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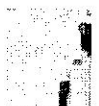
Lance Armstrong accuses former UCI president Hein Verbruggen of helping him cheat during 1999 Tour de France



Disgraced cyclist accuses governing body of concealing his doping

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Lance Armstrong accuses former cycling chief Hein Verbruggen of covering up his positive drug tests

Armstrong said that Verbruggen, as head of the International Cycling Union, helped minimize the impact of some of his suspicious drug test results. 'I'm not going to lie to protect these guys. I hate them,' Armstrong said of Verbruggen and other UCI members past and present.

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BY NATHANIEL VINTON / NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

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Lance Armstrong (r.) turns on former ally Hein Verbruggen (l.), accusing the former International Cycling Union head of covering up his positive drug tests on the tour.

One of the few remaining mysteries of the Lance Armstrong saga is whether aftershocks from his downfall will ever topple any of his big-shot cronies — the moneymen who financed his fraud, or the leaders of sports organizations who were supposed to be lookouts but instead looked the other way.

Now the earth is rumbling just a little under Hein Verbruggen, an "Honorary Member" of the International Olympic Committee who chaired the IOC's coordination of the Beijing Games in 2008. Before that, during his feeble reign as president of cycling's governing body throughout the dope-saturated period of 1991-2005, Verbruggen was a vigorous Armstrong backer.

The Dutchman attacked Armstrong's accusers in the media, accepted cash donations from the tainted American and even reportedly did personal investment business with Thom Weisel, the Silicon Valley financier who funded Armstrong's corrupt Tour de France teams.

On Monday, Armstrong accused Verbruggen of helping minimize the impact of some of Armstrong's suspicious drug test results that, if revealed, might have stopped Armstrong's career before he could wreak lasting havoc on the sport's credibility.

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