

# Blind extreme sports cyclist makes history in Cairo to Cape race

STAFF WRITER

A BLIND cyclist is surprising other competitors as he climbs up the placings in the Tour d'Afrique, which hits top gear in Ethiopia with the "The Gorge" section of the race.

Racers and expedition riders have completed the "Pharoahs' Delight" section from Egypt to Ethiopia.

Douglas Sidialo and his pilot, Joash Aswani from Kenya, are currently in fourth place in the Cairo to Cape race.

Sidialo is the first blind athlete to attempt the event.

He was blinded while cycling past the US embassy in Kenya as it was bombed in a terrorist attack in 1998.

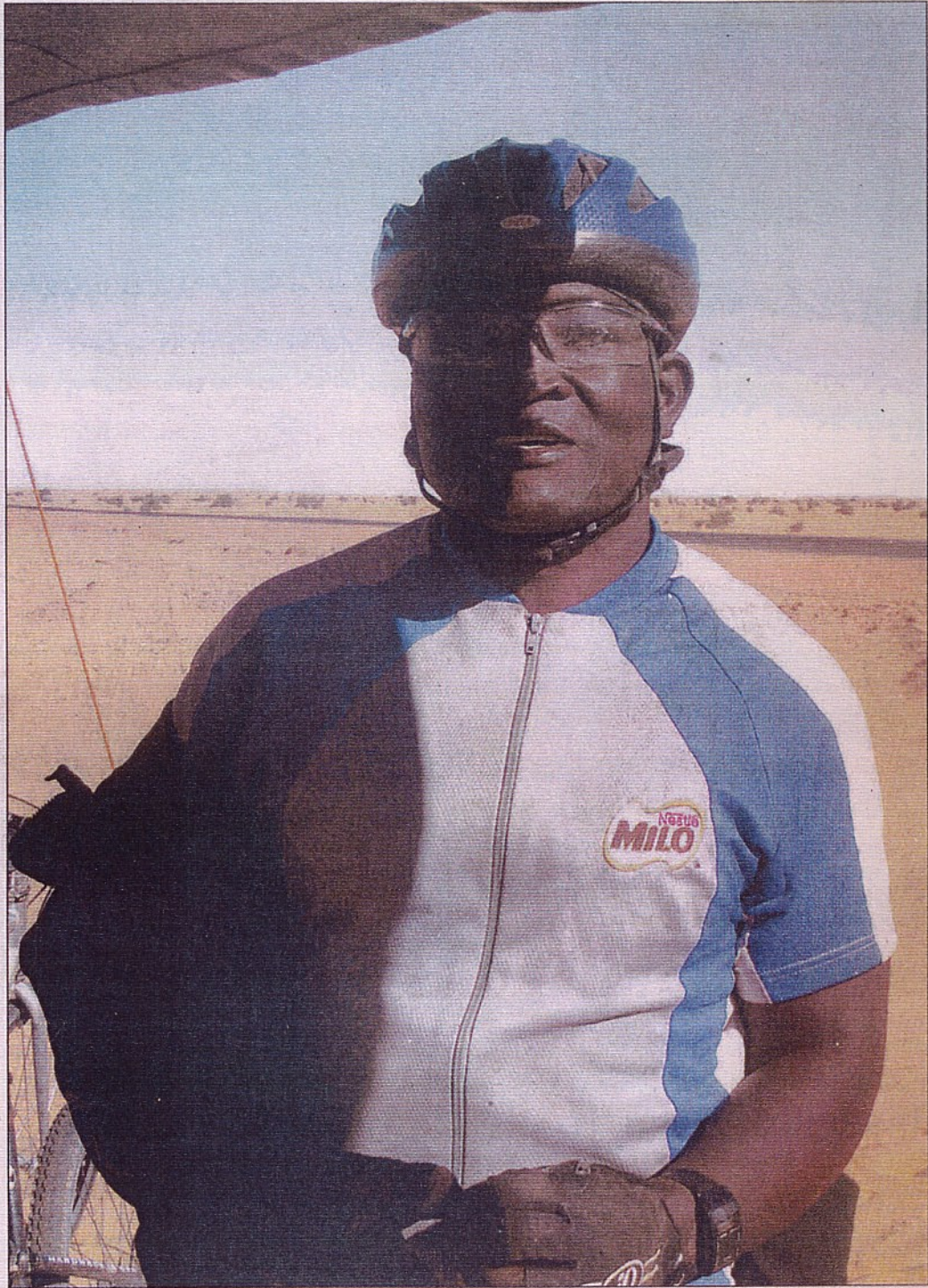
"I know how difficult it is to accept a situation like this," Sidialo said.

"My positive attitude and spirit has inspired me to accept blindness as a challenge, and I am working with other people affected by tragedies to seek new ways of coping with the challenges posed by the unique condition.

"I have made it my duty to tell people to adopt a positive attitude towards life."

Sidialo is very involved in sports administration. He is the chairman of the Kenya Blind Sports Association, chairman of the Kenya National Paralympic Committee and secretary-general of the International Blind Sports Association in Africa.

He travels extensively, sharing his insights and motivating people across the world through speaking, promoting books and embarking on



**CHILLED OUT:** Blind cyclist Douglas Sidialo takes a breather during the Tour d'Afrique cycle race. Sidialo is the first blind man to compete in it.

Picture: RACHEL DOBSON

extreme sporting challenges.

Sidialo is believed to be the first blind African to reach the top of Mount Kilimanjaro.

He performed the feat in September 2005, along with fellow blind mountain climber, Erik Weinhenmayer of Denver,

Colorado.

The American is the only blind man in the world to reach the top of Mount Everest.