

## **Floyd Landis to ride the PowerNet Tour of Southland**

Hudson McIlraith are pleased to announce that Floyd Landis has agreed to ride for the new *cyclingnzshop.com* – *bioSPORT* team in the 2009 PowerNet Tour of Southland.

Floyd Landis is an American cyclist from California, who currently rides for the UCI Continental team OUCH Pro Cycling Team. Landis turned professional in 1999 with the Mercury Cycling Team. He joined the US Postal Service team in 2002, and moved to the Phonak Hearing Systems team in 2005.

In 2006, Landis won the first edition of the Tour of California, before going on to finish first in the 2006 Tour de France. He was stripped of his Tour de France victory after a drug-control test demonstrated the presence of a skewed testosterone/epitestosterone ratio during Stage 17.

Landis maintained his innocence and mounted a vigorous defence. Although Landis' legal team documented many inconsistencies in the handling and evaluation of his urine samples, the disqualification was upheld.

He was suspended from professional competition until 30 January 2009, following an arbitration panel's 2 to 1 ruling on 20 September 2007. Landis appealed the result of the arbitration hearing to the Court of Arbitration for Sport, which subsequently upheld the panel's ruling.

All this time Landis had been suffering from a hip ailment, osteonecrosis, which was revealed during the 2006 Tour de France. This deterioration in the ball joint of his right hip stemmed from diminished blood supply and constricted blood vessels caused by scar tissue. The scar tissue formed as a result of a femoral neck fracture sustained in a bicycle crash during a training ride in October 2002. Landis kept the ailment secret from his teammates, rivals and the media until an announcement made while the 2006 Tour was underway.

Due to the severe pain and disability caused by the degenerative arthritis, Floyd opted for surgery but, as an alternative to traditional hip replacement, Floyd had the Smith and Nephew Birmingham Hip resurfacing procedure performed on 27 September 2006.

During the 2008 season, Landis worked as an adviser to Rock Racing and in 2009 got back on his bike with the OUCH Pro Cycling Team, which is connected to the doctors who performed the hip resurfacing surgery.

Floyd he says he is doing quite well in putting his life back together: "I wouldn't wish what I've been through on anybody. It's not easy being accused of something you didn't do and having it out there for the world to see. I didn't do it, and I'll never stop saying that. But I'm not asking for sympathy. I'm not trying to make a statement or anything by coming back. I just want to race. That's when I'm happiest in life — when I'm on my bike."

It was this attitude that caused Wayne Hudson and Richard McIlraith to consider inviting Floyd to ride for a team in the PowerNet Tour.

"We had already formed a team of 5 riders, 4 of whom had ridden together in the 2008 Tour of Southland but a couple of weeks ago, the fifth rider switched to another team, leaving us in the lurch. Although we asked a number of local riders if they wanted to ride for our team, nearly all of them had made commitments to other teams that were entering the PowerNet Tour."

So, over a cup of coffee the two friends started tossing famous names around, and came up with Floyd. "Although it was just a joke at first, I said to Richard, 'Well why not? All we can do is ask and if we don't ask, we'll never know whether or not he might have said yes'", said Hudson.

After making enquiries of the OUCH Cycling Team, they were put in touch with Landis' agent Scott Thomson. It didn't take much longer to reach agreement in principle. Landis had just finished his competitive season so

## ***press release***

was in pretty good form and Scott was confident that Floyd would rise to the occasion. “Floyd is the kind of guy who will give his best and will turn up every day to ride his bike regardless of his form.”

Hudson McIlraith’s next job was to find some title sponsors for the team, in order to off-set some of the costs of bringing Landis to New Zealand. However, that turned out to be lot easier than expected. “We only had approached three organisations and, when we told them who we were looking to include in the team, we got an almost instant response of “we’re in” from two of them.

The two naming rights sponsors are:

- *cyclingnzshop.com* ([www.cyclingnzshop.com](http://www.cyclingnzshop.com)), a new business which has just launched an online marketplace for the entire New Zealand cycle industry
- bioSPORT® a state-of-the-art biomechanical physiotherapy and sports conditioning practice in Auckland’s CBD ([www.biosport.co.nz](http://www.biosport.co.nz)).

The other riders in Team *cyclingnzshop.com* - *bioSPORT* are:

Nico de Jong -

Nick Lovegrove -

Jeremy Meech -

Jamie Whyte -

Hudson McIlraith is a special purpose venture set up to bring Floyd Landis to New Zealand. The partners in the venture are Wayne Hudson, a partner with Technology and Intellectual Property law firm, Hudson Gavin Martin and Richard McIlraith, a partner with Russell McVeagh.

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