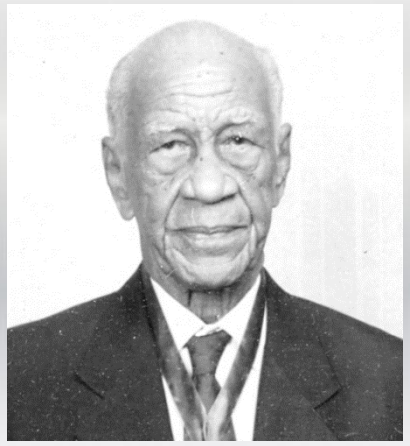
First Citizens Sports Foundation

HALL OF FAME



George Cumberbatch

M.O.M.

Administrator

Inducted in 2004

Given his background as an teacher, it is not surprising that George Cumberbatch gravitated towards refereeing in not one but three sports. If it appeared to be an option taken after his playing days were over, that was not the case; as early as his teens, Cumberbatch laid the foundation for officiating.

Like many sportsmen of the 1930s and 40s, the Belmont resident took part in more than one sport, though his priority was football. After graduating from Queen's Royal College (QRC), he joined Port of Spain's Sporting Club where he played for two seasons before joining local powerhouse club Maple. He was a regular in the starting XI and was made vice-captain in 1944. He remained with Maple until the 1953 season when they won the national FA Trophy, then immediately went into refereeing. Cumberbatch also took part in amateur boxing throughout his football career, hanging up his gloves and his boots simultaneously.

The transition was seamless. As early as 17-years-old, he had acquired a football referee's licence. As an official he was fair and never hesitated to roll out what he thought was the correct decision (in one memorable rough and tumble between Shamrock and Casuals in 1959, Cumberbatch sent four players off, including fellow Hall of Famer, Willie Rodriguez).

In addition to experience gained through his attendance at events such as the 1954 Commonwealth Games in Vancouver, he fortified his refereeing acumen by constantly furthering his qualifications, evidenced when he qualified as a FIFA referee lecturer in 1956. He attained a similar level of qualification in boxing, enabling Cumberbatch to officiate at a global standard. Over the period from the 1960s to the late 1980s, Cumberbatch was the referee of repute. He was in the ring for bouts involving Carlos Marks in the 1960s through to Claude Noel and Leslie Stewart in 1981 and 1987. In football the highest-level match he refereed was the 1970 World Cup qualifier between Costa Rica and Honduras. In addition, he refereed in netball's Port of Spain League.

Pursuing a Diploma in Sports Administration in England, he returned to serve on the boards of football, boxing and netball. He was eminently qualified for the eventual roles he took as President of the Trinidad and Tobago Referees Association and the Northern Amateur Football Association. Cumberbatch also became the assistant manager of the Hasely Crawford Stadium prior to its opening in 1982.

For his tremendous contribution to sport and public service, George Cumberbatch, who was also the Postmaster General for the nation, was awarded the Public Service of Merit Gold medal in 1979 and inducted into the Trinidad and Tobago Sports Hall of Fame in 2004.