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Champion crashes out Tobago Classic

By WALTER ALIBEY Saturday, September 27 2008

GERMAN Stefan Steinweg's last race of his illustrious career came to a disappointing end yesterday after being forced to bow out of the rest of the Tobago International Cycling Classic in the sister-isle of Tobago.

After entering today's second and third stages well in the lead, the 39-year-old German, who recently told Newsday that the race will be his last, was unable to continue the race when his bike broke during the opening lap of the third stage.

The stage began at the Multipurpose Complex in the capital city and headed through Black Rock, Mt Irvine, Bucco Junction to Shirvan Road, Marie Junction, Whim, Plymouth and Turtle Beach before heading back to the starting point.

And with defending champion, another German Andres Henig out of the race, New Zealand's Heath Blackgrove snatched the front position.

Blackgrove the winner of the feature event at the recent Newsday Cycling Classic around King George V Park, St Clair covered lost ground after finishing the opening stage in a distant sixth position the day before.

He now leads overall race in a time of five hours, 34 minutes and 44 seconds.

But yesterday the New Zealander, who is known as "The King of the Mountain" fought back doggedly for the top spot in a time of two hours, 56 minutes and 15.7 seconds.

German Timo Scholz was second in the stage in two hours, 56 minutes and 16.3 seconds while his countryman Jonas Schmeiser was third in a time of two hours, 56 minutes and 45.8 seconds in Division 1.

Trinidad and Tobago's Emile Abraham struggled on the day to finish a disappointing fourth in the stage in 2:57:30.1.

Only a few hours before Blackgrove secured the runner-up position in the earlier Time Trial and Second Stage, while Steinweg got a consolation third place finish.

The Time Trial was won by the Canadian Trevor Connor while Abraham completed the stage in a disappointing 11th position.

His Team Type 1 teammate, Tobago-born Abraham will have it all to do in today's fourth stage after his fourth place finish.

Yesterday Abraham who won the race seven times before, told Newsday that he started getting cramps in the last lap yesterday because of the extreme hot conditions.

With his fourth, he (Abraham) is also fourth overall in a time of five hours, 37 minutes and 03 seconds, but he promised to try and win the stage which pedals off at 8:00am this morning.

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