

# Lance Armstrong May Face Legal Battle in Wake of Doping Admission

by Anthony Caruso on January 18, 2013

Lance Armstrong's repeated and strenuous assertions of innocence against doping allegations were shattered this week when the athlete and cancer survivor admitted to using performance enhancing drugs during an interview with Oprah Winfrey.

The cyclist, who was stripped of his seven Tour de France titles and lost several of his endorsements may have made this admission under the false pretense that no additional action could be taken, but this may not be the case. In fact, Armstrong may face legal action if the U.S. Justice Department chooses to reopen its former two-year investigation and prosecute the cyclist. Some analysts say this may be unlikely, however, because the statute of limitations for perjury has run out. Armstrong's last testimony under oath that he did not engage in doping during his cycling career was in 2005. However, others say that the Justice Department may consider a criminal fraud case or take civil action against the former athlete.

Armstrong is already facing a number of lawsuits, including one brought against him by the U.S. Postal Service for defrauding the government. The cyclist accepted tens of millions of dollars in sponsorship money from USPS, and a damning report released previously by the U.S. anti-doping agency prompted the agency to start litigation against Armstrong. In addition to this suit and lost endorsements, Armstrong also faces a federal whistleblower lawsuit from former teammate Floyd Landis. The list is growing among newspapers, associations and individuals who are lining up to sue Armstrong for contract disputes or to recover bonuses, settlements and other monies paid to the former title-holder over the years.

It is currently unclear if former sponsors will pursue legal action to recover money from the cyclist. Morality clauses are a common aspect of sports law in regards to sponsorship contracts, but few actions have been taken against disgraced athletes historically.

For more information about this case or anti-doping regulations in other sports, please contact Anthony Caruso, Chair of Scarinci Hollenbeck's Sports and Entertainment Law Group.