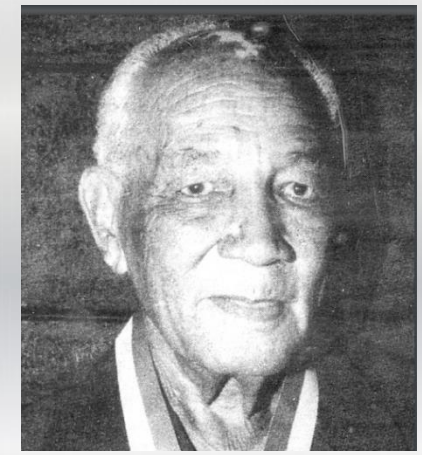
First Citizens Sports Foundation

HALL OF FAME



Ellis "Puss" Achong

Football

Inducted in 1984

Cricketer, footballer, umpire, selector, administrator: this Belmont, Port of Spain native dedicated his entire life to sport, attaining some memorable highs and leaving his mark on the Trinidad and Tobago sporting landscape, while unintentionally representing the racial diversity of the nation.

Eastern Port of Spain and Belmont in particular, with the Queen's Park Savannah on its doorstep, produced several sporting all-rounders from the turn of the 20th century. Ellis Achong can be counted amongst that number. His dribbling skills and pacy runs meant that by his mid-teens he was playing for one of the island's top clubs, Maple. It was there that Achong made the left wing position all his own, which he then replicated for the Trinidad and Tobago national team when he made his debut in 1919.

Seldom out of the headlines and scoring goals aplenty for club and country, Achong was also perfecting his skill as a spin bowler. Able to bowl both left-arm orthodox (finger spin) and wrist spin, batsmen found it difficult to pick his line of bowling. The latter is the art where left-arm bowlers turn the ball with their wrists rather than their palms. In other words, it's left-arm leg-spin. Difficult to execute, but Achong had perfected it.

By 1929 he was selected for the Trinidad and Tobago team to play in the Inter-Colonial Tournament and, one year later, he continued his rapid ascendency by being selected to play for West Indies at home against the England touring team. His debut at Queen's Park Oval on 1st February 1930, made him the first player of Chinese extract to play Test cricket, where he took 2 wickets for 64 runs as the Windies lost by 167 runs.

In the final of the 1932 regional tournament against British Guiana, 'Puss' took 3 for 74 in the first innings, and 7 for 73 in the second, to help secure victory for Trinidad and Tobago. Continuing his wicket haul in domestic and regional matches, he was prolific enough to be considered a certainty for the West Indies Test team to tour England in 1933. The only problem was that he was also still a certainty for the Trinidad and Tobago national football team to take part in the regional Martinez Shield late in 1932. His dilemma? How to get such lengthy time off from work for two consecutive years. Achong's employers settled the matter when they refused to give him time off in 1932 and football's loss was Test cricket's gain.

In England, his two wickets at Lord's cost 88 runs, with the hosts winning by an innings. In the second Test at Manchester, he again took two

wickets, this time for 90 runs, taking one more wicket for 59 in the 3rd Test at Kennington Oval, London. Achong got married during the tour, with the intention to settle in the Manchester area and continue to play league cricket. In his new surroundings he took over 1,000 wickets in the hard-fought Lancashire Leagues, where he played up until 1951.

In between, he returned to the Caribbean to play for West Indies against England in the 1935 Test series, where he played in the first and second Tests at Bridgetown and Port of Spain, taking a wicket in each match.

His league cricket career over, Achong returned to Trinidad and Tobago in 1952 and began to umpire in domestic and regional matches, with sufficient assurance and trust to be chosen to stand as umpire in the fourth Test between the West Indies and England in Port of Spain in 1954.

His later years saw him take up a sports coach position with the Trinidad and Tobago Ministry of Education, while he also became a member of the panel of selectors for the national cricket team.

Achong was part of the very first induction to the Sports Hall of Fame in 1984.

Matches: Test 6; First Class 38

Bowling: Test Wickets 8, Average 47.25; First Class Wickets 503, Average 30.23

Batting: Test 81 Runs, Average 8.10; First Class 1,928 Runs, Average 14.37