

## Lance Rode Tour Down Under In A Deal With McQuaid

According to a 227-page dossier published recently by the [Cycling Independent Reform Commission](#), the comeback of Lance Armstrong in the 2009 Tour Down Under is an example of cycling failing to apply its own rules.

The CIRC report disclosed the former American professional road racing cyclist, who previously held seven consecutive Tour de France titles from 1999 to 2005 before being stripped of all titles, was to be paid US 1 million dollars for racing at the 2009 Tour Down Under, with the money to go to his Livestrong charity. The wide-ranging report said another example of UCI failing to apply its own rules was the decision to allow Lance Armstrong to compete in the Tour Down Under in 2009, despite the fact that he had not been in the UCI (anti-[doping](#)) testing pool for the prescribed period of time.

The three appearances of Armstrong at the Tour from 2009-11 represent the single biggest boost to the race since it started in 1999. However, there has always been a dark cloud of controversy whether the ex-cyclist should have been cleared to compete. Armstrong was not supposed to be eligible for a return under anti-doping rules for a return to competition until February 1 – several days after the Tour.

The report said Pat McQuaid advised his senior team on the morning of 6 October that he had decided that Lance Armstrong could ride the Tour Down Under. This was after the then president of cycling's world governing body, the UCI, told the camp of Lance Armstrong that the cyclist cannot compete at the January Tour. The report added several interviewees spoke about an abrupt 'change of mind' by the UCI president that took many people at UCI by surprise and underlined the fact that the decision was unilaterally taken by the UCI president and added that no explanation as then given internally as to why Lance Armstrong was suddenly given an exemption.

The [CIRC report](#) revealed that Armstrong confirmed to McQuaid he would ride in the 2009 Tour of Ireland also on October 6. McQuaid's brother Darach was the project manager at the time for the Tour of Ireland. It was disclosed by the report that there was a "temporal link" between Lance Armstrong being cleared to race at the Tour Down Under and his decision to race at the Tour of Ireland. The report also said Pat McQuaid was under significant political pressure mainly from Australia to permit Armstrong commence his much-publicized racing comeback at the Adelaide race.

Former UCI presidents Hein Verbruggen and Pat McQuaid welcomed the findings of the CIRC report and insisted that the Cycling Independent Reform Commission has cleared them of any wrongdoing connected to the Lance Armstrong doping scandal. Verbruggen, president between 1991 and 2005, said the wild conspiracy theories and accusations have all been properly debunked once and for all and added he is pleased that this report confirms his complete innocence concerning these accusations which have been leveled at him in the past.