

# Landis admits doping, accuses Lance

By Bonnie D. Ford | ESPN.com Updated: May 21, 2010, 12:59 AM ET

Nearly four years after he began waging a costly, draining and ultimately losing battle to discredit his positive test for synthetic testosterone at the 2006 Tour de France, Floyd Landis told ESPN.com on Wednesday he used performance-enhancing drugs for most of his career as a professional road cyclist, including the race whose title he briefly held.

In a lengthy telephone interview from California, Landis detailed extensive, consistent use of the red blood cell booster erythropoietin (commonly known as EPO), testosterone, human growth hormone and frequent blood transfusions, along with female hormones and a one-time experiment with insulin, during the years he rode for the U.S. Postal Service and Switzerland-based Phonak teams.

Landis confirmed he sent e-mails to cycling and anti-doping officials over the past few weeks, implicating dozens of other athletes including seven-time Tour de France winner Lance Armstrong, team manager and owners, and officials of the sport's national and international governing bodies. ESPN.com is in the process of seeking comment from those individuals. Armstrong has long been dogged by accusations that he used performance-enhancing drugs, but no anti-doping authority has ever confirmed that he tested positive.

"I have nothing to hide ... history speaks for itself here," Armstrong told reporters before the Tour of California on Thursday. "It's his word versus ours ... we like our word, we like our credibility."

Later Thursday, Armstrong crashed in the stage near Visalia, Calif., abandoning the race and needing stitches and X-rays, which were negative. It did not seem the wreck would impact plans for the Tour de France and challenging rival-turned-teammate-turned-rival Alberto Contador, the defending champion of the race the Texan once dominated with relative ease.

"I will take a few days to recover and be on the bike as soon as possible," Armstrong said.

Armstrong said he would not pursue legal action against Landis. He said it would take too much money and effort and he wants to focus on his team, his family and his foundation, Livestrong.

"This is a man that's been under oath several times and had a very different version," Armstrong said. "This is a man that wrote a book for profit that had a completely different version. This is somebody that took, some would say, close to \$1 million from innocent people for his defense under a different premise. Now when it's all run out, the story changes."

Landis also accused American riders Levi Leipheimer and Dave Zabriskie and Armstrong's longtime coach, Johan Bruyneel, of involvement in doping.

The World Anti-Doping Agency said in a statement Thursday that it would open an investigation into Landis' allegations.

"WADA is aware of the serious allegations made by Mr Landis. We are very interested in learning more about this matter and we will liaise with the United States Anti-Doping Agency [USADA] and any other authorities with appropriate jurisdiction to get to the heart of the issues raised. WADA looks forward to these further investigations and enquiries by those responsible."

International Cycling Union (UCI) president Pat McQuaid said Landis' allegations were "scandalous and mischievous."

"I don't feel guilty at all about having doped. I did what I did because that's what we [cyclists] did and it was a choice I had to make after 10 years or 12 years of hard work to get there, and that was a decision I had to make to make the next step. My choices were, do it and see if I can win, or don't do it and I tell people I just don't want to do that, and I decided to do it."

-- Floyd Landis

professional cycling. I imagine from my own experiences that today he is paying a heavy price for his honesty and I support Floyd in his attempt to free himself from his past. I hope that others -- fans, riders and sponsors embrace this as an opportunity to bring about positive change in the sport."

In a statement released Thursday, USADA said it does "not comment on the substance of any doping investigation."

In an e-mail to USA Cycling president Steve Johnson dated April 30, Landis related a number of anecdotes he said were representative of his time in the European peloton. However, as Landis told ESPN.com, no one ever coerced him into doping.

"I take responsibility for all the stuff I did," Landis said in the interview. "No one gave me something and said, 'Don't ask what this is, just take it.' I would never have done that. The things I took, I knew what they were, and I spent the time researching what the risks were, and the decisions I made were mine. The whole entire process of doping in the entire sport and the evolution of it all wasn't my fault, but when it came down to it, me being there, I made the decision to do it. It wasn't anyone else telling me to do it. I'm not blaming anyone for that. It was my decision. Every time." In the e-mail to Johnson, Landis said Bruyneel, the longtime sports director of the U.S. Postal Service, Discovery Channel, Astana and RadioShack teams who guided Armstrong and Spain's Alberto Contador to a combined nine Tour de France victories, "instructed" Landis on how to use testosterone patches when he was riding for Postal in 2002. Landis added that he first used EPO on Bruyneel's advice the following summer while training for the Tour of Spain, that he obtained the drug directly from Armstrong, and that he started using HGH that he bought from a team trainer in Valencia during that same training period.

In the same e-mail, Landis said he worked with Armstrong's personal trainer, Dr. Michele Ferrari of Italy, who consulted with several riders on the Postal team at the height of Armstrong's career. Ferrari helped Landis with the extraction and re-transfusion of his own blood during one session in St. Moritz, Switzerland, in 2002, according to Landis.

"I paid [Ferrari] \$10,000 [that season]," Landis told ESPN.com. "He only accepted cash. His normal fee is 10 percent of your salary."

"I mean, he's one of the best references," Landis said of Ferrari, who worked with numerous top cyclists. In 2004, Ferrari was convicted of sporting fraud and abusing his medical license by an Italian court, but later succeeded in having that judgment reversed on appeal. "I didn't wish to take the risks on my own and especially since it was fairly clear that his advice was endorsed by Lance himself," Landis said in the ESPN.com interview. "And therefore Johan and the other guys that knew of it and were involved -- working with him, they'd understand the risks that I was taking as well and therefore trust me."

Landis also said he and Armstrong discussed the efficacy of the then-newly developed test for EPO in 2002.

In the e-mail to Johnson, Landis said he had blood extracted in 2003 inside the apartment Armstrong owned in the historic center of Girona, Spain, and that it was stored in a refrigerator there along with blood extracted from Armstrong and teammate George Hincapie. Landis said Armstrong asked him to stay in the apartment on one occasion while Armstrong was away in order to make sure the refrigerator did not malfunction.

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He also said in the e-mail that a team doctor gave him and Hincapie, who he said was his roommate during the 2003 Tour de France, syringes filled with olive oil in which andriol, a form of testosterone that can be taken orally, had been dissolved.

Hincapie said he was disappointed to hear Landis' accusations.

"I have been a professional on the circuit for 17 years -- which is one of the longest careers in the peloton. During that time, I have earned the respect of my peers and a reputation for working hard, honestly and honorably," he said in a statement.

Landis further described personally seeing other riders receive transfused blood, including once on the team bus after a stage of the 2004 Tour de France. The bus driver stopped on a "remote mountain road" for an hour, pretending the bus had engine trouble while the entire team received transfusions, Landis said in the e-mail.

Landis, seeking his own chance to become a team leader, signed with the Phonak team before the 2005 season. In the e-mail to Johnson, the rider claimed that he negotiated with team owner Andy Rihs for extra money to cover the expenses of a doping program. Phonak was stung by several high-profile doping cases from 2004 to '06, including that of Landis' fellow American Tyler Hamilton, who was convicted of using banned transfusions.

Rihs issued a statement saying Landis' claims were "lies" and a "last, tragic attempt" to get publicity.

"Floyd Landis personally signed that he would uphold our code and use no illegal practices when he joined our former racing group," Rihs said.

The whole team was convinced that he was upholding this until his doping was revealed at the 2006 Tour.

"Neither I, nor the leadership of the team, knew that Floyd Landis doped," Rihs said.

The timing of the Landis allegations -- right in the middle of the Tour of California -- did not go unnoticed. Bruyneel suggested the reason the dethroned 2006 Tour champion made his allegations now is because his team was not allowed to ride in the Tour of California. "He saw all the doors are closed. . . . His timing is obviously not a coincidence."

Andrew Messick, president of AEG Sports that owns the Tour, said that the ToC welcomed Landis last year when his suspension from cycling ended but that his new team didn't warrant an invite this year. "Floyd thought it was personal. He thought he was being punished. And he did what he did. Whether there is a link there, that's a question to ask Floyd."

Asked whether Landis threatened to go public with his allegations if his team was not invited, Messick said, "He didn't, but we all listen to the chatter. It's other people who call you and tell you stuff. But Floyd never said it."

Landis' doping conviction cost him his Tour title, his career, his life savings and his marriage. He said he knows his credibility is in tatters and that many people will choose not to believe him now. He added that he has no documentation for many of the claims he is making about other riders or officials, and that it will be his word against theirs.

However, Landis said he decided to come forward because he was suffering psychologically and emotionally from years of deceit and he has become a cycling pariah with little to no chance of ever riding for an elite team again. Prior to speaking with ESPN.com, he said he made his most difficult phone call -- to his mother in Pennsylvania to tell her the truth for the first time.

"I want to clear my conscience," Landis said. "I don't want to be part of the problem anymore."

"With the benefit of hindsight and a somewhat different perspective, I made some misjudgments. And of course, I can sit here and say all day long, 'If I could do it again I'd do something different,' but I just don't have that choice."

Landis said he takes full responsibility for having doped on every occasion that he did it, and added he was never forced or threatened.

"I don't feel guilty at all about having doped," Landis told ESPN.com. "I did what I did because that's what we [cyclists] did and it was a choice I had to make after 10 years or 12 years of hard work to get there, and that was a decision I had to make to make the next step. My choices were, do it and see if I can win, or don't do it and I tell people I just don't want to do that, and I decided to do it."

According to Landis, his first use of performance-enhancing drugs was in June 2002, when he was a member of the U.S. Postal Service team. The World Anti-Doping Agency's statute of limitations for doping offenses is eight years, and Landis said that, too, is part of his motivation for divulging his inflammatory information.

"Now we've come to the point where the statute of limitations on the things I know is going to run out or start to run out next month," Landis said. "If I don't say something now, then it's pointless to ever say it."

Landis, who began his career as a top mountain biker, had kept detailed training journals since he was a teenager. He said he continued the same methodical record-keeping once he started using banned drugs and techniques. Landis said he spent as much as \$90,000 a year on performance-enhancing drugs and on consultants to help him build a training regime. Landis said he has kept all of his journals and diaries and has offered to share them with U.S. anti-doping authorities in recent meetings. He added that he has given officials detailed information on how athletes are beating drug testing.

As for his own positive test, Landis still maintains that result was inaccurate and that he had not used synthetic testosterone during the 2006 season -- although he now admits he used human growth hormone during that time. At this point, he said he does not want to dwell on any of the issues he and his lawyers hammered at during his case.

"There must be some other explanation, whether it was done wrong or I don't know what," he said. "You can try to write it however you want -- the problem I have with even bothering to argue it is [that] I have used testosterone in the past and I have used it in other Tours, and it's going to sound kind of funny to say I didn't."

Landis exhausted and also raised funds in fighting his case, which cost an estimated \$2 million, and he also raised funds for his defense in a well-publicized effort. He said he would pay those donors back if he could, but does not have the money to do so. He said he did not level with the people close to him, but declined to say whether he informed his lawyers of his past drug use.

Bonnie D. Ford covers tennis and Olympic sports for ESPN.com. Information from ESPN.com's Jim Caple and The Associated Press was used in this report.

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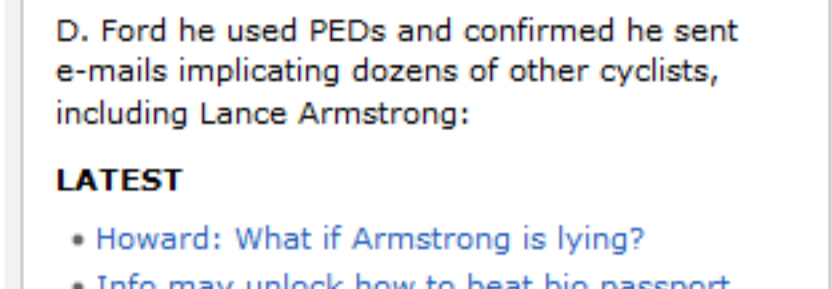
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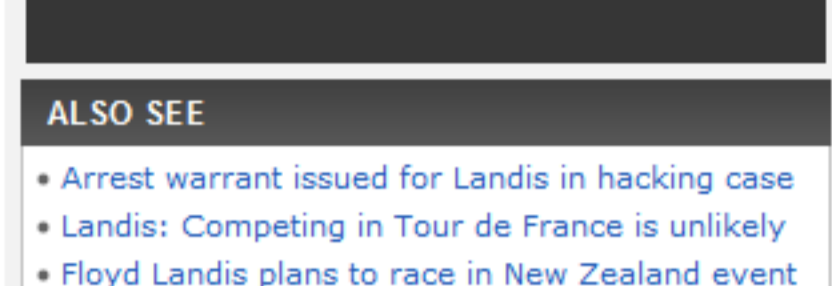
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