

Armstrong Had Prior Authorization To Ride Fondo, Says Hincapie

George Hincapie, American retired road bicycle racer, has remarked that his former teammate Lance Armstrong had prior authorization from “the appropriate governing body” to ride in the [Gran Fondo Hincapie](#) in Greenville, South Carolina.

[Lance Armstrong](#) was to reunite with several former U.S. Postal Service teammates, including George Hincapie, Christian Vande Velde, and Kevin Livingston. He was also to reunite with other active American professional riders including Tejay van Garderen, Brent Bookwalter, and Larry Warbasse (BMC Racing), Tom Danielson and Alex Howes (Garmin-Sharp), and Matthew Busche (Trek Factory Racing).

The planned attendance of Armstrong drew the attention of the United States Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) and USA Cycling because of his lifetime ban. In a statement, USA Cycling said that the banned cyclist is prohibited from participating from any event sanctioned by the national federation according to WADA Code. The Hincapie Fondo, as a non-competitive event, was in no way required to be sanctioned through USA Cycling.

USA Cycling’s director of communications, Bill Kellick, said no one here gave him a green light to participate and said we had no prior knowledge. The Hincapie Fondo is listed by USA Cycling as a “Fun Ride or Tour” and not a competitive event. USA Cycling director of communications Bill Kellick had remarked the event is a permitted, non-competitive ride with no officials, so there is no one there to stop Armstrong from participating but he added that if he does participate, it would be up to USADA to determine what, if any, penalties would be imposed beyond the lifetime ban and then it would be up to USA Cycling to impose those penalties.

In 2012, Hincapie testified against Lance Armstrong before USADA that he and Lance made use of banned [performance enhancing drugs](#) but mentioned in his sworn affidavit that he continues to hold Lance Armstrong in “high regard.” Hincapie had remarked he continues to regard Lance Armstrong as a great cyclist, and he continues to be proud to be his friend and to have raced with him for many years. The former cyclist had remarked he does not condemn Lance for making those choices, and he does not wish to be condemned for the choices he made.

On hearing this, George Hincapie remarked issued a statement and expressed his disappointment and said Lance Armstrong had been given “the green light” to participate after someone from the Hincapie Fondo had reached out to “the appropriate governing body.” However, Hincapie did not specify which “appropriate governing body” had been contacted. In the statement, George Hincapie said Lance will not be joining us at the Fondo this year and added that more than a month ago we conferred with what we thought was the appropriate governing body regarding his participation. Hincapie said at that time we were given the green light for him to ride and our intent was never to cause a stir, but we are disappointed to learn they’ve reversed course at the eleventh hour and added we will of course comply with the ruling, and look forward to a great event.