



Trinidad and Tobago's Tonya Nero on her way to victory in the women's division of the **UWI** International Half-Marathon on Sunday in Trinidad.
PHOTO BY KERLON ORR/CA-images

Nero claims second **UWI** Half-Marathon crown

By STEPHON NICHOLAS

Cuban Richer Perez reclaimed the **UWI** International Half-Marathon crown Sunday morning with a commanding display in the 13.1 mile race which started and ended at **UWI** St Augustine.

Perez, the 2016 runner-up, led from start to finish while fittingly wearing the #1 on his bib, to beat his nearest rival by almost four minutes and cross the finish line in an impressive one hour, six minutes and 51 seconds and claim the US\$2,000 first prize. Kenyan Kenneth Rotich had to settle for second place in 1:10:43 while his compatriot Godfrey Mbihi came third in 1:11:30.

There was a mad finish for fourth place and the title of national champion as Trinidad and Tobago's Matthew Hagley just edged Curtis Cox to the line, coming in three seconds

ahead in 1:13:44 while Cox clocked 1:13:47.

Speaking to Newsday, Hagley said he was not satisfied with his time but was still proud of his effort, having suffered a calf injury recently.

"My time wasn't the best or what I expected but I am still satisfied because of the injury I came off from," said the Defence Force long distance runner.

"Curtis Cox carried me through the last three to four miles.

He and I was working together to get (Venezuelan Alexis) Pena off our back and then it was all down to the final sprint, and I think I had a little more gas than Cox did at that point in time," he said.

In 10th place overall but the first female was TT's Tonya Nero who got revenge against Venezuela's Yeisy Alvarez who beat her to the finish line last year. Nero, the 2012 champion, destroyed her competition to stop the clock at

one hour, 16 minutes and 31 seconds, leaving in the distance Alvarez who placed second in a slow 1:23:10. Kenyan Mercy Chebwogen was third in 1:25:30.

Nero, whose time was her fastest ever on the current course, was pleased with her run but complained it was difficult to breathe at times.

"It was humid but since it was after 5 (am) it was cool up until about six miles, then it started getting hotter. It was hard to breathe because of the air," she said.

Nero said she did not envisage the margin of victory over Alvarez to be so wide but said she simply ran her own race.

"I had a goal pace so when the race started I went out on my pace and stuck to it — I didn't wait or look back. I didn't expect (to dominate her) because she ran one (hour) 17 (minutes) I think last year," she added.