First Citizens Sports Foundation

HALL OF FAME



Brandon Bailey

Weightlifting

Inducted in 1985

Trinidad and Tobago's proud and uncanny legacy in weightlifting from the 1940s to the 1960s was in no small part due to lifters like Brandon Bailey who took up the mantle from the likes of Lennox Kilgour and Rodney Wilkes.

Bailey was born in St James, which ironically was one of the hotbeds of weightlifting during Trinidad and Tobago's glory years in the sport. He moved to Arima at seven years of age, where he played the traditional sports of football, cricket and took part in running races at Arima RC. But by 16 years old he had passed his teaching exams, started monitoring classes, and found some spare time to test his strength. To do this he would lift, push and move large boulders, taking immense satisfaction in the process. When other like-minded teenagers who also partook in the boulder moving went to the gym to further test their strength, Bailey followed. While others decided to pursue bodybuilding, Bailey stuck to his original pursuit and went for weightlifting.

It was a surprising choice given that, still a teenager, he had yet to lift proper poundage. But he dedicated himself to the process and, by the time he entered his first competition, he was in the Heavyweight category. By 1956 he was the national champion, repeated the feat the following year, and then represented Trinidad and Tobago at the West Indian Championship in 1958, which he also won.

That West Indian title was won at home before he took a year away from the sport to further his teaching qualifications, but during that time he researched whatever information was available about the training methods utilized by the new powerhouse in the sport, the Soviets. It helped immensely, and upon his return he represented his nation at the West Indian Championship in Aruba and won with a new personal best of 960lbs.

This weight put him at a level with the world's best in his category, so when he was selected for his first Games, the CAC held at Kingston Jamaica, he was supremely confident. He matched the 960lbs lifted in Aruba and comfortably won the gold medal.

Now he set his sights on Perth, Australia for the Commonwealth Games held in November 1962. There, he increased his total to 970lbs and it was enough to secure him the bronze medal. The winner lifted 1,025lbs. He was now a big Games medalist with an almost immediate opportunity to go for more medals with the Pan Am Games in 1963.

At São Paulo, Brazil for the Pan Ams, Bailey was fortunate to be able to complete the competition, far less medal. During one of his early lifts, his

foot went into a small hole on the stage. The slippage hurt his knee and wrist, resulting in no feeling in his hand. But Bailey had not come this far to give up easily and, regardless of any mishaps, he continued and ended up with the silver medal. He maintained his 100% record of medals to Games.

Bailey was eager to test himself on the greatest stage of all when the 1964 Olympics rolled around in 1964, but he was some way off his best form, evidenced by his lifting 936lbs. For the record, the gold medalist won with a total of 1,261lbs.

Bailey returned to Trinidad and prepared once again for the four-year cycle of Games that would culminate in the Mexico Olympics in 1968. First up was his defense of the CAC title in Puerto Rico in 1966, which he again won comfortably, but he also had the joy of lifting over 1,000lbs for the first time.

He did not have to wait long (three weeks) nor travel far for his next target, the Commonwealth Games in Jamaica. He took part in a close battle for the podium places, lifting 1,098lbs for another Commonwealth bronze, but he missed the silver medal by just 5.5lbs.

In Winnipeg one year later, Bailey lifted 1,012lbs at the Pan Am Games, confirming his ability to go over 1,000lbs regularly, but whereas he earned a silver at the previous Pan Ams, this time it was bronze for Bailey.

He did not go to the 1968 Olympics but could take immense satisfaction that his medal record placed him second to Rodney Wilkes in terms of medals won by Trinbagonian weightlifters.

Bailey continued his career as a teacher in Arima, and in retirement he still taught Physical Education at some schools as well as remaining a strength training consultant to various athletes. In 1985, Brandon Bailey was inducted into the Trinidad and Tobago Sports Hall of Fame.

CAC Games:	**1962 Gold Heavyweight**
	1966 Gold Heavyweight
Commonwealth Games:	**1962 Bronze Heavyweight**
	1966 Bronze Heavyweight
Pan American Games:	**1963 Silver Heavyweight**
	1967 Silver Heavyweight



