

## **Lance Armstrong Doping Doctor Receives Suspended Sentence**

Dr. Michele Ferrari, the infamous coach and sports doctor, has been found guilty of doping Italian biathlete Daniel Taschler by a court in Bolzano.

Ferrari, who was banned for life by the United States Anti-Doping Agency for doping [Lance Armstrong](#) and other athletes from the US Postal Service team, was given an 18-month suspended prison sentence and a fine of 4,500 Euro. He was also asked to pay 15,000 Euro as part of a civil verdict to the World Anti-Doping Agency.

Taschler was given a nine-month suspended sentence. The biathlete's father, who was a one-time Italian Biathlon nation coach and vice-president of the International Biathlon Federation, was given a one-year sentence.

During the investigation, police used phone taps to listen in on conversations between Dr. Ferrari and Taschler. It was believed by prosecutors that the conversations included instructions on how to take EPO and details of secret telephone numbers where Dr. Ferrari could be contacted. The biathlete's father had pushed his son to work with Dr. Ferrari as a way to boost his athletic career.

The investigation was sparked by the Padua investigation that assisted uncover financial payments from Armstrong to Dr. Ferrari and other evidence. This investigation was moved to Bolzano as the first contact between Taschler and Dr. Ferrari is alleged to have occurred near home of the biathlete.

This is the first instance when Dr. Ferrari has been found guilty of doping in a court. It is despite him having a long history of doping accusations going back to the early nineties when the big [benefits of Erythropoietin](#) (EPO) were first discovered. Previously, Dr. Ferrari was found guilty of sporting fraud and illegally working as a pharmacist in 2006 after testimony from former rider Filippo Simeoni. Simeoni said that Ferrari had advised him on how to use EPO and [Testosterone](#). However, Ferrari was later cleared on appeal of the latter charge as the slow legal process in Italy and the statute of limitations allowed him to avoid the case reaching a final verdict. In 2000, doping became a crime in Italy and it was only then that prosecutors found it easy to pursue doctors and athletes who dope.

In 2002, Ferrari was banned for life by the Italian Cycling Federation but he made an appeal to a regional court to have the ban lifted because of a rule change of the World Anti-Doping Agency. Ferrari had then claimed that he was not properly notified by the Italian Olympic Committee (CONI) and every licenced athlete of his ban. Several riders were banned for just three months in the past as it was claimed by them that they did not know Ferrari had been banned in 2002.

The infamous coach and sports doctor is infamous for comparing Erythropoietin to orange juice in 1994 when he used to work with the Gewiss team that dominated racing at the time. Ferrari had told L'Equipe and other European media that EPO is not dangerous, it is the abuse that is and he had also added that it is also dangerous to drink 10 liters of orange juice.