

Business

# Cyclist Tyler Hamilton Hands in 2004 Gold Medal to Doping Agency

By Eben Novy-Williams

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Tyler Hamilton, an American cyclist who accused former teammate Lance Armstrong of taking performance-enhancing drugs, turned in his 2004 Olympics gold medal to the United States Anti-Doping Agency.

Hamilton, 40, tested positive for blood doping at the 2004 games in Athens and was allowed to keep the medal in the individual time-trial event because no back-up test could be done. He returned the medal to the USADA, the Colorado Springs, Colorado-based agency said today in an e-mailed statement.

“USADA continues its ongoing investigation into the sport of cycling,” the agency said in the release. “Where there is credible evidence of doping, a fair and thorough process exists for resolving such violations.”

Chris Manderson, Hamilton’s lawyer, said in a telephone interview that the cyclist voluntarily delivered the medal to USADA last week because he did not want it to be a distraction from his recent admission to doping or his comments about Armstrong in a “60 Minutes” television interview.

“Tyler didn’t want to hand it in for any reason other than he knew people were going to make a stink about it,” Manderson said.

Hamilton and Armstrong were teammates on the U.S. Postal Service team in 1999, 2000 and 2001. In an interview with “60 Minutes” correspondent Scott Pelley, airing on CBS on May 22, Hamilton said Armstrong used erythropoietin, or EPO, during the first of his seven Tour de France victories in 1999, and again to prepare for the race in 2000 and 2001.

Hamilton, who was suspended in 2005 and 2009 for doping, said he saw EPO in Armstrong’s refrigerator, and witnessed Armstrong inject himself with the drug multiple times. EPO boosts the number of oxygen-carrying red blood cells and improves stamina.

Armstrong denied the accusation through his spokesman, Mark Fabiani.

“Hamilton is actively seeking to make money by writing a book, and now he has completely changed the story he has always told before so that he could get himself on ‘60 Minutes’ and increase his chances with publishers,” Fabiani said in an e-mailed statement. The spokesman noted that Armstrong has taken and passed more than 500 doping tests over 20 years of competitions.

USADA, which said it does not comment on the details of active investigations, said it is working with the International Olympic Committee and the United States Olympic Committee as appropriate “concerning the final implications of our overall investigation.”