

## First Edition Cycling News, Friday, June 15, 2012

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June 15, 20:00

### Sky meeting with ASO is routine, team says



June 14, 17:51

By: [Daniel Benson](#)

#### Wiggins training data shown as part of annual presentation

There's nothing unusual about professional cycling teams meeting with race organisers or sporting authorities, in fact it's a regular occurrence for teams vying for wildcard places and WorldTour licences. It's just rarely publicised.

However when a blog on *Skysports* let slip that the British team of Bradley Wiggins and Mark Cavendish had made a presentation to ASO ahead of this year's Tour de France, it raised eyebrows – especially when the blog mentioned that part of the presentation was to ensure they 'won't get any nasty surprises'.

Why would **Team Sky** need to justify their performances this season and why should they choose to present **Bradley Wiggins'** power details and training data ahead of race he'd yet to start? In the subsequent 24 hours social media has been ablaze with innuendo and rumour, cultivating all from Sky's success but also from the thickened air of suspicion cast by **USADA investigation into Lance Armstrong** and a motley crew of doctors. It was even alleged that Sky had made a donation to ASO for drug testing, a somewhat odd rumour considering ASO have never carried out a single drug test.

Sky's meeting was no isolated incident though. They've presented in front of ASO since 2009, before their WorldTour licence had even confirmed, and according to a spokesperson for the team, training data, power profiles and clean competition was but one of the cornerstone of their showcase.

"We do it every year, and we actually meet with ASO twice a year. We started doing that in 2009 before we were really a team and we presented the five-year programme to them. We showed them what we wanted to do in terms of changing the face of the sport within the UK and then also showed them how the track programme had come about - our no stone unturned philosophy," Sky's spokesperson told *Cyclingnews*.

"We present everything on Sky Ride, our internal engagement, and then we also present where we are with performance and where we are from a coaching stance and the structure of the team.

"We used Brad as a case study because he's a lead rider and won the Dauphine so we took them through all the work that we do with Tim Kerrison, Shane Sutton and with Brad. We weren't called in and we didn't call them and say 'we want to prove Brad's clean'."

Team Sky is well aware that with success comes suspicion, and with a highly successful 2012 campaign levels of both are abundantly high.

"We felt it's our job to be transparent and tell people what we're doing, and the more we can tell people the less mystery there is. We're not doing it to try and convince them we're clean, we are clean. We're meeting them because we're genuinely proud of the work we doing and they enjoyed what we had to show them," their spokesperson explained.

"On the record, I can categorically and 100 percent deny that Team Sky has ever made any form of donation to any organisation involved with the running of the sport, nor would we ever do so."

### Chris Horner: I don't believe Armstrong cheated



June 14, 19:36

By: [Daniel Benson](#)

#### Former teammate stands by former Tour winner in USADA case

**Chris Horner** has leapt to the defence of **Lance Armstrong** after it was **announced that USADA had brought doping charges against the seven-time Tour de France winner**. The pair rode together at Astana and RadioShack, a period in time in which alleged doping infractions occurred. Armstrong has denied all charges levelled at him.

"I read the news like everyone else but you look at it with Lance and it's the same stories that have been going around for years, forever, and it's been relived and recycled many times. Lance has always come out clean from it," Horner told *Cyclingnews*.

"I don't believe Armstrong has cheated in any way to win those victories and he's gone through an insane amount of testing. Do you have pictures of it? Video of testing? Because without that you really don't have anything."

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USADA's exact evidence is unknown, however, [their 15 page letter to Armstrong](#) and five other individuals – including Armstrong's former and Horner's current team boss – does include testimony from ten riders. Horner believes that their word should be questioned.

"I've been in the sport for a long time so I've heard these rumours and seen this stuff in the press and seen these allegations. Now I've read it again and I think USADA could be spending a lot of money on testing with the riders currently racing. Lance has had a legendary, unbelievable career that has just been fantastic to watch and to see what he's done for the sport and against cancer. The guys that are saying it [doping] I have an idea who they are, just like you do, and you just have to wonder, are they telling the truth or not? But it's the same story I've been hearing for a long time. You can't crucify someone on that."

Throughout both the FDA and now the USADA investigation Armstrong criticised the spending of US tax payers' money into allegations of his and US Postal's past and it's a sentiment that Horner agrees with. The RadioShack veteran believes that the sport's governing body and anti-doping agencies money would be better spent looking to the future, increasing their current rate of tests in a bid to remove cheats from the current peloton.

"There's so much more that the drug agencies can be doing with the tax payers' money on cleaning the sport up from this point on," he told *Cyclingnews*.

"On the record, 100 percent, I loved racing with Lance. I love my experience I had with Lance and I would love to see USADA, WADA, and the UCI go forward and get the doping tests as controlled as possible and testing the riders who are racing their bikes now."

#### Tour de France?

Having been omitted from RadioShack's initial Tour de France long list there has been growing calls from the US media to install him in the team's final nine. With Andy Schleck ruled out from injury the team is lighter in its ambitions for GC and Horner – 10th in the 2010 Tour – believes that he can perform a role for the team, whether it's as an overall contender or a domestique.

"I'd love to go to the Tour. It's the Tour and that's an easy decision in terms of me wanting to go but the team makes the selection and I'm going to keep training up until the start and sending in my training SRM files to the team. All I can do is keep training and hopefully it works out."

Horner refused to be drawn into the circumstances that lead to his current omission: "I don't really want to comment on that because it's created so much drama for the team. We've got fantastic sponsors with RadioShack and Nissan and I don't want any bad press for them."

"I'm very good at looking after riders, like I was with Cadel Evans and I've been there for Lance and at big races for Alberto Contador. I was looking forward to helping Andy and Frank and I'm still looking forward to helping Frank. You've got to have guys on the team that can climb."

RadioShack's Tour place may come under scrutiny with [RMC Sport](#) reporting that ASO may remove them from the Tour due to USADA's investigation.

"It would be a huge blow and unfair. I've not heard about any possibility of that from the team, though, but it would be truly unfair. We've got a great bunch of guys here and clean riders who love racing. It would be a bummer."



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## Bassons and Simeoni say Armstrong probe is overdue



June 14, 21:28  
By: Daniel Friebe

### American's old foes nonetheless welcome USADA efforts

Two men who clashed famously with [Lance Armstrong](#) during his reign as the [Tour de France](#)'s dominant rider, Christophe Bassons and Filippo Simeoni, today welcomed news that Armstrong will [face doping charges](#) from the United States Anti-Doping Agency (USADA).

Bassons said that USADA's action was "important" but also long overdue. "It's a shame now that it's coming 15 years after it all happened. It's a shame because the evidence was there for years. I knew all along what was happening, so this doesn't change anything for me. I don't need fifteen pages of documents to tell me what I knew already," Bassons told *Cyclingnews*.

Simeoni had similarly mixed feelings. The Italian said the possibility of Armstrong being condemned for doping left him "cold". Simeoni also "can't understand why suddenly now they're investigating him, when for years he was allowed to do whatever he wanted."

Armstrong last night dismissed the investigation as a "witch-hunt". "I have never doped," he affirmed in a statement.

Bassons and Simeoni had of course tackled Armstrong about doping, in their own ways, long before this latest round of allegations. In 1999, Bassons was riding the Tour de France for La Française des Jeux but also penning a daily column for *Le Parisien*. After writing that the peloton had been "shocked" by Armstrong's stage-win at Sestriere, Bassons was confronted by Armstrong on the road to Alpe d'Huez the next day and invited to stop his innuendo or else leave the sport. Two years later, sure enough, Bassons quit professional cycling at age 27. He now works for the French Ministry of Youth and Sports.

Today Bassons expressed his hope that anyone found guilty in the USADA probe will be banished from cycling. He also, though, partly supported Armstrong's claim that the seven-time Tour champion is being singled out, while those who have since provided evidence against him seem not to escape without penalty for their own misdeeds.

"I can understand why they're offering plea bargains. History tells us that, unfortunately, that's the only way people will talk. It also provides very valuable intelligence when they do that," Bassons said. "What is wrong is giving them complete immunity in return for information. When there's a crime, there has to be a punishment. If there's not, what's happening here sets a dangerous precedent.

"As for Armstrong's entourage, if found guilty, they can't be allowed back in to work with teams in the future," he continued. "In general I'm against making doping a criminal offense, except when there is trafficking involved, but there's no reason why we can't rid the sport of people who have facilitated doping on this scale."

On the UCI's role in the affair, and in particular allegations that they were complicit with what USADA is calling the US Postal team's "conspiracy", Bassons called for a radical rethink of sports federations' role in anti-doping.

"It's that old chestnut: you can't have the body in charge of promoting a sport also policing it. Give responsibility for anti-doping to WADA or national anti-doping agencies. But not to the federations," he argued.

Filippo Simeoni was involved in his own notorious spat with Armstrong at the 2004 Tour de France. Two years earlier, Simeoni had testified before an Italian magistrate that doctor Michele Ferrari had advised him to use EPO and testosterone in 1997, a claim that prompted Armstrong to brand Simeoni an "absolute liar" in an interview with *Le Monde* in 2003. The following year at the Tour, Armstrong thwarted Simeoni's breakaway attempts and allegedly threatened to "destroy" the Italian in a mid-race exchange on stage 18.

Simeoni now owns two bars in Sezze, between Rome and Naples. The 40-year-old claims to have "left cycling behind completely", although he happened to be riding his bike when *Cyclingnews* reached him today.

While he applauded USADA's efforts, he also said that whatever comes of the investigation will bring scant consolation.

"This all leaves me a bit cold now. I've taken myself out of that world completely," he said. "I just can't understand how justice has taken this long. There was always evidence, but nothing was done. Is what they've got that much more crushing now? Armstrong was allowed to do whatever he wanted for years. He was a superhero, untouchable. Now this. I suppose it just shows how the balance has shifted; before, I think there were forces greater than our understanding working to protect him; now there's probably also a reason why they've decided to take him down.

"We'll see how it goes," Simeoni summed up. "I prefer not to dwell too much, because I have too many regrets if I do. This whole business really cut me down in my prime. Now it'd be nice to just get justice, although I still fear that this could rumble on for months if not years."

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## UCI re-confirms that Contador's points won't count for Saxo Bank



June 15, 10:01  
By: Cycling News

### Spokesman says the matter is not up for discussion at UCI board meeting

The UCI is standing firm that any points [Alberto Contador](#) earns for [Team Saxo Bank](#) in 2012 and 2013 will not count towards the team's ranking. A UCI spokesman said that the issue is not up for discussion.

Contador's doping-related ban ends in August, and it has already been announced that [he will re-join Saxo Bank](#).

Bjarne Riis apparently thought that the matter would be discussed at today's UCI board meeting in Salzburg, Austria, but UCI spokesman Enrico Carpani denied that.

"The matter with Contador is not on the agenda, and there are no plans to change anything in relation to what we previously announced," he told *tv2sport.dk*.

"Just because the rule is discussed, it does not mean that the rule is changed. There are different opinions about it here, but the rule still applies."

The UCI points are used to determine the level of a team's licence. Currently Saxo Bank is ranked last of the 18 WorldTour teams. The rule went into effect after Contador was found to have violated the anti-doping rules, and so Riis argues that [it does not apply to him](#). He has previously indicated that he is willing to take the matter to the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

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## Bad weather claims stage three of Nature Valley Grand Prix



June 15, 11:47  
By: Pat Malach

### Heavy rain and lightning strikes sees race cancelled

For the second time in three years promoters and officials had to cancel the Cannon Falls Road Race stage of the [Nature Valley Grand Prix](#) because of extreme weather conditions.

Heavy rain and lightning strikes caused race director Dave LaPorte and head official Dot Abbott to make the difficult call just minutes before the men's race was set to start. They had originally proposed running a short race on the 1.9-mile closing circuit in downtown Cannon Falls, but increasingly bad weather and resistance from the men's pro team directors led to the decision to call the whole thing off.

"We've had a number of discussions with the police and the promoters," chief official Dot Abbott told team directors who had gathered under a tent near the start line. "Taking into consideration some of the input you guys gave us on

well, looking at the weather reports and the resources, we have obviously looked at the option of running this as a circuit race, but the organizer has come to the conclusion that it is not in the interest of the riders or the race to hold this stage. It's very unfortunate that we have to do that, but we do think it's in the best interest of the race."

Race director Dave LaPorte said the original road race course was in an exposed rural area that would have made it impossible to protect riders if the extreme weather put them in harm's way.

"The plan was to come here and do a road race," he said. "But the problem with doing a road race here is that there is absolutely no cover out on the course, so if we had a tornado come in or torrential rain there would be no way to stop the race out in the country and protect the riders. We started to look at maybe turning it into a circuit race so we could have a show, but trying to do it on the fly was tough. We probably could have done it, but it was likely to turn into a mess."

Organizers also canceled the Cannon Falls stage in 2010 after tornadoes began to touch down just 20 km from the course. The men were already racing and had to be turned around and sent back their team cars in Cannon Falls.

Most of the pro team directors applauded the decision to scrap the entire stage again this year rather than trying to put together a circuit race at the last minute. Kenda/5-Hour Energy team director Frankie Andreu said the stage race already has plenty of criteriums so his team was looking forward to the road race, but the conditions took away that option.

"I understand the circumstances," he said. "And the weather is only going to get worse, so I think it's the correct decision that they're making for the safety of the riders."

Andreu said having the riders compete in a circuit race would have only been for show, and putting it together at the last minute under severe conditions was just too much to ask.

"Doing the circuit in the pouring rain and lightning, not having any follow cars so if somebody crashes they have to chase, it's just a hodgepodge to have the riders ride around," he said. "This is an NRC race and they're above that. I wish they would have consulted with some of the pro teams; I think that would have been the right thing to do. But they did it on their own and I think in the end they did the right thing."

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## RadioShack-Nissan's tale of woe continues



June 15, 13:37  
By: Cycling News

### Rumours of late salaries, dis-invitation to Tour de France and Schlecks looking to leave

The crisis around [RadioShack-Nissan](#) continues to grow amid reports of delayed salary payments, a possible revoked invitation for the Tour de France and rumours that [Fränk](#) and [Andy Schleck](#) may leave the team.

The latter two possibilities are related to Johan Bruyneel's involvement in the [USADA's Lance Armstrong investigation](#). The RadioShack team manager [faces up to a lifetime ban](#) if he is found to have violated the anti-doping regulations.

The team has not responded to *Cyclingnews'* requests for comments, and neither the team nor Bruyneel has publicly commented on the situation. The Luxembourg website *wort.lu* reported that the UCI on Thursday told Bruyneel that he must report to them on his position.

The French sports newspaper *L'Equipe* reported on Friday that the Schleck brothers are preparing to leave the team. Their lawyer is said to have already started negotiations with the directors of other teams over contracts for the next season.

In addition, French website *rncsport.fr* reports that Tour organizer ASO may cancel the team's invitation to the Tour in light of Bruyneel's involvement. Race director Christian Prudhomme would neither confirm nor deny that to the French website.

The Schleck brothers do not have a good relationship with team financier Flavio Becca, according to *wort.lu*. The Luxembourg businessman's firm Leopard S.A., which is responsible for the team, was late in paying May salaries, reported *Blick.ch*. Becca is further said to be involved in a governmental scandal, and to be under investigation for tax problems and/or embezzlement. Becca, who is also said to be heavily in debt, had his [house and business searched by the police last year](#).

The only piece of good news for the Schlecks is that they have both been nominated to the Luxembourg Olympic team. Andy Schleck has had to [withdraw from the Tour de France squad with a fractured pelvic bone](#), but will be able to ride again in the Olympic road race, according to the Luxembourg media.

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## Madrazo out with fractured cervical vertebra after Route du Sud crash



June 15, 15:37  
By: Cycling News

### Movistar rider to undergo surgery

Angel Madrazo of [Movistar](#) team suffered a cervical fracture in a crash near the end of the first stage of the [Route du Sud](#). He will undergo surgery today or Friday, the team said.

The 23-year-old hit a traffic island and was initially diagnosed with a fracture left collarbone. However, examinations at the hospital in Albi, France, disclosed a small fracture in his second cervical vertebra.

He was moved to hospital in Toulouse for surgery Thursday or Friday.

The "Sparrow of Cazoña", as he is nicknamed, joined the team in 2009. 2011 was his breakthrough year, with numerous top ten finishes. This year he was fifth overall in the Tour Mediterranean, and third in the [GP Miguel Indurain](#).

## Bruyneel asserts innocence regarding USADA doping allegations



June 15, 20:00  
By: Cycling News

### Will cooperate fully with investigation

Johan Bruyneel, who along with Lance Armstrong plus four other doctors and trainers from the United States Postal Service team are the target of a [US Anti-Doping Agency \(USADA\) investigation](#), today released a statement proclaiming his innocence of all charges.

"I have never participated in any doping activity and I am innocent of all charges," read a statement on Bruyneel's personal website. "I am dismayed that once again doping allegations have been raised against me, this time by USADA.

"Following a Department of Justice Grand Jury investigation, no charges were filed against me. It cannot be right that I or anyone else can be pursued from court to court simply because our accusers do not like the decisions made along the way and so attempt to find a court which will get them the result they want."

The *Washington Post* reported on Wednesday, June 13, on a copy of a 15-page letter sent by USADA to Lance Armstrong and five others, including Bruyneel, in which they are accused of a doping conspiracy. USADA alleges that Bruyneel, Armstrong's team director for all seven of the Texan's Tour de France victories from 1999 to 2005, committed violations including possession of prohibited substances and/or methods (including EPO, blood transfusions and related equipment, testosterone, hGH, corticosteroids and masking agents); trafficking of the aforementioned prohibited substances; administration and/or attempted administration of prohibited substances; and assisting, encouraging, aiding, abetting, covering up and other complicity involving one or more anti-doping rule violations.

Bruyneel has the right to file a written statement to the USADA Anti-Doping Review Board by June 22, 2012 regarding the allegations in the USADA letter.

According to USADA protocol, USADA will also make a written submittal to its Anti-Doping Review Board regarding the doping allegations. The Anti-Doping Review Board will decide if there's sufficient evidence to proceed with adjudication process and the respondents have a right to a hearing if proceedings advance beyond Anti-Doping Review Board. A hearing date should take place prior to November, 2012

"I shall of course cooperate fully with the investigation, although I have no doubt the end result will be the same as all the other investigations over the years," said Bruyneel.

Meanwhile, the [RadioShack-Nissan](#) team, of which Bruyneel is a general manager, issued a statement on Friday regarding the USADA investigation in which it distances itself from the allegations. "LEOPARD S.A. (with its cycling team known as RadioShack Nissan Trek) takes note that none of the investigated facts relate to its cycling team, to its riders or to the present activities of Mr Bruyneel within the LEOPARD S.A. structure," said the team in a press release. "Indeed, these alleged facts report exclusively to events that took place prior to the start of the collaboration between LEOPARD S.A. and Mr Bruyneel.

"LEOPARD S.A. stepped into cycling with the firm commitment of actively promoting a zero doping policy. In this context, and in the light of the possible development of the case, LEOPARD S.A. will take all appropriate measures, in order to guarantee its sporting integrity and the general interest of cycling."

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RadioShack directeur sees Luxembourger as Tour contender in 2013

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