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## Trek Bicycles sues to end relationship with Greg LeMond

April 8, 2008

Waterloo, Wis. — (AP) - Best-selling bicycle maker Trek Bicycle Corp. is severing its ties with three-time Tour de France winner Greg LeMond, saying his outspokenness about doping has weakened the company's LeMond brand bicycles.

LeMond has a "troubling pattern of inconsistent business dealings," Trek president John Burke said Tuesday.

A message left for LeMond's attorneys in Minnesota was not immediately returned.

LeMond, of Minnesota, sued Trek in March, accusing the company of breaching its contract and asking for an injunction to prevent it from ending the deal.

**"Greg's public comments damaged the LeMond brand, and our reputation with retailers and consumers."**

- Trek president John Burke

In response, the company filed a lawsuit Tuesday in federal court in Madison asking for permission to break the contract.

Burke told employees during a meeting at the company's headquarters about 60 miles west of Milwaukee that he met with LeMond in the fall and told him Trek would not renew their contract when it expired in 2010. He encouraged LeMond to find another manufacturer, he said.

He said throughout the company's relationship with LeMond, the cyclist would renege on promises, like saying he would curb his comments about doping and focus more on the brand.

Trek then invested money in the brand, Burke said, only to have LeMond speak out again, which sent sales downward and frustrated dealers and customers.

"Doping is a very important topic for our industry. We never discouraged Greg from speaking out about doping in cycling," Burke said. "We know there is a difference between attacking an issue and destroying reputations. Greg's public comments damaged the LeMond brand, and our reputation with retailers and consumers."

He said the company was disappointed to see the relationship end.

Trek's LeMond bikes are mostly produced in Asia. Employees there and in the U.S. will be shifted to other jobs as bicycle sales overall remain strong, Burke said.

Trek is best known among cyclists for making the bikes that Lance Armstrong rode in his Tour de France victories. With brands like Trek, Gary Fisher and Klein, the company sells 1.5 million bikes a year and does \$700 million in sales.

The LeMond brand has about \$15 million in sales per year, Burke said.

LeMond, of Medina, Minn., became the first American to win the Tour de France in 1986. Trek began licensing his name in 1995 to make road bikes.

LeMond created controversy last year when he testified during Floyd Landis' arbitration hearing, saying he had confided to Landis about childhood sexual abuse and that Landis' manager threatened to disclose LeMond's secret if he testified. He went on to say that Landis had admitted to him that he doped.

Landis later had his 2006 Tour de France title stripped from him, but he is appealing that

decision.

LeMond and Armstrong also have feuded over doping since 2001 when LeMond said he was unhappy about Armstrong's association with an Italian doctor Michele Ferrari, who had been linked to doping accusations but later was cleared by an appeals court.

Armstrong cut ties with Ferrari before the 2005 Tour.

Trek has strong ties with Armstrong, and Burke said Tuesday that the former champ was not informed of the company's decision to drop LeMond.

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