

# Lance sponsorships are not being 'lanced'

New York - US sporting goods giant Nike was one of several sponsors sticking by Lance Armstrong after the US Anti-Doping Agency stripped the cycling legend of his record seven Tour de France titles.

Armstrong, a cancer survivor revered by millions for his efforts in raising cancer awareness and supporting those stricken by the disease, has steadfastly denied doping accusations but said that he would not pursue an arbitration process.

"We are saddened that Lance Armstrong may no longer be able to participate in certain competitions and his titles appear to be impacted," Nike said in a statement.

"Lance has stated his innocence and has been unwavering on this position. Nike plans to continue to support Lance and the Lance Armstrong Foundation, a foundation that Lance created to serve cancer survivors."

The company declined to comment on the terms of its deal with Armstrong, who has been a Nike-sponsored athlete since 1996.

Armstrong was also banned from cycling for life by the US anti-doping agency, which said his decision not to pursue arbitration in an effort to clear himself of doping charges levelled in June triggered the action.

AdAge reported that brewer Anheuser-Busch and sunglasses manufacturer Oakley were also sticking with Armstrong.

Johnson Health Tech, a Wisconsin-based company that makes exercise equipment, was among the firms citing Armstrong's cancer awareness work as a reason to continue supporting him.

JHT issued a statement "reaffirming" its support of Armstrong and his charitable foundation.

"JHT fully supports the great work they do helping families throughout the world overcome cancer's financial, practical and emotional challenges," the company said in a statement.

Source: *AFP* via I-NET Bridge