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Racism in Pro Cycling Should Be Treated Like Doping Violations

I FACED SLURS IN THE PELOTON BUT THE INSTIGATORS NEVER FACED CONSEQUENCES.

BY KÉVIN REZA (AS TOLD TO YANN-YVES O'HAYON-CROSBY) Jul 27, 2020



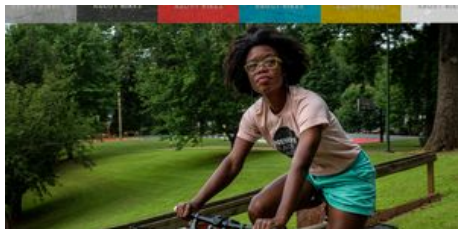
Franz-Renan Joly / B&B HOTELS - VITAL CONCEPT

Since I started as a pro in 2010, I always felt comfortable in the peloton. Even when I among amateurs I never had any problems with [racism]. It's really these two moments in my career. In 2014, during my second Tour de France, I was in the break with a Swiss rider who used a racial slur. And it made a little noise since it is the Tour; it's seen on all the channels around the world.

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I was quite young, 26, and I couldn't really understand what was going on. I wanted more to duke it out personally with this guy. In the end it was settled, via different managers from my team and his team. And there was an apology and well, that's it. It stopped there.

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What I would like to see in future cases is high sanctions, like a one-year suspension.

In the Tour of Romandie in 2017, there was yet another altercation with an Italian cyclist. At first I thought, *no, it's not possible that it's 2017 and there's still that kind of talk*. Anyone can get carried away during a race, because it goes so fast we get tired. There are words we say when we are upset, not-so-kind names, insults and all that, but we don't go beyond that. To get carried away in this case like that, to use a slur, I really didn't let it pass and I wanted to fix it myself [with him], but unfortunately, after the finish line there were cameras, photos taken, and it made the same noise as in 2014 and it got out of hand.

The evolution around diversity in cycling is going well, but two or three idiots will come out with this kind of bullshit. What I would like to see in future cases is high sanctions, like a

one-year suspension. I would put this in the same category as a doping violation. Punish the aggressor so that he doesn't do it again. Because the two times when I was insulted they both came out unscathed.

Kévin Reza, 32, is a pro cyclist for B&B Hotels–Vital Concept.

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