

Today's ride causes me to question Froome's anti-doping credentials



Funny to think that my own Strava data casts suspicion on Chris Froome's "clean" performances

This morning I tried something new; instead of just using Qvar, an inhaler that's supposed to make it easier for me to breathe when riding hard but whose effectiveness I've had questions about, I added Albuterol to the mix. Qvar is a long-lasting breathing aid, designed to make your lungs work better through the day, while Albuterol is sometimes referred to as a "rescue" inhaler, something to be used when someone's having an asthma attack or, in my case, for exercise-induced asthma. I'd tried Albuterol a couple times after my doctor prescribed it and pretty much forgot about it because it didn't seem to do anything for me.

But this morning it was a bit on the cool side as a marine layer had moved in, and having felt a bit sluggish on the bike the past couple of days, I figured what the heck, maybe I'd give the Albuterol another chance.

So where does Chris Froome and doping come into play? It was the Albuterol's apparent effect on my heart rate, which for the most part was a bit depressed except for a couple times when it fluttered and kicked up 30 beats or so for no good reason, certainly not in response to effort. And that got me thinking. Froome received an "emergency" TUE (therapeutic use exemption) that allowed him to use a cortisone-based inhaler during an important race. What's the connection? The fact that such inhalers have very different effects on different people, and you absolutely positively would not prescribe one to a top athlete in an important event unless you already knew how it would affect the athlete. And why would you know that its effect would be positive (in a race) if you hadn't previously experimented with it?

Chris Froome's "emergency" TUE is just plain wrong. Either it was for something he's used in the past and should have been subject to the normal procedures for allowing a banned or limited substance (because inhalers of that sort can have a stimulative effect, enhancing performance), or it was a ruse to get some quick assistance when he needed it. There's just no way it should have been a sudden thing requiring a quick TUE that didn't involve some real research into whether it was really needed or not.

Oh, right, regarding the ride- Just Karl & Eric this morning; Kevin had another doctor appointment so he couldn't make it. With a bit ride Saturday for Eric he was taking it easy, but today, his version of easy was frustrating because it wasn't so fast I was working hard but not so easy that I could actually carry on a conversation. I could get in a short sentence now & then, but had to choose my words wisely. Perhaps that's why I'm so verbose when I type; it's reactionary to my ability to converse on a bike. --Mike--