

Tour de France cyclists warned about doping

French anti-doping supremo Pierre Bordry issued a stern warning to riders on the eve of Tour de France cycling tournament to stay away from forbidden substances and methods.

Bordry expressed his hope Friday that 'everyone has understood' that drug testing had reached a new level after the famed race had been plagued by doping in the past years.

Riders chosen randomly will be tested after each stage at the 95th edition, tests will include those for Human Growth Hormone, and hair tests are also conducted on top of urine and blood samples.

Overall, around 180 tests will take place during the three-week race that starts Saturday and runs until July 27. Italian authorities are also involved as the Tour runs through Italy as well.

Tests are carried out by the French anti-doping agency AFLD after Tour organisers, the ASO company, broke away from the ruling cycling body UCI after several disputes.

The Tour has been rocked by doping in past years.

The original 2006 winner Floyd Landis is serving a doping ban and was stripped of his title.

The 2007 champion Alberto Contador cannot compete because of the drug-tainted past of his Astana team which was ousted from the Tour after a positive test of top rider Alexandre Vinokourov.

Also last year, Dane Mikael Rasmussen had to quit as overall leader after lying to his team about his whereabouts.

Bjarne Riis was stripped of his 1996 title after admitting to doping and this year's edition comes 10 years after the Festina team was kicked out during the race over doping.

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