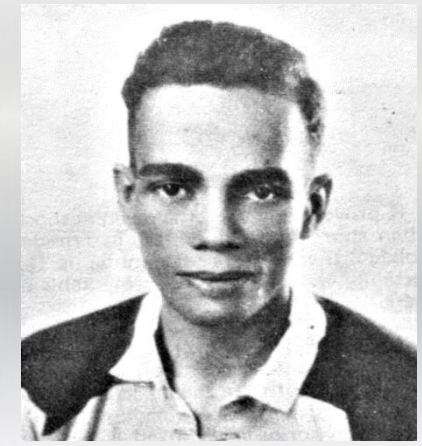
First Citizens Sports Foundation

HALL OF FAME



Francis Dinzey

Athletics

Inducted in 1984

Timing is everything, especially in elite sport. Francis Dinzey would have known all about timing, given the many races that he won based on knowing how to pace his race, how to outfox his opponents, and when to attack for the line. However, timing also meant that for an athlete in 1920s and 30s Trinidad and Tobago there were limited options beyond the domestic scene.

Nonetheless, Dinzey achieved his success based on what was available at the time and helped to establish the path that would lead to the nation's proud history in athletics, within that rarity for the country, distance running. He was built for purpose, with a tall thin frame that some thought bordered on fragility, but come the 1 Mile and 3 Mile events that were very popular in the era, Dinzey was anything but fragile.



He loved running from his boyhood years when he followed the trend of participating in many sports before specializing in one. For Dinzey, it was cycling that also occupied his time in his teens, but he soon realized that his best chance for honours was on the running track.

Taking part in the plethora of sports meets that were held around the country almost every weekend, Dinzey soon rose to the top as the best distance runner in the country, especially in the longer 3 Mile. It was no easy feat; the period was blessed with numerous gifted runners such as 'Bobs' Donawa and 'Sergeant' Bynoe. By 1928 he had won the event at the Empire Day Games held at the Queen's Park Oval. In the absence of a yet-to-be established national championships, these Games were the barometer to crown Trinidad and Tobago's best athletes. Dinzey also won the 1 Mile and 3 Mile in the 1929 Empire Day Games, repeating the 3 Mile victory in 1930. That year the first Commonwealth Games were held in Hamilton, Canada, but Trinidad and Tobago did not have the funds nor the sports administration infrastructure to send a team.

By 1934, with the 2nd Commonwealth Games being held that summer and murmurs of the nation sending its first ever team to an international Games, the athletics community was abuzz with excitement. At that year's Empire Day Games, the younger Mannie Dookie beat Dinzey in the 1 Mile and 3 Mile events and earned selection as a one-man team to the Commonwealths. For his part, Dinzey – a rival of Dookie on the track but a close friend off it – again used timing: he concentrated on an unforeseen comeback the following season to beat Dookie over the two distances, and to reclaim his crown in the 'championships'. The crowd and media were enthralled.

Dinzey continued to win at many local meets and traveled to British Guiana, where he wowed the crowds with his victories. He retired in the early 1940s and continued his career in the police force, while also coaching aspiring runners. For his numerous victories in distance running on the track, for his contribution to Trinidad and Tobago sport, Francis Dinzey was inducted into the Trinidad and Tobago Sports Hall of Fame in 1984.