

# Nike 'lances' support for Livestrong

LOS ANGELES, USA: Nike has decided to stop making products for disgraced cyclist Lance Armstrong's cancer charity Livestrong, but will still support the group financially, the company said on Tuesday (28 May).



Nike said its Livestrong Collection, which includes footwear, apparel and accessories, will be phased out at the end of the year,, bringing down the curtain on what has been a globally recognized brand for almost a decade.

Exemplified by the distinctive yellow Livestrong wristband, of which Nike said 87m had been sold worldwide, the decision will inevitably be seen as the company's latest step to rid itself of Armstrong's toxic legacy.

"Nike has made the decision to stop producing new Livestrong products," the company said in a statement.

"We will continue to support the Livestrong Foundation by funding them directly as they continue their work serving and improving lives of people dealing with cancer," the statement said.

Livestrong earlier announced the end of the partnership with Nike and thanked the company for its collaboration that helped raise over US\$100m.

The foundation "is deeply grateful to Nike not only for the time and resources it invested in helping us improve the lives of people affected by cancer but also the creative drive it brought to our nine-year partnership.

## Sound financial position

"While the Foundation created and owns the Livestrong brand, Nike shone a spotlight on the spirit of courage and resilience it represents," it said.

Livestrong says its sound fiscal health means the Foundation is well-positioned to continue to grow its free services for cancer patients and survivors to improve their quality of life and access to care.

Livestrong evolved from The Lance Armstrong Foundation, though the two were widely seen as synonymous. Armstrong

stepped down as the Foundation's chairman last year and subsequently left the board entirely.

A Nike spokeswoman, Mary Remuzzi, meanwhile, said she had no specifics about how much or in what form Nike funds Livestrong.

Armstrong was an inspirational figure for millions after recovering from testicular cancer and then winning the world's most celebrated cycling event, the Tour de France, seven times in a row.

But the US Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) banned Armstrong and stripped him of his titles last year. The former cyclist chose not to fight the doping accusations and admitted, after years of strenuous denials that he had used banned, performance enhancing substances.

Livestrong provides free cancer support services and other resources and has helped more than 2,5m people suffering from this disease since its inception. It has raised over US\$500m to support its charity work.

Source: AFP via I-Net Bridge

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