

Get ready for a splash



Colby High senior Logan Middleton dived off the high dive while holding a raft on Monday at the downtown pool. ANDY HEINTZ/Colby Free Press

Legendary pro cyclist drawn into investigation

LOS ANGELES (AP) – Lance Armstrong stands out in a federal investigation of cycling like a guy wearing a yellow jersey.

Agents are engaged in a wide-ranging probe of pro cycling, people with knowledge of their work have told the Associated Press, and Armstrong clearly appears to be, at the very least, a person of interest.

Authorities have obtained records of years-old doping allegations against him and contacted his sponsors. Former teammate Floyd Landis has unleashed new claims about him.

Many of the other big names in American cycling during the past 25 years, including Greg LeMond, have been drawn in by this inquiry being led, among others, by Jeff Novitzky, who is credited with uncovering baseball's steroid era via the BALCO investigation.

A federal grand jury seated in Los Angeles will decide where it goes next.

While federal authorities have not disclosed who they are looking at, dozens of interviews by the AP with people involved in the case reveal a broad investigation that began with cyclists who had records of doping. It then turned toward Armstrong, who has denied using performance-enhancing drugs and has hundreds of clean doping tests as evidence.

Those on Armstrong's side appear willing to fight what has the potential to be the mother of all doping cases – an aggressive prosecution versus a defendant with millions of dollars and a tenacious, prideful streak.

Armstrong's lawyers contend the investigation is a waste of money. Armstrong himself said he would be happy to participate as long as it isn't a "witch hunt." Some people interviewed by the AP believe that Armstrong has been on investigators' radar for years. Others, however, say the evidence simply took them on a path that eventually, and without intent, brought them to Armstrong.

People familiar with the investigation said Novitzky's probe into cycling began after he was notified about a cache of performance-enhancing drugs that a landlord found in the vacated apartment of Kayle Leogrande, a little-known cyclist with a doping ban who rode for Rock Racing.

Rock Racing, owned by former rider and fashion entrepreneur Michael Ball, became the centerpiece of the probe, according to several people, none of whom wanted their names used because it could jeopardize their access to information. Messages left for Ball and Leogrande were not returned.

Then, Floyd Landis created a stir in April when he sent e-mails to cycling officials that accused ex-teammate Armstrong, along with his longtime doctor and trainer, and numerous other U.S. cyclists, of running an organized doping program earlier this decade.

That led to subpoenas, including the one handed to LeMond – a longtime Armstrong detractor – and reportedly former teammate George Hincapie. Tyler Hamilton, another cyclist tainted by positive doping tests, also is said to have

received a subpoena.

Last week, Armstrong sponsors Trek Bicycle Corp. and Nike each said they had been contacted by federal investigators regarding the cycling probe and were cooperating.

Although most of Landis' accusations center on Armstrong's conduct in Europe, federal authorities still have broad areas to explore.

Investigators could consider charging cyclists with a broad range of crimes involving drug violations, fraud, conspiracy and financial wrongdoing. Armstrong's attorneys have said investigators haven't even told them if the cyclist is a target nor have they said what they are focusing on.

Armstrong lawyer Tim Herman wrote in a letter last month to the federal prosecutor that many of Landis' claims are beyond the government's jurisdiction to investigate and involve alleged acts that occurred more than five years ago and in other countries. The letter attacked the tactics of Novitzky, a Food and Drug Administration agent, whose investigation of the Bay-Area Laboratory Cooperative led to a conviction against Olympic sprinter Marion Jones and perjury charges against baseball slugger Barry Bonds.

Laurie Levenson, a professor at Loyola Law School in Los Angeles and a former federal prosecutor, said authorities will be methodical.

"If you are going after someone with the stature of Armstrong, you don't rush into this," she said.

Dogs to take over pool Monday night

The Colby Recreation Department will hold its third Doggie Paddle from 6 to 8 p.m. on Sunday at the city pool.

Owners may bring one dog and will be required to sign a release form, said Recreation Director Stacy

Lee. The event is free. Dogs must have up-to-date vaccinations and owners will have to clean up any messes, Lee said. She said about 40 dogs participated last year.

Kansas Speedway officials bring another race to state

KANSAS CITY, Kan. (AP) – Kansas Speedway officials have made good on their promise to bring another Sprint Cup race to Kansas in exchange for the right to build a racetrack casino.

Speedway president Patrick Warren announced Tuesday the track will host Cup races next year on June 5 and Oct. 9. The October race at the 1.5-mile track will be the fourth in the 10-race Chase for the Sprint Cup championship.

Officials estimate the additional race will have a \$100 million economic impact on the region. That's on top of more than \$200 million projected annually for the Hollywood Casino, a joint venture of International Speedway Corp., the track's owner, and Penn National Gaming Inc. of Wyomissing, Pa. The casino is scheduled to open in early 2012, just off the second turn.

Warren said the race fulfills a vow the firm made to state regulators when the company applied

for a license to build and operate a \$521 million state-owned casino next to the speedway.

"We're delivering (the second race) before the casino even opens its doors," Warren said.

The second Cup date is part of a restructured 2011 Cup schedule that will include a new race at Kentucky Speedway in July.

Phoenix International Raceway also announced Tuesday it will continue to have two Cup races in 2011. The first race will follow the Daytona 500 in February. Auto-Club Speedway, which has hosted two Cup races, will host just one race next season.

Kansas Speedway this year hosts the Price Chopper 400 on Oct. 3, the third race in the Chase.

Chief Executive Lesa France Kennedy said with the addition of the casino, the region is "more than capable" of hosting two Cup events.

"There's a natural connection between Kansas Speedway and

the casino, and it will establish this area as one of the major sports and leisure destinations in our country," Kennedy said. She said the casino and other entertainment options nearby will make Kansas Speedway "two of the most anticipated stops" on the schedule.

Kansas Speedway hosted its first Cup race in September 2001.

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