



# Floyd Landis comes clean, accuses Lance Armstrong

Updated 5/21/2010 5:46 PM

By Sal Ruibal, USA TODAY



By Peter Dejong, AP

Floyd Landis was happy right after the 2006 Tour de France.

Floyd Landis, the American cyclist who had his 2006 [Tour de France](#) win taken away after he was found to have violated doping rules, is now saying that he and his former teammate [Lance Armstrong](#), plus other members of the [U.S. Postal Service](#)

Professional Cycling Team, were part of a systematic doping scheme to use banned drugs and avoid detection.

Landis also claims that Armstrong bribed a high-ranking international cycling official to hide a positive doping test in 2002 and used banned drugs and techniques to circumvent detection while winning the Tour de [France](#) seven consecutive times.

Armstrong — speaking Thursday in [Visalia](#), Calif., before the fifth stage of the Tour of California — vehemently denied Landis' accusations.

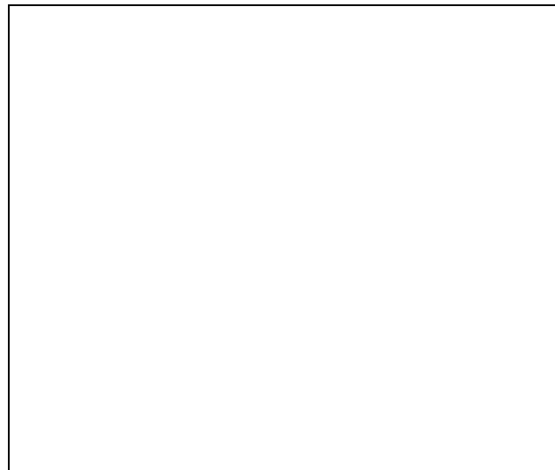
"I'm surprised it didn't come out [at the first stage] in Sacramento," he said. "The timing with the race is obvious." The seven-time Tour de France winner said that while he had filed lawsuits against others who had made allegations in the past, he probably would not sue Landis, saying he preferred to spend his time "on my team, Livestrong and my family. ... It's our word against his word. I like our word."

Later Thursday Armstrong crashed a few miles into the stage outside Visalia. He went to the hospital for X-rays and abandoned the Tour of California, which ends Sunday with a circuit race in Thousand Oaks. Team spokesman Philippe Maertens told The Associated Press that Armstrong got stitches in the left elbow and under the left eye.

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Landis' allegations were part of a string of e-mail correspondences contained in a May 19 e-mail sent to news reporters through an online service that blocks the identity of the sender. The emails were first reported by the *Wall Street Journal*.

Part of the correspondence includes an e-mail to Steve Johnson, CEO of [USA Cycling](#) (the sport's national governing organization), in which Landis outlined how he and his teammates were taught to use the banned blood-boosting drug EPO and techniques for so-called "blood doping" through the collection, storage and eventual re-injection of their own red blood cells.

"I want to clear my conscience," Landis told ESPN.com. "I don't want to be part of the problem any more."

He also said he was speaking out now in part because the World Anti-Doping Agency's eight-year statute of limitations was close to running out. "If I don't say something now then it's pointless to ever say it," Landis said.

Johnson released a statement Thursday saying USA Cycling "does not discuss doping allegations, investigations or any aspect of an adjudication process."

"There are many accusations being circulated and we are confident these will be thoroughly investigated by the appropriate authorities," the statement said. "Cycling is the most aggressive sport in the fight against doping."

In his e-mails, Landis claims that in 2002, Postal team director [Johan Bruyneel](#) personally taught him how to use testosterone patches to boost his performance. Landis' 2006 violation that cost him the Tour win was related to an illegally high testosterone level caused by the use of testosterone skin patches. He also alleges that he and Armstrong discussed how to use EPO without detection.

Other Landis allegations:

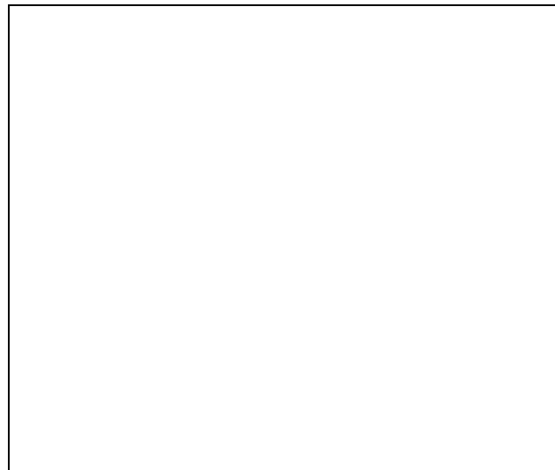
- The team had strong ties to Italian doctor [Michele Ferrari](#), who Landis says often extracted blood from him and his teammates for later reinjection at races. Ferrari also showed the team how to store the blood in refrigerators, Landis wrote. Landis claims that Armstrong had him stay at his Girona, Spain, apartment while Armstrong and his wife were away in case there was a power failure that would endanger blood stored in a refrigerator hidden in a closet.

- Blood extraction for later transfusion was extracted by a team doctor at Armstrong's apartment home in 2003. Landis says on two occasions the entire team met there for blood transfusions. Later that year, he claims, "I was instructed to go to Lance's place by [team director] Johan Bruyneel and get some EPO from him. The first EPO I ever used was then handed to me in the entry way to his building."

- In 2004, Landis claims, the team was becoming more cautious about their program and began flying to Belgium for blood work. He also says the team began doing blood work on its team bus: "The second ... was performed on the team bus on the ride from the finish of a stage to the hotel during which the driver pretended to have engine trouble and stopped on a remote mountain road for an hour or so so the entire team could have half a liter of blood added. This was the only time that I ever saw the entire team being transfused in plain view of all the other riders and bus driver."

- By 2005, Landis says he was doing his own transfusions, but hired an assistant to make sure the blood was handled at the proper temperatures.

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- In 2006, Landis left for the Swiss-based Phonak team. He claims that team officials there approved and financed his doping plan, which went awry when he had a positive test for an illegal testosterone ratio and lost the winner's yellow jersey.

Armstrong's attorney Bill Stapleton declined to comment Wednesday because he said he had not seen the letters.

"I've always known Floyd as an angry person ... somebody who's basically angry with the world," Bruyneel said. "To me it sounds like he just wants to drag down people who are still there and enjoying this."

Jim Ochowicz, a former official for USA Cycling, also was implicated in the emails. "These allegations are not true, absolutely unfounded and unproven," said Ochowicz to the Associated Press. He is now the president of BMC Racing, Hincapie's current team. "This is disappointing to anyone who works in the sport or is a fan of the sport."

UCI president Pat McQuaid questioned Landis' credibility in a telephone interview Thursday with the Associated Press.

"What's his agenda?" McQuaid told the Associated Press. "The guys is seeking revenge. It's sad, it's sad for cycling. It's obvious he does hold a grudge."

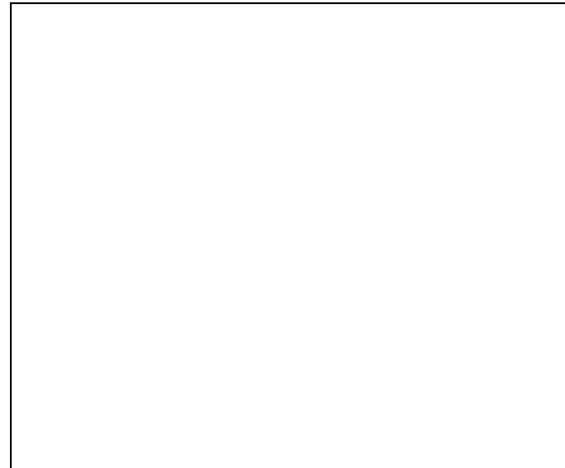
McQuaid said he received copies of the e-mails sent by Landis to the U.S. cycling federation, but declined to comment on their contents. He said Landis' allegations were "nothing new."

"He already made those accusations in the past," McQuaid said. "Armstrong has been accused many times in the past but nothing has been proved against him. And in this case, I have to question the guy's credibility. There is no proof of what he says. We are speaking about a guy who has been condemned for doping before a court."

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*Contributing: The Associated Press, staff reports*

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