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Fonclaire turns on the heat with 'Fire Down Below'

By NEIL PARSANLAL

SOUTH Panorama zonal champion, Vat 19 Fonclaire, on Thursday night continued its winning ways by destroying the opposition in the national semi-finals at the Queen's Park Savannah in Port-of-Spain, leaving its nearest rival, Amoco Renegades, a full five points behind.

Playing a Ken "Professor" Philmore arrangement of Len "Boogsie" Sharpe's "Fire Down Below," the southern-based band scored 460 1/2 points to lead the field of 16 bands, 11 of which will challenge reigning champion Phase II Pan Groove in the national final tonight.

Phase II will be looking to score the hat-trick this year, having won the title in 1987 and 1988.

Crowd Favourite

Amoco Renegades, who placed first in the national preliminaries with a Jit Samaroo arrangement of Winsford Devine's "Somebody" and who was beaten into sixth place in the North zonal final, recreated the spirit of the prelims and won second place in Thursday's semis with 255 1/2 points.

Perennial crowd favourite Witco Desperadoes, who won its place in the semis by the last coat of chrome on its pans, again failed to excite the judges and could only manage fifth place, 27 points behind Fonclaire.

East zonal champion, Potential Symphony, was the last of the 11 bands to qualify for the final, earning 421.

The steelbands which qualified for tonight's final are: