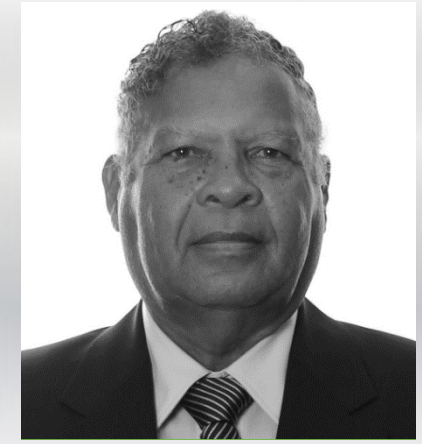
First Citizens Sports Foundation

HALL OF FAME



Alvin Corneal

Football

Inducted in 1989

The mere mention of his name conjures up images of a supremely gifted sportsman playing on the left-wing for Trinidad and Tobago, commentating, coaching youngsters, or rubbing shoulders with the legends of world football in his capacity as a prominent FIFA member. 'Alvin Corneal' and 'Trinidad and Tobago football' are intertwined.

Equally adept with both feet, Corneal was also used as an out and out striker and became noted as a player who possessed not just physical skill, but also a tactical brain.

Born in San Juan, Corneal's uncle took him along to the Strollers Club at the age of 10, where the young Alvin got his first taste of proper football and cricket, and where he excelled in both. He then attended Fatima College where he made his InterCol debut at 15 years old and soon became captain of the school's football and cricket teams. By 16 he was representing the North in the coveted Red Cross Cup, a fixture in

which he would play every edition until 1968, except for 1959.

Corneal was called up for the national team in 1959, making his debut against Jamaica in the Four Nations Cup. The tournament also helped the selectors make their choices for the upcoming West Indian football team tour of the United Kingdom, with Corneal making the cut. On that tour he scored six times, proving himself to be an integral part of the squad and gaining invaluable experience.

Upon his return he played a couple of seasons for the southern TPD team before joining the Sedley Joseph-led Maple team in the early 1960s, becoming part of their success in winning the League for four consecutive years (1960-1963).

He was one of the first names on the starting lineup for Trinidad and Tobago in both football and cricket, as both teams were building towards greater successes. In football, that meant taking part in the World Cup qualifiers for the first time in 1965, while also moving up the hierarchy within the CONCACAF region.

By 1967, when Corneal and Maple again won the League, the Trinidad and Tobago team was a slick machine and went to the Pan Am Games in Winnipeg full of confidence regardless of the opposition. This was not shared by the officials, who expected the team to be eliminated after the group stage and booked their return flight dates accordingly.

Instead, the team, Corneal included, played scintillating football and topped their group, beating Colombia and Argentina and drawing with

Mexico. They lost to Bermuda in the semi-final but recovered to beat hosts Canada and take a well-deserved bronze medal.

At the end of the year, the team travelled to Honduras for the CONCACAF Championship but suffered losses to Mexico, Honduras and Guatemala. Corneal, with one eye on trying to represent West Indies in cricket, retired from playing football for Trinidad and Tobago but continued turning out for Maple (league winners again in 1968 and 1969).

He played Shell Shield cricket and was part of the Trinidad and Tobago team that emerged victorious in the regional tournament under the captaincy of Joey Carew.

Corneal's passion for the technical aspects of football meant that he always knew that he wanted to become a coach and studied accordingly to gain the relevant coaching qualifications. He created the Alcons Soccer Academy, and in 1973 he was appointed Trinidad and Tobago Youth Team Head Coach with immediate results, the team winning a bronze medal at the CONCACAF Under 20 tournament. He continued until 1976, having lost only one match during his time at the helm. A stint as the National Senior Coach in 1979-1982 saw Trinidad and Tobago win the Caribbean Nations Cup. He then coached Barbados, Guyana, St Vincent, and St Kitts, before coaching North Carolina State University.

His continued pursuance of excellence within football's global body, FIFA, meant that in 1994 Corneal became the first Caribbean person to be appointed a FIFA Coaching Instructor, and 11 years later he became a member of FIFA's prestigious Technical Study Committee.

His intimate knowledge of sport has also taken him to the commentator's chair over the past three decades, where his forthright views and insights are sought after soundbites for the Caribbean sports fan.

In 1987, Alvin Corneal was inducted into the Trinidad and Tobago Sports Hall of Fame.

Pan American Games: **1967 Bronze Football**

POS League: **Winner (1962-63, 1967-69)**