvigorated the process and he accepts that we needed to do that.