

UCI Colluded With Lance Armstrong, Says Report

A 227-page report by the [Cycling Independent Reform Commission](#) (CIRC) was published on Monday after a year-long probe. The report criticized the UCI, the world governing body of cycling, for allowing doping and covering up Lance Armstrong, the sport's star rider.

The report also criticized former UCI leaders Hein Verbruggen and successor Pat McQuaid for letting doping flourish and breaking rules. The present UCI President [Brian Cookson](#) said Verbruggen should give up his honorary presidency and added that cycling still has “an endemic problem of lower-level doping.”

The UCI chief remarked the advisers of Lance Armstrong were allowed to become “directly and heavily” involved in Emile Vrijman’s 2006 report. Vrijman, the Dutch lawyer, was examining accusations by L’Equipe newspaper in 2005 that Lance Armstrong took [Erythropoietin](#) (EPO) in winning the first of his seven Tour de France titles. L’Equipe linked back-tested samples from the race to the cyclist.

The CIRC investigation found the UCI “purposely limited the scope of the independent investigator’s mandate” against the suggestion of Vrijman. It was also revealed that the primary goal was to ensure that the report reflected UCI’s and Lance Armstrong’s personal conclusions. It was also revealed by the investigation that the UCI exempted Lance Armstrong from rules, failed to target test him despite the suspicions, and publicly supported him against allegations of doping, even as late as 2012. It went on to add that the world governing body of cycling saw Lance Armstrong as the perfect choice to lead the sport's renaissance after the Festina doping scandal at the 1998 Tour de France. It was also added that the fact that he was American opened up a new continent for the sport, he had beaten cancer and the media quickly made him a global star.

The report also highlighted decision of Pat McQuaid to allow Lance Armstrong to participate in the 2009 Tour Down Under even though the former American professional road racing cyclist hadn't been in the testing group for the required period of time. The report says there was a temporal link between this decision, which was communicated to UCI staff in the morning, and the decision of Lance Armstrong, which was notified to Pat McQuaid later that same day, to participate in the Tour of Ireland, an event run by people known to Pat McQuaid.

After the report was published, McQuaid said if he had not put a lot of his time and energy into the fight against doping, as the report recognizes, and led to significant progress maybe he would have had more time to spend more time on governance and management which the report finds criticism with. He added the area which is under investigation is only one part of an enormously challenging role as UCI president and he is proud of his achievements in developing the sport globally.

Cookson, who set up the three-man CIRC panel, said Lance Armstrong had a positive test for cortisone, which was covered up - and assisted in covering up - by the UCI in 1999 and added that it the UCI was going to prioritize the image of the sport, the business of the sport, over the integrity and honesty of the sport and that was a very bad signal.