

## **Former Swiss Rider Denies Doping Network Links**

An accomplished rider in both the Grand Tour events and one-day races, Switzerland's Tony Rominger, has denied his management company having links to what is believed by Italian investigators as a network designed to finance doping, aid evasion of taxes, and money laundering.

Italian officials are investigating the activities of sports doctor Michele Ferrari in the wake of a report against cyclist [Lance Armstrong](#) and his USPS team from the US Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) wherein the agency accused Armstrong of overseeing a widespread doping program. The cyclist was stripped of his seven Tour de France titles and banned for life, a decision that was recently endorsed by the governing body of cycling, the UCI.

It was alleged by two Swiss newspapers that cash from operations of Ferrari went through the management company of Tony Rominger. Rominger issued a statement saying, "Tony Rominger formally contests these accusations of tax evasion and money laundering being reported in the media," and added that he had no contact with Ferrari for "very many years." Rominger added that he had never been called upon to provide information to the penal, civil or administrative judicial system — either Swiss or Italian.

The accusations were immediately and vehemently denied by the professional road racing cyclist who won the Vuelta a España in 1992, 1993, and 1994, and the Giro d'Italia in 1995. The cyclist also won the Mountains Jersey twice in the Vuelta a Espana, in 1993 and 1996 and the the Points Jersey in the 1993 Vuelta a Espana. In the 1992 World Championship Road Race, Rominger was placed fourth behind Gianni Bugno of Italy, Laurent Jalabert of France, and Dimitri Konyshev of Russia. In the 1993 Tour de France, Rominger finished second behind Miguel Indurain of Spain. The cyclist had a successful career but was overshadowed by the prowess of Indurain (winner of five consecutive Tours de France from 1991 to 1995, the fourth to win five times) in the Grand Tours.

Meanwhile, Indurain has openly extended his support of Lance Armstrong and said he believes in the innocence of Armstrong. He went on to dispute the strength of evidence against the cyclist and remarked that he believes Armstrong will come back and appeal and try to show that he played fair for all those years. Indurain also took issue with the investigation process and challenged the validity of the evidence produced against the seven-time Tour de France champion, Armstrong who was stripped of all his titles and banned for life by the US Anti-doping Agency (USADA) relying on witness testimony from 11 former teammates and 15 other riders.

Despite the fact that the governing body of cycling accepted the sanctions imposed on Armstrong by USADA, the UCI president, Pat McQuaid, delivered a different message to the world by calling USADA evidence and methods into questions and raising grounds for a possible appeal – either by Armstrong himself, or by the World Anti-Doping Agency – against the conclusions of the report. McQuaid also challenged the USADA jurisdiction in stripping Armstrong of his titles under the WADA Code and publishing its report after the cyclist waived his right to a [Court of Arbitration for Sport](#) (CAS) hearing.