First Citizens Sports Foundation

HALL OF FAME



David Farrell

(Posthumous)

All Rounder

Inducted in 2020

The sport of table tennis enjoyed immense popularity in the 1970s and 1980s in Trinidad and Tobago, buoyed by the likes of Mansingh Amarsingh winning regional titles, and the national team winning medals abroad and attending the world championships. This was in no small part due to the efforts, passion and administrative skill of David Farrell.

For club and country, Farrell was the instigator to popularize table tennis and was a natural fit as leader of its governing body; the term 'visionary for the sport' perfectly sums up his contribution to table tennis' landscape.

Farrell started off his organizational involvement in the sport by co-founding the Crusaders team in 1966, comprising outstanding players such as Franklyn Rouse and Frank Watson, that would later produce the likes of Dexter St. Louis, Jennlynn Daniel, Shelly-Anne Paris and Seamus Clarke.

Within a year of its formation, Farrell had the nous to pursue corporate funding for the Crusaders, landing the Solo soft-drink company as the title sponsor. It is a mutually beneficial relationship that remains in place to the present day and is the template for other teams to follow.

With such a foundation, the Solo Crusaders became a force on the domestic circuit, in turn raising the standard of both organization and play across Trinidad, leading to better players coming through the ranks.

Farrell now turned his attention to the national administration of the sport, rising through the ranks of the Trinidad and Tobago Table Tennis Association (TTTTA) to become its President in 1982. The push to introduce the sport at primary school level was accentuated by Farrell arranging for junior tournaments to be televised on the country's only channel at the time, TTT. Not only were there large crowds at the events but a much wider audience was being introduced to the joys of the game. It further increased the popularity and led to the unearthing of talent like the young St. Louis. The iconic Trinidad and Tobago player would later state that when he professed a desire to one day represent Trinidad and Tobago in table tennis at the Olympics – in what would have been a farfetched concept the time – he received Farrell's full support. He also encouraged St. Louis in his endeavour to improve his game by going to live in France. St. Louis would later represent Trinidad and Tobago at not one, but two Olympics: Atlanta 1996 and Beijing 2008.

In 1984 Farrell stepped down from the helm of the TTTTA and lent his talents to basketball, with little surprise that his time in that sport, taking advantage of interest garnered by the initial televised NBA matches to the country, led to an increase in participation.

Meanwhile, table tennis' fortunes were dwindling, with the sport not able to replicate the popularity that it enjoyed in the previous decades. Farrell returned as TTTTA President in 1995 for what would be a seven-year stint. He immediately got to work in helping to create the turnaround, using his Crusaders' connection with Solo to get the company to sponsor the national championships, while also getting Scotiabank to sponsor the wider game in Trinidad and Tobago. The result has been a resurgence of the sport's popularity that remains in place to the present day (2022).

He remained loyal to the sport that he loved, continuing as President of the Solo Crusaders until the time of his passing in 2019. For his massive contribution to table tennis and his never-ending servitude to sport, David Farrell was posthumously inducted into the Trinidad and Tobago Sports Hall of Fame in 2020.