

## Big George Hincapie is a hero in my book - dope or no dope

Written by By TERRY MATHEWS, News-Telegram Arts Editor  
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Just so there is no confusion. I think Big George Hincapie, all 6' 3" of him, is a god when he puts on a cycling kit and steps into the pedals. For seven years, he was Lance Armstrong's lieutenant at the Tour de France, riding out in front in the flat stages, protecting him from crashes, pulling him up mountain after mountain, so Armstrong could be free to fly to the finish.

He's riding for Team BMC this year for a record 17th tour. He's also ridden for Motorola, U.S. Postal and The Discovery Channel.

When not riding for Armstrong, Hincapie, now 39, has won his share of races, including stages at the Dauphine Libere and the Tour de France in 2005. He won two stages of the Tour of California in 2006 and took the title and a stage at the Tour of Missouri in 2007. He's also won the U.S. Professional Road Race three times (1998, 2006, 2009). He's also been an Olympian 5 times.

He's going to retire after this year. He says he wants to go out on top and spend more time with his wife and kids, now 8 and 4.

You can find all this information on Wikipedia.

What you can't find online is a measure of the man. I've seen Hincapie in action, both on the bike and off. In addition to watching him ride every tour, I also saw him during the six-day 2005 Tour de Georgia. He truly was a team player on the road, riding in front for Armstrong as they screamed down a road or going first up one of the many hills around Dalton, Dahlonega and Rome in the northern part of the state so Armstrong could save his energy for the final push to victory.

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