First Citizens Sports Foundation

HALL OF FAME



Eric A. De Verteuil

Hockey

Inducted in 1985

An all-round sportsman who eventually devoted most of his time to field hockey, Eric De Verteuil possessed the ability to turn around the fortunes for his team with his ball control and dribbling, at pace. Fittingly he would become a national captain, after also playing at the highest levels in the United Kingdom.

De Verteuil took up the sport while at St. Mary's College (one of the two main secondary schools for sport in Port of Spain from the 1930s onwards, the other being Queen's Royal College). He took part in athletics and tennis, displaying prowess in both sports (even winning the Boys Doubles national title with Lindy Price in 1950), but began playing hockey for the school in 1948, age 16, immediately showcasing the ability to go past defenders and create the openings for either his teammates or De Verteuil himself to score.



A solid three-year stint in the school team, which participated in the First Division North Hockey League at the time, saw De Verteuil selected to play for the Combined Colleges team against British Guiana. He was an integral part of their 3-1 victory, an occasion made sweeter by the inclusion of his twin brother, Alan, on the left wing, while Eric played on the right wing – the first male twins to play the sport in the nation. It also proved to be a great send-off for Eric, who had completed his secondary school education and boarded the boat for England to further both his studies and sporting career at Birmingham University.

While there, De Verteuil wasted little time establishing himself on the school's hockey team, earning himself the honours of a full Blue during his time as a student from 1952-55. As a standout member of the Birmingham team, he also earned himself selection for the Worcestershire County First XI, the Midlands, the University Athletics Union team, as well as the English Universities team. Playing for the latter, De Verteuil became part of hockey history when, in December 1953, he played for English Universities versus Scottish Universities in a match that was the first ever hockey match to be televised.

He returned to Trinidad in 1955, joining the Rugby Club team, representing them at both tennis and hockey. Sometimes the sports overlapped, with De Verteuil missing the first half of a hockey match to complete a tennis game, before hurrying to play in the second half and having an immediate impact on the outcome. By now he had made his preferred position of inside left all his own on the field, allowing him to dribble and cut inside the opposition, who would often deploy more than one player to mark De Verteuil.

In 1959, with a five-match series against British Guiana on the cards, he was named the national hockey captain. A few weeks later, De Verteuil was also named captain of the Trinidad and Tobago team for lawn tennis' Brandon Trophy tournament. A rare feat: national captain in two different sports, in the same year. The teams did not fare well against their respective opposition, but De Verteuil retained his hockey captaincy into 1960, where Trinidad and Tobago toured Jamaica and was joined by British Guiana for a triangular series, with Trinidad and Tobago emerging winners.

In 1961, De Verteuil led Trinidad and Tobago in a regional quadrangular tournament in Barbados, playing six matches and finishing second behind the hosts. A year later he gave up the captaincy but remained a squad player, as the team toured Jamaica for three matches and Barbados for a lone game, where Trinidad and Tobago lost. He retired from national hockey but played national tennis for the remainder of the year, where he teamed with Michael Valdez to win the 1962 Brandon Trophy.

A true all-rounder, Eric De Verteuil was inducted into the Trinidad and Tobago Sports Hall of Fame in 1985.