



# Chicago Tribune

Please [register](#) or [log in](#)Subscribers:  
[Get the Advantage](#)
[NEWS](#) [SPORTS](#) [ENTERTAINMENT](#) [BUSINESS](#) [HOMES](#) [JOBS](#) [CARS](#) [SHOPPING](#) [PLACE ADS](#) [NEWSPAPER SERVICES](#)
**HAWKINSON FORD COMPANY**  
Soaring above the rest since 1961


6100 West 95th Street • Oak Lawn, Illinois 60453 • 866-746-8535

 CLICK HERE TO SEE OUR  
HUGE SELECTION OF  
OVER 700 CARS & TRUCKS  
IN STOCK


- [E-mail this story](#)
- [Printable format](#)
- [Search archives](#)

Search:  [chicagotribune.com](#)

Web enhanced by Google

[chicagotribune.com](#) >> [Sports](#)**Most e-mailed**  
(last 24 hours)

- [Milking it](#)
- [These kids today, they want it all](#)
- [Actor found shot on North Side](#)
- [Troubles of Royko's son detailed](#)
- [Shedd welcomes baby penguins](#)

[More from today](#)  
[Past week](#)
**Top stories**[Making case for All-Star status](#)[Trades? Deal Jazz in](#)[Talented Moore in hurry for more](#)[Great shots! It's your turn Western Open](#)[Progress of Bridgeview stadium has Fire smiling](#)**more sports:**  
[ChicagoSports.com](#)**The latest on the ...**
[Cubs](#) | [Sox](#) | [Bears](#)  
[Bulls](#) | [Fire](#) | [Blackhawks](#)  
[Preps](#) | [Colleges](#)  
[Columnists](#) | [Forums](#)  
[TV/Radio schedule](#)
**Reader Q&A**
[Mark Gonzales answers your Sox questions](#)
**2005 NBA draft**

## Before the yellow jerseys

Tribune reporter Philip Hersh watched Lance Armstrong develop into a cycling and American icon

**By Philip Hersh**  
Tribune reporter  
*Published June 28, 2005*

Lance Armstrong and I go back a long way--to the days well before Forbes reported he was making \$28 million a year, before his autobiography was a national best seller, before he had a rock star girlfriend, before anyone outside the cycling world knew either his name or his face.

I covered the last week of his first victory in the Tour de France and I am scheduled to cover the last week of what could be his seventh straight. But our interaction, mostly by telephone, began nearly 12 years ago, with an interview after he became the third-youngest men's winner of the professional road race at the World Championships.

When we talked then, in September 1993, Armstrong related how no one recognized him as he passed through O'Hare Airport while returning to his home in Dallas. He also described a very different scene of a few days earlier in France, where he had been a prisoner in his hotel before riding a minor road race as the new world champion.

"There was a mob outside waiting for me," Armstrong said. "I felt exactly like Michael Jordan for a few hours. I never thought that would happen to me."

Then he added, with what then was hyperbole, "My life has changed forever."

Not yet. At that point, the Tribune was the only mainstream publication outside Texas to take significant note of Armstrong's world title. Five years later the Tribune still was the only such publication to note the significance of his fourth-place finish in the Tour of Spain.

At the time, October 1998, it seemed a miracle for Armstrong even to have tried one of the world's three major stage races given his having been given a 50-50 chance to live after being diagnosed in 1996 with testicular cancer that had spread to his brain. And, before the cancer, the barrel-chested Armstrong never thought himself as a rider for the grand tours--Tour of Spain, Tour of Italy, Tour de France.

"It was the greatest and most amazing performance of my career," Armstrong told me then.

It was, of course, just the beginning.

"It is no longer the greatest achievement of my career, but it was a pivotal moment," Armstrong said Sunday. "That was the point where I said I can do a three-week race with the best of them and climb the high mountains with the best of them, and perhaps it was time to focus on the Tour de France."



**Tuesday, 6:30, ESPN**

- [Draft order](#)
- [Mock draft](#)
- [Player profiles: 1-30](#)
- [Player profiles: 31-60](#)
- [Player profiles: Unranked](#)
- [Team needs](#)
- [Draft central](#)

#### The week that was

We take a look back--in photos--at a week's worth of [White Sox](#) and [Cubs](#) baseball.

#### Scores & more

- [MLB scores](#) | [news](#)
- [Probable pitchers](#)
- Stats: [Cubs](#) | [Sox](#)
- [MLB standings, stats](#)
- [MLB odds](#)
- [Gameday matchups](#)
- [MLB watch](#)

Over the following six years, Armstrong would be the best of them, and his compelling story would become more and more familiar in the United States.

As the stage of it involving competitive cycling ends, for he has said the Tour beginning Saturday will be his last, most still know the man only by what he has done and what he has come to stand for, a symbol of hope in the cancer community.

The increasing distance Armstrong has put between himself and the rest of the world owes in part to the demands of celebrity and in part to a personality whose less heroic side comes out in Daniel Coyle's recently published book, "Lance Armstrong's War."

With a balance achieved despite his having shown drafts of the book to Armstrong and "his people," Coyle shows Armstrong, as a cyclist, to be the sometimes vindictive, constantly demanding, sometimes despotic, frequently bullying Sun King of a universe known as "Planet Lance." It is what Coyle calls a "walled kingdom," a universe in which one can be banned to the dark side of the moon for anything other than complete fealty.

"Lance is a difficult person. When he says jump, you jump," his teammate Viacheslav Ekimov told Coyle.

That quote is followed by one from Floyd Landis, now Armstrong's ex-teammate. "I think everyone's afraid of Lance," he said.

Coyle also shows Armstrong caring deeply about his role as a touchstone for cancer survivors, many of whom see him as a saint. They come to races, seeking a touch, a smile or a few minutes of his time, leaving him in the impossible predicament of having to disappoint some because days are only 24 hours long.

"How do you satisfy that much need? You can't," Coyle writes.

Coyle's book paints a fascinating picture of Armstrong, gives life to the cast of characters around him and offers colorful detail and insight into the weight-obsessed, dangerous, ritualistic world of elite cycling.

It does not duck the questions about doping that have dogged Armstrong since the 1999 Tour de France, questions laid out in another book, "LA Confidential," published in French last year.

[continue >>](#)

**Jump to page: 1 2** [Next page](#)

Ads by Google

#### Climb Like A Cycling God

Free Cycling Report Will Show You 5 Training Elements to Climb Fast.

[www.Cyclo-Zen.com](http://www.Cyclo-Zen.com)

#### Bicycle Adventures

Outstanding bicycle tours in the western US, Canada, and Hawaii

[www.bicycleadventures.com](http://www.bicycleadventures.com)

#### Lance Armstrong HP Laptop

HP L2000 Notebook: Starting at \$899 With AMD Turion Mobile Technology!

[www.hpshopping.com](http://www.hpshopping.com)

#### Sell Your Used Bicycle

Wanted: Road Bikes, Triathlon Bike Cash Paid For All Types of Bicycles

[www.usedbicyclebuyer.com](http://www.usedbicyclebuyer.com)

### TerraTrek Bicycle Tours

Washington's San Juan Islands, Santa Fe/Taos-NM & Wine  
Country-CA  
[www.goterratrek.com](http://www.goterratrek.com)

Copyright © 2005, [Chicago Tribune](#)

>> Save 54% off the newsstand price - [Subscribe to the Chicago Tribune](#)

**Chicago Tribune**  
SUBSCRIBER ADVANTAGE

Subscribers, did you know you can have free access to the last 365 days worth of Chicago Tribune stories by joining [Subscriber Advantage?](#)

[Home](#) | [Copyright and terms of service](#) | [Privacy policy](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Contact us](#) | [Archives](#) | [Advertise](#) | [Site tour](#)



THE BOSS ... RUNS THE COMPANY,  
CAN'T TURN ON HIS COMPUTER.  
FIND SOMETHING BETTER.

Find Jobs  
Post a Resume

careerbuilder.com



# Chicago Tribune

Please [register](#) or [log in](#)Subscribers:  
[Get the Advantage](#)
[NEWS](#) [SPORTS](#) [ENTERTAINMENT](#) [BUSINESS](#) [HOMES](#) [JOBS](#) [CARS](#) [SHOPPING](#) [PLACE ADS](#) [NEWSPAPER SERVICES](#)


THE SUBARU  
**ALL-WHEEL DRIVE  
HERITAGE**  
SALES EVENT

Think. Feel. Drive.



- [E-mail this story](#)
- [Printable format](#)
- [Search archives](#)

Search: [chicagotribune.com](#)Web enhanced by [Google](#)[chicagotribune.com](#) >> [Sports](#)

#### Most e-mailed (last 24 hours)

- [Milking it](#)
- [These kids today, they want it all](#)
- [Actor found shot on North Side](#)
- [Troubles of Royko's son detailed](#)
- [Shedd welcomes baby penguins](#)

[More from today](#)  
[Past week](#)

#### Top stories

[Making case for All-Star status](#)

[Trades? Deal Jazz in](#)

[Talented Moore in hurry for more](#)

[Great shots! It's your turn Western Open](#)

[Progress of Bridgeview stadium has Fire smiling](#)

**more sports:**  
[ChicagoSports.com](#)

#### The latest on the ...

[Cubs](#) | [Sox](#) | [Bears](#)  
[Bulls](#) | [Fire](#) | [Blackhawks](#)  
[Preps](#) | [Colleges](#)  
[Columnists](#) | [Forums](#)  
[TV/Radio schedule](#)

#### Reader Q&A



[Mark Gonzales answers your Sox questions](#)

[2005 NBA draft](#)

## Before the yellow jerseys

Tribune reporter Philip Hersh watched Lance Armstrong develop into a cycling and American icon

By **Philip Hersh**  
Tribune reporter  
*Published June 28, 2005*

[<< previous](#)

The response Armstrong gave to the book at the pre-2004 Tour news conference ("Extraordinary allegations demand extraordinary proof ... and [the authors] have not come up with extraordinary proof") puzzled Coyle. "It was not," he writes, "the sort of aggressive, categorical denial Armstrong had offered in the past."

When the doping allegations first emerged, I asked the oncologists who had treated Armstrong for their opinion. Dr. Craig Nichols called them, "ridiculous." Dr. Lawrence Einhorn said, "This is the cleanest-living guy you ever will see."

Even so, those of us who have reported for years about doping in sports cannot fail to wonder how Armstrong went from a very good cyclist to a nearly superhuman one after cancer. For the record, he has never tested positive for a banned substance.

Armstrong's strategy about the doping allegation is consistent with his approach to life and cycling: attack relentlessly, using his financial might to intimidate the accusers with lawsuits.

"It's never fun, and nobody wants to tie up their time with that stuff, but to me it's about justice," he told me in April. "It's not fair to make false accusations, so at least to me, you have to pursue that as much as you can."

A few minutes earlier, in talking about his historic sixth win in the Tour, an achievement that had defied four other great riders in the past 40 years, Armstrong mistakenly used "suspicious" instead of "superstitious" in explaining why people previously had said it was impossible. After catching himself, he added, laughing, "I'm sure there was some suspicion."

One measure of why (if not how) Armstrong began to dominate the Tour de France, from a recent article in the June issue of the Journal of Applied Physiology. The author, Dr. Edward Coyle, had studied Armstrong from 1992 through 1999 and concluded reduced body fat and increased muscular efficiency made him 18 percent more powerful over the seven years, and that, even when untrained, his oxygen-carrying capacity matched the "highest values normal men can achieve with training."

Normal went out of Lance Armstrong's life a long time ago.

-----

Fly another airline and you could kick yourself. Literally.

**UNITED**  
It's time to fly.™



phersh@tribune.com

**Tuesday, 6:30, ESPN**

- [Draft order](#)
- [Mock draft](#)
- [Player profiles: 1-30](#)
- [Player profiles: 31-60](#)
- [Player profiles: Unranked](#)
- [Team needs](#)
- [Draft central](#)

[Previous page](#)    [Jump to page: 1 2](#)

Copyright © 2005, [Chicago Tribune](#)

#### The week that was

We take a look back--in photos--at a week's worth of [White Sox](#) and [Cubs](#) baseball.

>> **Save 54% off the newsstand price - [Subscribe to the Chicago Tribune](#)**


**Chicago Tribune**  
SUBSCRIBER ADVANTAGE

Subscribers, did you know you can have free access to the last 365 days worth of Chicago Tribune stories by joining [Subscriber Advantage?](#)

#### Scores & more

- [MLB scores](#) | [news](#)
- [Probable pitchers](#)
- [Stats: Cubs](#) | [Sox](#)
- [MLB standings, stats](#)
- [MLB odds](#)
- [Gameday matchups](#)
- [MLB watch](#)

[Home](#) | [Copyright and terms of service](#) | [Privacy policy](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Contact us](#) | [Archives](#) | [Advertise](#) | [Site tour](#)



THE BOSS ... RUNS THE COMPANY,  
CAN'T TURN ON HIS COMPUTER.  
FIND SOMETHING BETTER.

[Find Jobs](#)  
[Post a Resume](#)

careerbuilder.com™