

Blackgrove wins Tobago Classic

Monday, September 29th 2008



LOCAL HERO: Trinidad and Tobago's Pan Am Games Road Race silver medallist Emile Abraham celebrates his victory in Stage 5 of the 2008 Tobago International Cycling Classic yesterday. Abraham's Team Gremlin teammate Heath Blackgrove of New Zealand was the overall winner.

New Zealand's Heath Blackgrove captured the Tour of Tobago Cycling Classic yesterday after placing third in the fifth stage.

Trinidad and Tobago's Emile Abraham won the fifth and final stage ahead of Germany's Timo Scholz and Blackgrove.

The fifth stage result gave Blackgrove the overall honours, ahead of Scholz and Abraham, with German Jonas Schmeiser fourth.

In a sprint finish to the fifth stage, Abraham proved too strong for Blackgrove.

However, the win was not good enough to earn the seven-time winner the overall title, which went to his Team Gremlin teammate Blackgrove, with Scholz second.

Abraham had to settle for third.

There was a small group of seven that broke away after 15 miles into the 120-kilometre race, which included Blackgrove, Jamaica's Marloe Rodman, Alex Bhogal of Canada and Germans Jonas Schmeiser, Andreas Feistel and Jens Grewe.

Between Castara and Parlatuvier, Abraham, riding solo, got up to the front bunch.

By the time Abraham connected to the leaders, the pack was down to five riders--Germans Schmeiser and Grewe, American Daniel Holt, Rodman and Abraham.

Rodman was the rider who kept the pace high, and on at least three occasions, the group rode away from Abraham.

Just before entering Charlotteville at around the halfway point Abraham got a flat, losing about 20 to 25 seconds in changing the wheel.

But Abraham pedalled his way back into contention after leaving Charlotteville.

By then, Schmeiser, one of the riders starting the day with a good chance of winning the overall prize, started to feel the effects of the gruelling mountainous terrain and climbs.

"I knew the German was hurting, and in trouble, so I felt a littleÂ relieved," said Abraham.

Coming out of Speyside, the hometown boy picked up the pace on the climb and Schmeiser back-pedalled and dropped back.

Abraham and Blackgrove carried the pace into Scarborough, trying not to let Schmeiser get back in the race.

From there to the finish the battle revolved around Abraham, Scholz and Blackgrove, with any one of the three likely to win. In the end, Abraham prevailed.

"I think I definitely felt a lot better than in previous years," said the winner. "I started the race feeling strong and I was really happy to win the hardest stage of the tour." -CMC

STAGE 5 RESULT:

- 1 Emile Abraham (T&T) Team Gremlin
- 2 Timo Scholz (Germany) Racing Students
- 3 Heath Blackgrove (New Zealand) Team Gremlin
- 4 Andreas Feistel (Germany) Racing Students
- 5 Tyron Thomas (Grenada) Digicel Grenada

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OVERALL RESULT:

TOP INDIVIDUALS

- 1 Heath Blackgrove (Team Gremlin)
- 2 Timo Scholz (Racing Students)
- 3 Emile Abraham (Team Gremlin)
- 4 Jonas Schmeiser (Racing Students)
- 5 Andreas Teiste (Racing Students)

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TOP TEAM

Racing Students (Germany)

KING OF THE MOUNTAINS: Heath Blackgrove (Team Gremlin)

SPRINT KING: Emile Abraham (Team Gremlin)

TOP U-23 RIDER: Jonas Schmeiser (Racing Students)

MOST OUTSTANDING T&T RIDERS: 1 Emile Abraham; 2 Colin Wilson (Team Trek)

MOST OUTSTANDING CARIBBEAN CYCLIST: Emile Abraham (Team Gremlin)

MOST OUTSTANDING U-23 CARIBBEAN CYCLIST: Marloe Rodman (Team Rafman Metalfab)

MOST OUTSTANDING DIV 2 CYCLISTS (Stage Five): 1 Garvin Nero (Team Trek); 2 Gevan Samuel (Team Trek);
3 Darren Matthews (Team Barbados)

MOST OUTSTANDING JUNIOR CYCLIST (Stage Five): Garvin Nero (Team Trek).