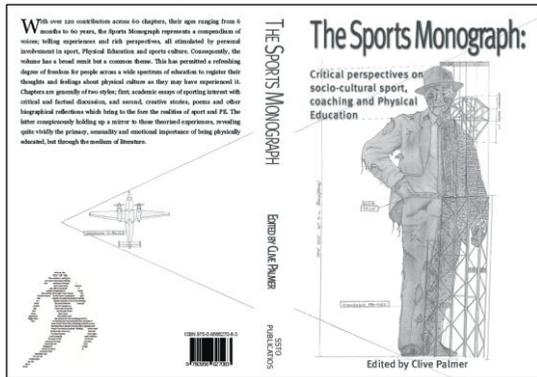


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Edited by:	Clive Palmer
Contributors and Institutions 	UCLAN University of Central Lancashire Edge Hill University, Lancashire Myerscough College, Lancashire Greenwich University London Witton Church Walk Primary School, Cheshire Moore Primary School, Cheshire UCAN University of Chester Academy Northwich, Cheshire German Sports University, Cologne Plus independent authors: over 60 chapters from 120 contributors spanning ages from under 6 months to over 60 years
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Doping in sport: Lance Armstrong, a case study

Iain Adams

with

Josh Carine and David Emmerson

Introduction

There is strong evidence that athletes have approached the improvement of their performance with intelligence and creativity from the very beginnings of formal competition. This has involved the evolution of training methods, the development of equipment and experimentation with diet. However, the introduction of significant prizes in events such as the ancient Olympics quickly corrupted the noble goals of seeking athletic perfection for itself or as a tribute to the Gods. Certainly in the ancient Olympic Games competitors used a variety of herbs and funguses as stimulants and hallucinogenics. Philostratus, a 3rd-2nd Century BC sophist, reveals that doctors helped athletes prepare for their events at Olympia and advised cooks in the preparation of concoctions containing such ingredients as the juice of the opium poppy to deaden pain. However evidence is hard to come by as they carefully hid their efforts from the Hellanodikai, the judges, as athletes continue to do (König, 2008; Papagelopoulos, Mavrogenis, and Soucacos, 2004). It is possible that the English word ‘doping’ originates in the Dutch word dop, a viscous opium juice, probably similar to that used by the ancient Greeks (Bowers, 1998).

Probably because of the extremes of endurance and speed demanded by various cycling disciplines, the use of drugs in the sport certainly pre-dates The Tour de France which started in 1903. Endurance events require a dulling of the senses to overcome the pain and many early riders used alcohol and ether, others realised morphine was ideal because it deadened the pain of the last agonizing miles of competition and then helped sleep to recover for the next day’s trials. Although Henri Desgrange originated The Tour as a ‘moral crusade for the sport of cycling’ (Whittle and Steer, 2007:9), there were sufficient complaints about skulduggery and cheating to fill two filing cabinets from the 1904 event on its own. This included sabotage of equipment, fans attacking cyclists to allow their

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favourites to speed away and cyclists catching rides in cars and on trains. The winner in 1904, Maurice Garin, was disqualified for covering part of the distance in a train, but the use of performance enhancing drugs and analgesics, although common, was not an issue.

Cycling was not alone in the acceptance of drugs; lacrosse players, in common with cyclists, were known to have drunk a mixture of wine and cocaine leaves in order to fight off hunger and fatigue (Murray, 1983). In the 1904 Olympic Games at St Louis, the American marathoner Thomas Hicks, won with the help of raw egg, strychnine injections and brandy (Gifford, 2004). Interestingly he was physically supported by his trainers at several points in the race including across the finish line; four years later the Americans would protest when Dorando Pietri received assistance from officials in the last few yards of the event at the 1908 London Olympics and had him disqualified so that their man, Johnny Hayes, was declared the winner (Adams and Larson, 2012).

Many types of drugs have been and are used to enhance performance in sport; including beta blockers to ensure a steady aim in shooting and baseball pitching, Ronicol to aid blood circulation to the muscles, steroids to develop muscle mass and help recovery from training, hormones such as erythropoietin (EPO) and human growth hormone (HGH) to improve endurance performance, and amphetamines to increase alertness and decrease the sense of fatigue. Amphetamines have long been wrongly associated with the death of Danish cyclist Knud Jensen in the 1960 Olympic 100 kilometres team time trial; a death probably caused by 'extreme heat combined with the consumption of Ronicol, which would have contributed to an already significant level of dehydration' (Møller, 2005:470). Dehydration and heat exhaustion, allied with a cocktail of amphetamines and brandy caused the death of the British cyclist Tommy Simpson on Mont Ventoux in the 1967 Tour. The rumours of Jensen using amphetamines and Simpson's death heightened the awareness of the dangers of doping and brought about a determination to control the peloton's worst excesses despite a leading rider, Jacques Antequetil, stating, 'I don't want to hear the word doping. Rather, one must speak of treatments that are not appropriate for ordinary mortals. You cannot compete in the Tour de France on mineral water alone' (Whittle and Steer, 2007:145). As a result, medical controls were introduced into the Tour in 1968; the same year that the International Olympic Committee (IOC) instituted drug tests at the winter games in Grenoble and the summer games in Mexico. By the 1970s most international sporting federations had instituted drug testing but continuing differences in definitions, policies, sanctions and even lists of banned substances led the IOC to head a collective initiative of the major sporting organisations and establish the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) in 1999 (WADA, 2010).

WADA sets out to research, educate and monitor the use of drugs in sport, and defines doping as the 'occurrence of one or more of the anti-doping

violations set forth in Article 2.1 through Article 2.8 of the code' (WADA, 2009). The agency also suggests that it is each athlete's personal duty to ensure that no prohibited substance enters their body (WADA, 2009). There is a significant literature on the field of sports doping and Verroken (1996) noted that when necessity demands medical treatment with any substance which, because of its nature, dosage or application, is able to boost the athlete's performance in competition in an artificial and unfair manner, this too is regarded as doping.

Values and ethics of sport and doping

If an athlete attains their goals in an unfair way; whether through foul play, drug use or any other form of cheating, then it may be regarded as an act of poor sportsmanship. Not all competitors take performing enhancing drugs, but those that do are gaining an unfair advantage over their competitors. Verroken (1996:51) opined, after reviewing the undoubted effects and consequences that drug use has on the body, that there can be no justification for athletes to cheat in order to win. Although most sports performers face the same external pressures, some do succumb and take illegal aids although the majority do not. Therefore the use of performance enhancing drugs is not an educational, economic or social problem, but one of morals and ethics. However, a Swiss sports doctor, Gérard Gremion, thought that 99% of the peloton in the Tour de France were doping (France-Soir, 1998).

Ethics is, at its simplest, a system of rules and principles that guide the actions of a particular individual or group in order to do 'good' (Singer, 1994). From this definition, it can be concluded that sport contains a myriad of ethical case studies, because each sport has at least one set of guidelines and incumbent rules to ensure it runs efficiently and fairly. There are many ethical theories applied to sport, with most scholars taking a Kantian deontological approach to act upon ones 'duties' rather than the consequences of their actions; one must do the right thing simply because it is the right thing to do. Others subscribe to consequentialism, doing whatever produces the greatest amount of good for the greatest number of people. A form of consequentialism is utilitarianism, an idea developed by Jeremy Bentham, stating that people should maximise human welfare or well-being, maximizing pleasure and minimizing pain (Robinson and Garratt, 2004). Although these ethical schools differ, they both aim to achieve a similar common goal, which is to aid the process of moral decision making, morals being the principles of right and wrong in society.

Singer (1994) suggests that morals take the form of a stern set of duties, or moral obligations, to obey the law, essentially to obey the ethics set out by society. Morals can be formed and shaped by a wide range of external factors and form the basis of sociological thinking. In sport, moral values are used to assess situations and obey, or disobey, the ethical guidelines, or rules, set up by an organisation. Loland (2002) argues that sport rules and ethics do not speak for

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themselves, instead they are governed by human interaction and the norms that humans share. For example, there must be common knowledge about football by both parties in order to successfully play the game; players must understand what it means to score a goal, or alternatively what construes 'diving'.

For a long time, sport has been seen as a tool for character building and has been partly justified within educational systems as it is purported to teach morality and skills, such as initiative, loyalty, discipline and fair play; fair play being understood to mean using tactics and strategies that are in accord with the rules and spirit of the game. In the Anti-Doping Code presented by WADA (2009), it is suggested that doping programmes should seek to preserve the intrinsic value of sport, i.e. 'the spirit of sport', because this spirit is the essence of the Olympics and leads to sport being a celebration of the human spirit, body and mind. Cook (1908:16) cited Baron De Coubertin as once announcing:

Before all things it is necessary that we should preserve in sport these characteristics of nobility and chivalry which has distinguished it in the past, so that it may continue to play the same part in the education of the peoples of today as it played so admirably in the days of ancient Greece.

The moral standpoint that Coubertin adopted came from his admiration of the principles founded in muscular Christianity (Beamish and Ritchie, 2006). Instilling these core values in modern day sport is still seen as being of great import to many, but the immense pressures involved with winning in modern day sports, mainly due to the increasing expectations from sponsors, coaches, team members, family and fans, often leads to athletes facing a moral dilemma, cheat and win or obey the spirit of the rules and lose. Verroken (1996) suggests that the development of the 'win at all cost' mentality, which for many, is integral to elite sport, gives commentary to the work of Dubin (1990) who argued that the switch from the original mandate of Sport Canada to support mass participation in 1988 to one of winning, predictably led to the use of anabolic steroids by Ben Johnson and his teammates. Canada had lost track of what athletic competition was all about in its pursuit of the goal of becoming one of the top three countries in athletics; there was too much emphasis on winning Olympic gold by both the public and by the Canadian media. Olympic gold seemed to be regarded as the only achievement worthy of recognition.

Lumpkin (2009) reiterated the position that without ethical guidelines and a shared sense of morality in sport, the emphasis on winning grows and consequentially results in unethical and un-sportsman like behaviour. As a result, athletes regularly face situations where they must make the moral decision on whether or not to use fair-play values, a decision De Coubertin maintained was entirely down to them. It is almost like a constant tug-of-war between winning and fair play, whilst at the epicentre lie ethical and moral decision making. Lumpkin, Stoll and Beller (1999) discussed a moral paradigm that contains three

stages of thought when it comes to making these moral decisions. In brief the process is about being able to recognise a moral dilemma, being able to value oneself and the surrounding society and finally being able to use core intrinsic value and knowledge about a situation in order to act. The major factor in this three stage process is being able to adopt and apply one's values contextually and consistently. However, because moral values are internal, they differ from person to person and therefore result in a wide range of viewpoints and opinions on what is right and what is wrong.

Before an athlete takes an illegal ergogenic aid, they enter the decision making process whilst considering a variety of internal and external factors. In accordance with this, Strelan and Boeckmann (2003) developed the Drugs in Sport Deterrent Model (DSDM) to explain the decisions elite athletes make in ergogenic drug use. This model outlines a wide range of benefits, such as winning, prize money, acknowledgement from peers and an enhanced future career, and deterrents, for example legal sanctions, health concerns and social perspectives. Not only does the use of performance enhancing drugs present a potentially severe risk to an athlete's health, it also may have a significant effect on their fellow professionals, support teams, sponsors and fans. This betrayal of the support network is a major factor for many athletes in their decision-making, there now being a considerable entourage who invest in an individual's sporting potential. However, the betrayal may actually be not taking drugs and therefore not achieving the success that the support teams, sponsors and fans desire.

Lance Armstrong - the doping saga

On August 24th 2012, The United States anti-doping agency (USada) stripped Lance Armstrong of all of his competitive achievements from August 1998 to the present day. In a controversial move USada (2012a) also decided to issue a lifetime 'period of ineligibility' to Armstrong for all activities and competition which fall under its jurisdiction. For some reason, the USada decided that the Armstrong saga was one of the biggest sporting scandals in recent sporting history and stated that Lance Armstrong was heavily involved in 'the most sophisticated, professionalised and successful doping programme all sport has ever seen' (USada, 2012b).

Throughout his career Lance Armstrong was regarded as the greatest road cyclist of his era dominating the sport for many years. To win one Tour de France is a phenomenal feat 'no race is faster, more frantic or, as a result, more dangerous than the Tour' (Friebe, 2012:12), winning seven, 1999-2005, is an unsurpassed achievement and many would argue unsurpassable. Lance Armstrong himself, when asked in a recent high profile interview if he thought it was possible to win without performance enhancing drugs, stated 'not in my opinion, not in that generation' (BBC, 2013). Armstrong's referral to a 'generation' suggests that in the time of his cycling endeavours there was a

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'doping culture' throughout elite level cycling, implying that without the unnatural aid of such doping procedures, competing with the best was an unachievable task. In fact, a close examination of the Tour's history would lead most observers to conclude that a failure to dope would lead to failure in the race in any generation including today's. Many would argue however, that this does not make the action right (see Loland, 2002; Thompson, 2006). Ethical theories such as deontology are reliant on rules as a means to making moral decisions (Lumpkin *et. al.*, 1999) and would suggest that because there are strict laws and regulations set out by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), it was Armstrong's duty to refuse any illegal substance offered to him.

Thompson (2006), in his cultural study of the Tour de France, highlights that in regards to the issue of 'doping', the practice is as old as the sport itself, Armstrong was not the first elite cyclist discredited in the event which Max Novich referred to 'as a cycling nightmare' (1973:2597). The sport of cycling, and in particular the iconic Tour de France with which it is synonymous, is tainted to many as a result of the continuous high profile doping cases such as Jacques Anquetil, Eddy Merckx, the Festina scandal, Lance Armstrong, Floyd Landis and Alberto Contador. It is difficult to ignore the stark historical evidence that suggests cycling is a sport seemingly built on foundations of falsity. Even the Golden Age of the 1950s had its stories with the five time winner Jacques Anquetil telling the French government minister to 'leave me in peace; everybody takes dope' in a television debate (Anquetil, 2003), and the infamous incident of 1955 when Jean Malléjac collapsed on Mount Ventoux in a chilling precursor of Simpson's death in the following decade (Woodland, 2007). In 1977 Merckx, a five time champion, tested positive for Pemoline, an amphetamine-like substance, that riders thought could not be detected by the amphetamine test that had caught a number of riders in 1974 (El País, 1977). Overall Eddie Merckx would fail three doping tests in his career. In 1998 the French police stopped a Festina team car at the Belgium border and found narcotics, erythropoietin, testosterone, amphetamines and growth hormone. As a consequence they raided team hotels and discovered drugs in the rooms of the Dutch TVI team. Eventually seven teams dropped out of the race and less than one hundred riders finished out of 189 starters. Many thought the debilitating drug scandals of 1998 threatened the very existence of The Tour and it was only the popularisation of the event in America through the emergence of the Texan superstar Armstrong, bringing millions of dollars in sponsorship and TV rights that saved it (Whittle and Steer, 2007).

Elite athletes need to win and many 'over-conform' to this sporting aim by becoming 'positively deviant', in mainstream society's view, whilst in pursuit of this winning expectation (Coakley, 2009). It is apparent that drug enhanced training and performance was the norm for the Tour's competitors from the first race in 1903 until today. On the 13th May 2011, L' Equipe, citing a leaked report from the WADA laboratory in Lausanne, reported that 42 riders in 2010 showed

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'overwhelming evidence' of some form of doping, Lance Armstrong, riding his last Tour, was not one of the 42, although Wiggins the 2012 winner was not above suspicion. The proven normality of drug taking in elite cycling brings into question the immense criticism and the harsh and abnormal punishment of Armstrong; why should one athlete take the blame and punishment for the actions of everyone else? Why should one athlete be made an example? (This may be similar to Ben Johnson in 1988 after the Seoul Olympics). As he had never failed a test according to the Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI) and USada was finding him guilty for his first offence, he could have been punished by a six months ban as were most of his former teammates, some of whom had been caught before and should have had a minimum of a two year ban.

It is notable that since Armstrong had his 1999-2005 Tour titles stripped, no replacement winner has been named because all of the podium finishers, first through third, have failed drug tests except Armstrong. The 2006 race was initially won by Floyd Landis, an ex-teammate of Armstrong's, but he tested positive for an unusually high ratio of testosterone to epitestosterone and was later disqualified and then banned for two years. The 2007, 2009 and 2010 winner was Alberto Contador who was later disqualified in 2010 after testing positive for clenbuterol; he was also named in the Operación Puerto doping case leaving suspicions over his earlier performances. With the use of performance enhancing substances so endemic pre-2010, it may be that cyclists not taking drugs were disadvantaged and unable to obtain professional contracts.

Inner morality is shaped by the norms of society and the perceived norm of the professional cycling world would have influenced Armstrong and his peers. Therefore it can be construed that greater society, of which professional cycling is a part, played a significant part in these actions. It may have been partly through feelings of guilt and frustration at not being able to find any physical evidence of Armstrong's wrongdoings that caused USada to lash out in such a disproportionate manner. Their report highlights the disadvantages that purported 'clean' cyclists had with regard to team selection during Armstrong's seven years of leadership of the US Postal and Discovery teams. Furthermore it is suggested that Armstrong pressurised his team members to conform to his doping standards, 'Armstrong had ultimate control over not only his own personal drug use, which was extensive, but also over the doping culture of his team' (USada, 2012). This seems to indicate that despite previous efforts to pin blame on society as opposed to himself; Armstrong was in full control of his, and apparently his team-mates, decisions. However a close reading of the affidavits of his former teammates does not support the accusation that he essentially bullied his colleagues into doping against their will.

The evidence

The USada failed to find physical evidence of Armstrong's doping relied upon affidavits from his former teammates about the doping culture they had been involved in at US Postal and Discovery (USada, 2012b). The chief witness was Floyd Landis who won the 2006 Tour, after Armstrong had retired from racing, but was disqualified. In January 2010 a French judge issued an arrest warrant for Landis in connection with computer hacking into the Châtenay-Malabry antidoping laboratory which had conducted the tests on his urine samples in 2006. Investigators found that Landis had tried to change stolen data 'to make it seem as if the lab's testing procedures were sloppy, so its test results could not be trusted' (Jolly and Macur, 2010). However, it was not until November 2011 that Landis was found guilty of hacking into the laboratory computers (Associated Press, 2011). After his disqualification, he formed the Floyd Fairness Fund to collect money from the American public to fight a legal battle against his disqualification. The donations were collected from town-hall style meetings, charity rides, online videos and personal appearances 'based, in large part, on his consistent denial of having used PEDs [performance enhancing drugs], during his professional cycling career' (Rogers, 2013). After serving a two year ban during which he unsuccessfully fought charges brought by USada he returned to racing in 2009 and then in 2010 at the Amgen Tour of California described systematic doping at US Postal effectively acknowledging that his Fairness Fund was fraudulent (Rogers, 2013). This resulted in an investigation into Landis for wire and mail fraud by United States Federal prosecutors.

Landis's decision to 'tell all' during the Tour of California in 2010 appears to have been in vengeance after Armstrong, who was also riding in the race, refused to support him in obtaining a contract to ride for Team Radio Shack, Armstrong's team at the time (Albergotti and O'Connell, 2010), and the failure of the UCI to settle a dispute with Mercury Racing in his favour. Landis must have also thought that by exposing Lance Armstrong it would help his case with the US Attorney's office. In essence he was attempting to show that the culture surrounding US Postal was responsible for him denying the use of performance enhancing drugs and defrauding people of their money. He attached a copy of the US Attorney's Deferred Prosecution Agreement to his affidavit (Landis, 2012). Earlier he had told how at the beginning of his career he had heard that elite cyclists used 'exotic and prohibited blood additives and synthetic drugs. Far from being repelled by this... he had come to assume doping was part of the sport and, if he joined a top team, would be part of his job'. When trying to get a contract with US Postal he described how he had told Bruyneel, US Postal team director, in late 2001 that he wanted to be on the Tour squad 'and that whatever he needed to do to improve beyond the typical training, he was willing to do' (Albergotti and O'Connell, 2010). In his affidavit Landis describes his own use of blood doping, human growth hormone, testosterone and EPO alongside members of the

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team. Landis stated that at the end of the Dauphine Libere race in 2002, when he asked Bruyneel about how to improve he was instructed to obtain testosterone patches from Armstrong, and then in 2003, to get EPO from Armstrong (Landis, 2012).

Frankie Andreu who raced with Armstrong between 1996 and 2000 admitted to using EPO on his own to make Armstrong's 1999 squad for the Tour (Lindsey, 2011). He had been a teammate of Armstrong's on Motorola before they both joined US Postal. Andreu (2012:3) explained the context and drug culture he found himself in,

While I was competing on Motorola the use of erythropoietin (EPO) became prevalent in the peloton. As the use of EPO increased it became apparent that it was going to be difficult to have professional success as a cyclist without using EPO. Over time, a general consensus arose on the Motorola team that it would be necessary for us to use EPO to help in racing because there were so many riders against whom we were competing, who were using EPO. At the time, I recall LA saying he was getting his ass kicked and was in favour of doing something about it. All of us were saying that we have to do something. In 1996 Kevin Livingston and I drove together to Switzerland to purchase EPO. We went to a pharmacy in Switzerland and each purchased EPO for our own use.

Others, such as Levi Leipheimer had also been using performance enhancing substances before being recruited by US Postal. Leipheimer received a 6 month ban from USADA over the winter of 2012-2013, despite having tested positive for ephedrine whilst riding for Team Einstein in 1996 and admitting to using performance enhancing drugs and methods whilst riding for Saturn, US Postal, Rabobank, Gerolsteiner and Astana. Leipheimer (2012:3) noted that:

By 1999 I had come to believe that in order to be successful in professional cycling it was necessary to use performance enhancing drugs. I was offered EPO in 1999 while on the Saturn team...I debated internally about whether to use EPO for about six months before trying EPO during the second half of the 1999 season.

After the 1999 season Leipheimer negotiated with US Postal and joined them in December of that year. Leipheimer stressed that US Postal did not have an organised doping policy,

In April of 2007 at the Tour of Georgia I asked Johan Bruyneel whether the team was going to organize a blood doping programme for the 2007 Tour de France. Johan responded, "you're a pro, you should do it on your own" (Leipheimer, 2012:11).

Tyler Hamilton began racing for US Postal's precursor Montgomery-Bell in 1995; Montgomery-Bell became US Postal in 1996. He explained how difficult he found it to compete in Europe as:

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The speed of the peloton was tremendous and it was generally acknowledged that doping with the banned blood boosting hormone erythropoietin (EPO) was prevalent... In May of 1997 Dr Celaya gave me my first injection of EPO and provided some EPO to take home. After using EPO I began to notice significant improvement in my endurance and my racing performances (Hamilton, 2012:4).

Armstrong joined the team in 1998 and Hamilton protected him in the mountains during his first three wins of 1999, 2000 and 2001. Hamilton left US Postal in 2001 and began racing with Team CSC; 'when I met with the CSC Team Director he quickly referred me to the Spanish doping doctor, Dr. Eufemiano Fuentes, for blood transfusions' (Hamilton, 2012:14). Hamilton won the gold medal for the individual time trial in the 2004 Olympics but this was annulled for blood doping, an offense for which he was banned after failing another test in the 2004 Vuelta a España whilst riding for Phonak. After completing a two year ban Hamilton returned to racing but failed another test in 2009 for a banned steroid (Robbins, 2009).

Kevin Livingston also helped Armstrong through the mountains of the Tour in 1999 and 2000 before moving to Team Telekom in 2001 and retiring after the 2002 Tour. In 2013 a commission of French senators revealed that 17 cyclists, including Livingston, had returned positive EPO tests in 1998 and 18, again including Livingston, had used EPO in 1999. Others proving guilty included great names of cycling, Jalabert, Pantini, Ullrich, Olans, and Cipollini as well as Armstrong (Velonews, 2013). In 1998 Livingston was riding for Cofidis and not with Armstrong. Michael Barry was another US Postal rider who implicated Armstrong but began doping at Saturn, like Leipheimer, before he met Armstrong. He left Europe because 'I was fed up with the doping culture that was so prevalent in European cycling' (Berry, 2012). His affidavit describes doping with US Postal from 2003 and 2006 and does not mention Armstrong in connection with his own decision to start, emphasising the need to use drugs because 'my experiences during that first week made me question whether it was even possible to compete in a race like that without doping' [the 2002 Vuelta a España] (Berry, 2012:9).

Jonathon Vaughters began using EPO with the Porcelena Santa Clara team in 1994 and after joining US Postal remembered talking with Armstrong about EPO during the Festina scandal; 'Lance and I, having been professionals for years by that time, were under no illusions; that we could not be successful without EPO' (Vaughters, 2012:5). Christian Vande Velde signed for US Postal in 1997 and first used testosterone in 1999 after being asked whether he wanted to by Dr del Moral. In 2000 he approached del Moral 'about putting together a "programme" to improve my cycling performance. The term programme was a euphemism... referring to combining drugs and training to bring the rider to a level of peak performance' (Vande Velde, 2012:11). Vande Velde described how he failed to follow the programme religiously and was told by Armstrong and Dr

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Ferrari that he would have to follow the programme to the letter if he wanted to continue with US Postal. He left the team in 2003 for Liberty Seguros and found 'an organized doping programme' there as well and continued using EPO until joining CSC in 2005 (Vande Velde, 2012:20).

Of the eleven riders giving evidence most seem to have been using drugs before they met Armstrong or rode for US Postal and others indicated their willingness to use drugs to make the team. Despite USada's implication that Armstrong was implicit in forcing riders to start using drugs there is no evidence to that effect in the riders' affidavits to USada, although two or three riders mention his forceful insistence on not talking to the press about drugs and of him feeling betrayed when members left US Postal for other teams.

George Hincapie was a key domestique for Armstrong in all seven of Armstrong's victories on Le Tour and his affidavit detailed how he and Armstrong began doping. His reluctant implication of Armstrong earned him a six months ban over the winter of 2012-2013. He stated, 'early in my professional career, it became clear to me that, given the widespread use of performance enhancing drugs by cyclists at the top of the profession, it was not possible to compete at the highest level without them' (Hincapie, 2012a). He noted that his team Motorola, despite being the top US team, were being crushed in Europe so he, Armstrong and other team riders began using EPO because 'people in the peloton were talking about EPO quite openly... everybody was taking EPO... I purchased EPO for the first time in 1996 at a pharmacy in Switzerland' (Hincapie, 2012b:4-5). Hincapie continued to use testosterone pills and patches after Armstrong retired but claimed to have ridden 'clean' since 2006 (Hincapie, 2012b).

The overall impression of US Postal from the riders is that the team wanted to win and if riders could not perform to the desired standards they were expendable. Although there was no team doping policy, the team Director, Johan Bruyneel, and doctors, del Moral and Celaya, assisted the riders in the use of drugs and even encouraged it to maintain and improve performance. All of the riders knew Dr Ferrari but he was employed individually by riders such as Floyd Landis, Christian Vande Velde and Lance Armstrong and not by the US Postal team.

Another rider, David Zabriskie, offers a multi-dimensional view of the effect and consequences of the doping culture in cycling. He had started cycling to escape drugs explaining that,

Cycling became a refuge for me. Long hard training rides were cathartic and provided an escape from a difficult home life associated with a parent with an addiction. My father had a long history of substance use and addiction (Zabriskie, 2012:2).

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He revealed that after joining US Postal on a salary of \$40,000 in 2001 he had a bad year and his salary was reduced to \$15,000. In 2003 he met with Bruyneel and del Moral in Girona and 'felt cornered' into using EPO and testosterone (Zabriskie, 2012:8) but his improved performances earned him increases to \$50,000 for 2003 and \$65,000 for 2004. However it was a decision that placed him under severe stress and 'drove him to tears' with 'severe guilt' and was 'haunted by the possible health implications associated with doping' (USada, 2012b: 22-23). In 2004 he started living with Floyd Landis and Landis told him about other riders' use of drugs at US Postal, which support staff facilitated, and that Dr Ferrari took a percentage of his salary. At the end of 2004 Zabriskie left US Postal to ride for Team CSC but went to Landis's house for Christmas in 2005 where he was convinced by Landis to try growth hormone which he supplied along with EPO. In 2006 Landis claimed he was provided with 'in excess of one hundred thousand dollars to fund' his drug programme (Zabriskie, 2012:11). Zabriskie continued doping intermittently until June 2006 and became one of the first riders to sign the UCI riders' anti-doping commitment.

Scott Mercier has become something of a celebrity since being highlighted by USada chief executive Travis Tygart as the US Postal rider who resisted the pressure to dope. He recounted the day he refused in 1997 when team doctor Pedro Celaya gave each rider a training programme and a zip lock bag of pills and vials of fluids. He tried to follow the training programme of 200 to 250 kilometres per day but could not do it every day and could not keep up with his teammates. 'That was when I decided I didn't want to be a pro cyclist any more. I got home and decided "no thank you"' (Austin, 2012). By late 1997 Mercier left the sport for good despite having a contract to race for US Postal in 1998 and acknowledges that he has spent some of his time 'wondering what might have been' (Austin, 2012). Mercier feels that Celaya thought he was acting in the best interests of the cyclists, helping them to compete at the top level and preventing them seeking drugs on their own from riskier sources (CNN, 2012). Interestingly Mercier was not asked to give an affidavit and this gives some concern that USada were not interested in doping before Armstrong joined the team.

All of the affidavits offer compelling insights into the issues associated with doping in elite sport. It is clear that the presence of doping within the sport can potentially have a detrimental effect on all athletes, their families and support staff, whether an athlete has conformed or resisted they are all still exposed to the negatives associated with doping. All of the athletes acknowledged the seeming necessity to dope simply to keep up with the peloton let alone beat it. Mercier's insight into his experience as a professional rider in an era that was apparently dominated by performance enhancing drugs further supports the notion that the doping culture was rampant within the sport, 'when you're at an Amstel Gold Race and you can barely hold the wheel of the guy in 80th place... that same guy,

you smoked three months previously... how is this guy suddenly so much better than me?’ (Austin, 2012).

Beyond the bike

USADA’s exposure of the doping culture within cycling should benefit not only cycling but sport as a whole with particular emphasis placed on the importance of correct moral messages being given to the future participants in sport. Today’s media ensures that elite athletes in most sports are placed into the position of role models, or at least, the media fuel a public expectation that these athletes have a moral duty to represent their nation by competing fairly. Payne, Reynolds, Brown, and Fleming (2003) noted that sports people acting as role models have a positive impact on individuals and the broader community. They also referred to the application of the social cognitive theory when discussing the influence role models have on the development of young observers in that most learning is based on observation and relies to a large extent on the influence of role models and their characteristics. Role models are expected to set a good example of how to behave so that others might look up to them or emulate them in life, which may be an implicit duty of the Olympian in accordance with the Olympic Mission (Wassong, 2013).

Armstrong in particular was in a significant position; both powerful and vulnerable, within cycling as a role model (and Olympian); his deceitful success, deceitful at least to the general public, whilst acting as a catalyst to many to take up cycling and achieve within the sport. The 2012 Tour de France winner Bradley Wiggins (2013) spoke of the disgraced Armstrong as an influence in his early career; ‘he won the Tour (for the first time) when I was 19, on the Great Britain track squad, and it was so inspirational’ (Fotheringham, 2013). Perhaps it could be disputed that without the high profile achievement of Armstrong’s career, cycling may not have gained the same exposure and therefore the same capacity to inspire future generations, but is it right for future athletes to be inspired by what mainstream society regards as immoral cheats?

However, Armstrong’s achievements extend beyond cycling. Regardless of the pain he has caused thousands of cycling fans across the world, there is still a reason for Armstrong to be regarded as a hero. In 1996, Lance Armstrong was diagnosed with Stage 4 testicular cancer which had spread to his brain, lungs and abdomen (Livestrong, 2012a). After refusing radiotherapy because of its potential side-effects, the ex-cyclist battled through gruelling chemotherapy and brain surgery in order to fight his battle against cancer, and came out a winner. A year later in 1997 the charity ‘Livestrong’ was founded by the cyclist in order to help others achieve what he had, and to date has raised over \$500 million to offer services to cancer patients (Livestrong, 2012b). In May 2000 Armstrong’s autobiographical book *It’s Not About the Bike: My Journey Back to Life* was published and became a best seller inspiring people around the world. His story

brought a beacon of light to many in dark tunnels of despair through illness and gave hope when nothing else was offered. Similarly, millions supported the charity by wearing yellow bracelets accompanied with Nike clothing, the charity sponsor, as a sign of affection towards sufferers of the disease. However, the views of many changed with Armstrong's admittance to using performance enhancing drugs in an interview with Oprah Winfrey on her show in January 2013. This was broadcast to millions of viewers worldwide and made available on her internet forum. Armstrong's act of deception and fraudulence dented the hopes of millions of worldwide cycling fans who once idolised the competitor (Lennon and Palmer, 2011; Young and Adams, 2011) and furthermore, led to sponsors of the athlete including Nike, Trek and Budweiser removing their sponsorship (BBC, 2012).

As mentioned previously, an ethical theory often used in sports is utilitarianism. This theory holds the concept that an action must promote universal pleasure, and also minimise pain as much as possible. The theory of utilitarianism is very much a consequentialist theory; the end results of an action can justify its means. In this situation, the work Lance Armstrong has done for charity no doubt outweighs his drug enhanced performance scandal. The lives he has possibly saved and improved through funding cancer research certainly have more meaning and caused greater pleasures than the acts of deception in merely winning bicycle races.

Being in the position of a successful and high profile athlete and philanthropist will have unquestionably placed great amounts of pressure on Armstrong to continue his success within the sport. Initially after his cancer recovery, he decided to quit cycling, but his cancer doctors told him about the 'obligation of the cured', the need for people to know of his success in beating his cancer to give them the strength to continue their treatment (Armstrong, 2000:154). Because of this Armstrong 'started to see cancer as something that I was given for the good of others' (Armstrong, 2000:155). To support his charity and earn sufficient money to help people he had to continue racing and winning to show people that by following their difficult and painful chemotherapy regimens they could also win their personal races. Early in his book, Armstrong hints of his adherence to the sporting ethic, 'I'm asking you now, at the outset, to put aside your ideas about heroes and miracles, because I am not storybook material. This is not Disneyland or Hollywood' (Armstrong, 2000:3); it has to be remembered that Armstrong was doping before his cancer was diagnosed (Hincapie, 2012b). As a cancer survivor and role model, Armstrong was under pressure to do well which aligned with his already established elite athlete philosophy of winning. It may be that Armstrong became professional at the scientific manipulation of his body, and have equal expectations of his team, because of the unreasonable levels of expectancy placed upon him. Within his recent interview Armstrong strengthens this conception where 'the American

attributed his ruthless desire to win at all costs and the “momentum” of the pressure for success’ (Russian Today, 2013) as the catalyst for his involvement in doping. This calls into question the on-going attitudes towards high performing athletes within sport; is the criticism of Armstrong justified when it is highlighted that a key factor in his drug use was to gain continued acclaim from, and in many ways satisfy, the very people who now express disgust towards him? He was achieving great happiness for a great number and from a Kantian perspective his duty to continue to fund cancer research and relief are possibly of a higher order than his duty to the sport whose elite ethics he was following, or at least working within the boundaries of.

The sport of cycling and its association with such a high prevalence of doping has, in the opinion of many, tarnished and diminished the spectacle of the sport and subsequently the splendour of victory. Thompson (2006:216) suggests that the drugs culture reduced the heroism of the sport ‘if what made the super human exploits of the giants of the road possible was not their exceptional moral and physical qualities, but their pervasive and increasingly sophisticated doping’. Many cyclists have come forward in support of this belief that the sport of cycling has been tarnished as a result of Armstrong’s and others morally bankrupt decision to cheat their way to the level of elitism within the sport of cycling. In particular Armstrong’s former rival Dan Lloyd, who also competed in the 2010 Tour de France, believes that because of the actions of Armstrong’s generation, future elite riders will subsequently face continuous doubt and suspicion; ‘in the eyes of most of the general public a lot of these guys are going to be guilty until they can prove themselves innocent... until we don’t have doubts anymore I think the sport will always be tarnished’ (BBC, 2013b). This is a clear example of the longitudinal negative effect the high profile Armstrong doping saga has had on not only the sport of cycling but on elite level sport on a whole.

Conclusion

The USada findings show that strategic doping was an integral cog in the US Postal and Discovery teams success, following a well worn path blazed by the US Cycling team in the 1984 Olympics, the Carrera in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Philips DuPont Magnetics in 1990-1991, Team Telekom/Team T-Mobile, Festina, TVM and ONCE in the mid/late 1990s, Kelme-Costa Bianca 2000-2003, Cofidis in 2004, Astana-Würth in 2006, Astana and LA-MSS in 2007, and Lampre-ISD in 2008-2009. However, despite USada’s hyperbole there is clear evidence that doping was not a team policy for either US Postal or Discovery and athletes had to make their own choices; the team would support either choice but failure to perform was a guaranteed exit pass. These is disturbing evidence of pressures put onto riders, support staff and families to maintain omertà, the code of silence, about the use of drugs. However, the very word, omertà, reveals that the code of silence around drugs was not an invention of Armstrong or US Postal

but of the European circuit. Road racing is a dangerous sport with up to 200 cyclists sharing the same narrow road and they have to find ways of existing together to survive and have evolved an unwritten code of ethics including stopping to allow the *maillot jaune* to catch up if he has been caught up in an accident or had a mechanical problem. In 2001 Armstrong waited for Ullrich after he crashed rather than forging on ahead. Armstrong's continued refusal to admit to drug use and to 'name names' after he had 'come clean' could be regarded as upholding the moral values of his society.

In 2013 USADA published their vision for sport in 2016 in which USADA saw itself as 'the guardian of the values and life lessons learned through true sport' upholding the 'principles of true sport, sport that grows from the idea that athletes can compete fairly; with nothing but their motivation, their skill, their sweat, and their desire to drive them. And in doing so, they reveal truth in sport and in life' (USADA, 2013). A close reading of the US Postal cyclists' affidavits leads to a questioning of USADA fairness in its punishment of Armstrong and the tabloid journalism of its report and statements. USADA's CEO Travis Tygart stated that 'the evidence shows beyond any doubt that the US Postal Service Pro Cycling Team ran the most sophisticated, professionalised and successful doping programme that sport has ever seen' (Brown, 2012). This is patently untrue in the light of the systematic doping of East German athletes during the Cold War which it is estimated, scarred over 10,000 athletes. Between 1972 and 1988 East Germany, with a population of around 17 million, won 384 Olympic medals despite not competing at Los Angeles, to date over 356 former athletic administrators and coaches have been convicted of drugs related activity in sport (BBC, 2005). The state-sponsored East German system was copied by China throughout the 1980s and 1990s with steroids and human growth hormones treated as part of scientific training (The China Post, 2012). As in East Germany, many athletes did not know they were being doped. It is not only state sponsored programmes that make US Postal's drug conspiracy minor league. The BALCO case involved a myriad of baseball stars as well as track and field athletes including Marion Jones with five Olympic medals, three gold (Fainaru-Wada and Williams, 2006). Operación Puerto, a Spanish police operation against Dr Eufemiano Fuentes, involved cyclists from Atana-Würth, Cominidat Valenciana, AG2R, Caisse d'Épargne-Illes Balears, Team CSC, Phonak, Saunier Duval-Prodire, T-Mobile, Tinkoff and Unibet. Fuentes has also worked with tennis players, runners, footballers and boxers. In 2006 the police found more than 200 bags of frozen blood and plasma when they raided his office, which resulted in him being given a one year suspended sentence for endangering public health as doping was not illegal in Spain in 2006. On 29th April 2013, a Madrid court ordered the blood destroyed much to the annoyance of WADA who wanted to test the blood to see if it implicated other athletes in blood doping.

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Lance Armstrong certainly polarised opinions, the majority may feel he deserved a lifetime ban from sport; but others have sympathy and feel he has been made a scapegoat. Some cyclists feel he deserved a six month or two year suspension and he is admired for upholding the ethics of the peloton. Hincapie continues 'to regard Lance Armstrong as a great cyclist, and I continue to be proud to be his friend and to have raced with him' (Hincapie, 2012b:15). Livingstone remains friendly with Armstrong and runs his training studio out of the basement of Mellow Johnny's bike shop in Austin which is owned by Armstrong (Lindsey, 2011).

American authorities do not have a good record against drug abuse; in 2008 the San Diego Union-Tribune reported that 185 National Football League (NFL) players were using performance enhancing drugs identifying players from every position on the field and every team. Known users in baseball, such as Barry Bonds, Roger Clemens, Mark McGwire, and Sammy Sosa are still honoured in the Hall of Fame (Barra, 2013) despite their exposure as drug users. It is claimed that 114 American Olympians failed drug tests over 12 years but no action was taken and they were allowed to participate. Carl Lewis, who famously received the gold in the 100 metres in the Seoul 1988 Olympics after the first through the tape, Ben Johnson of Canada, was disqualified after failing a drug test, apparently failed three drug tests including in the Olympic trials (Wooldridge, 2003). Even worse, there is strong evidence that Lewis arranged for steroids to be put into Johnson's beer as he hydrated to give his urine sample after the final (Moore, 2012). Perhaps the severity of the ban is linked to an attempt to re-image American sports bodies, or perhaps taking on the NFL (National Football League) and MLB (Major League Baseball) is too daunting as too many Americans care about the image of their national sports; cycling is 'foreign'. Armstrong was proud to be an American racing for American teams on American bikes; perhaps if he had been from another country he would have been more fairly treated as he competed in a drug fuelled peloton. Charles de Gaulle, the French President, when asked about Anquetil's doping replied 'doping, what doping? Did he or did he not make them play the Marseillaise abroad?' (L'Équipe, 1994). As Armstrong commented on the drug culture during the RAGBRAI ride in Iowa in July 2013, 'that reality that the world has seen now is uncomfortable for many people... It wasn't a pretty time. I didn't invent it and I didn't end it' (The Washington Post, 2013). Armstrong's supporters and those interested in equitable treatment for all await for Tygart to open investigations into Lewis and the US Olympic Committee as doping amongst America's sprinters seems as rife as ever (LetsRun.Com, 2013).

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