

Verbruggen won't take legal action against Hamilton

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Dutchman reacts angrily to questions on Armstrong testing

Former UCI President Hein Verbruggen has ruled out taking legal action against Tyler Hamilton despite the former rider substantiating Floyd Landis' allegations of past corruption within the UCI. Cycling's governing body is suing Landis for defamation after he alleged that the UCI had covered up a positive test for Lance Armstrong during the 2001 Tour de Suisse and protected riders. Both Armstrong and the UCI have denied the allegations while Landis has yet to see his case come to light in court.

The UCI is also in the midst of legal proceedings against the former *Sunday Times* and "Rough Ride" author Paul Kimmage, who received a [subpoena on Wednesday](#) from the Est Vaudois district court, which is based in Vevey, near UCI headquarters at Aigle. The case is to be heard on December 12.

While the UCI sues a journalist with a stern public anti-doping stance and an ex-rider who has confessed to doping, they are still awaiting a "reasoned decision" which USADA must issue as the next step in its anti-doping case against Lance Armstrong.

"The problem is we can't find Landis," Verbruggen told *Cyclingnews* as he poured himself a glass of wine at a worlds presentation in Valkenburg.

However Verbruggen, who served as UCI president from 1991 to 2005, added that, "We've had legal suits in the past with Dick Pound so everyone that says we have put things under the table or not done our best is sued. Simple. They can come to the court and prove their case. Simple like that."

It is understood that the UCI's action against Kimmage stemmed from a body of work for *The Sunday Times* newspaper, which includes an extensive interview with Floyd Landis published in January 2011, and in response to criticism of the UCI that Kimmage expressed in an interview with *L'Équipe*. However, the UCI has not requested damages from *L'Équipe* or *The Sunday Times*, only from Kimmage. The Irishman left *The Sunday Times* at the end of 2011.

Asked why he and his associates had taken action against Kimmage and not the publications Verbruggen incorrectly claimed that only the author could face a legal case.

"No it's him. He's said it. You don't sue the paper. I don't know exactly the details but I saw the text and the text is clearly an attempt at our integrity. Recently I saw that he was angry with us because we went after journalist and we should do better anti doping and not go after journalists who ask questions."

In 2011 Kimmage spent several hours interviewing Landis, an interview the UCI at the time called 'boring'. Later, in an interview with *Cyclingnews*, Kimmage raised questions about the UCI's relationship with Armstrong, while [last month he told the website that](#), "McQuaid needs to resign and Verbruggen needs to be removed from the sport."

"Rough Ride", is widely held up as one of the most seminal cycling books. It tells the tale of Kimmage's journey as professional rider and his predicament and battles as he encountered a world and culture warped by doping. Asked if he had read the book, which was published roughly at the same time his presidency began, Verbruggen said:

"No. No. I have no need to read that. Why should I? I'm not in cycling any more. I've never read it. I don't read very much. I'm sorry to say but there's no need. I know what we have to do and we always did. Someone has doubts about that, court, simple. Also Mr Pound. I have nothing to hide."

The Secret Race

As for Hamilton, whose book "[The Secret Race](#)" was released earlier this month, Verbruggen ruled out legal action. In his confession Hamilton admitted to taking performance enhancing drugs during his time at US Postal, CSC and Phonak and alleged that Lance Armstrong provided him with EPO before the 1999 Tour de France.

Hamilton, like Landis, makes the claim that Armstrong told him that a positive test from 2001 was covered up. Hamilton also claims that Armstrong informed the UCI of Hamilton's doping habits after Hamilton beat Armstrong during a mountain time trial at the Dauphine in 2004. Hamilton said that the call led to meeting between him and the UCI. The UCI later said that the meeting was routine and that Armstrong had not been involved.

"He [Hamilton] has not written those things. He says that he's heard from Armstrong saying those things. He's much more careful," Verbruggen said.

Yet in the book Hamilton says, "We're way, way ahead of the tests. They've got their doctors, and we've got ours, and ours are better. Better paid, for sure. Besides, the UCI doesn't want to catch certain guys anyway. Why would they? It'd cost them money."

As for the Armstrong tip off, Verbruggen said "That's not true. He was called in by the UCI. I've never had a tip from Armstrong but you know and not from anyone else. We called him in because he had very doubtful results. We did that all the time. That's what he says but I don't want to talk about the whole thing."

USADA's case files

It is understood that both Landis and Hamilton are central in USADA's case surrounding doping practises that took place at the US Postal team. The agency's case has already led to uncontested sanctions for Lance Armstrong, who has been stripped of all of his results from 1998 onwards.

Landis [originally came clean](#) in a series of emails in 2010, when he added to doping, and the fact that he had covered up his lies by denying doping.

"He has never contacted me. Nor has Mr Kimmage, Mr Walsh, Mr Hamilton, nor has any of your colleagues. I've never heard from these people one phone call," Verbruggen said when asked why he would not listen to a confession.

Cyclingnews reminded Verbruggen that he and Landis had been in email contact in 2010, when he had emailed Landis stating that: "Mr. Landis, you're not worth any further word or attention except perhaps from psychiatrists. HV".

Upon being reminded of the email correspondence, Verbruggen added: "Yes, because he comes out with statements and then I react but pick up the phone and talk with those people, that's apparently not done.

"If someone wants to give me a confession come and give me a call, sit down. These people go to the press, say all kinds of insulting things that are not true, well let them come to court. That's my only answer.

"You're a journalist. You know very well how it works. It's the same thing. We've had Mr Pound in court. He has retracted many of the things he says in court but you don't publish that and most of the press doesn't. Come to court and prove your case. I think that's the best answer. It should be taken as a sign that we have nothing to hide. Nothing. Absolutely nothing."



Hein Verbruggen



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When asked about the USADA case Verbruggen reacted angrily, saying, "I don't talk about that. You're a journalist. You hear that those people say Armstrong has arranged with the UCI... If you would be a guy that thinks like Landis or Hamilton wouldn't you ask Armstrong what are you doing with the tests that are done by USADA? What are going to do with the tests by WADA, AFLD? Nobody says that. What I mean is, if Armstrong tells those riders I can arrange with the UCI, if you were Hamilton wouldn't you say, 'Lance what if I'm controlled by USADA, what are you going to do if I'm found positive?' He has been controlled 500 times, maybe 200 times other than us."

The claim of 500 tests has never been officially proven but current UCI President Pat McQuaid recently publicised that Armstrong had been tested 215 times by the UCI. However when *Cyclingnews* pointed out that they weren't aware of how many times Armstrong had been tested or which body had tested him each time, Verbruggen added:

"You should. God dammit. You're here with your microphone embarrassing me with all types of questions. I'm mad at people like you. You don't even do your homework. Is he only controlled by the UCI, he's controlled by other bodies. Am I entitled to be upset? You can write that. I wonder. You don't know the rules. That's upsetting for me. I'm 72 and I don't need lessons from people like that. You don't do your bloody homework. I know he's been tested. Yes. You should bloody well know; I hope to see that you write that. 'We as journalists don't do our homework'."