First Citizens Sports Foundation

HALL OF FAME



Andrew Gordon Ganteaume

Cricket

Inducted in 1985

Mention 'Andy' Ganteaume's name and invariably there will be reference to his place in history as the batsman with the highest batting average (a record that was eventually broken in 2019) from the sole Test match that he played.

That appearance and his subsequent average came about due to the circumstances of the era, but the diminutive Ganteaume was much more than a single Test match wonder. He had a good first-class cricket career and was an all-round sportsman who represented Trinidad and Tobago in football for several years.

He hailed from Belmont, Port of Spain, playing both cricket and football in the Queen's Park Savannah, and though he did not have any formal training for batting, he developed a solid defensive style of building an innings before putting way the bad balls bowled to him later in his time at the crease.



It was the antithesis of the swashbuckling West Indian batting that had begun to take hold in world cricket, but every team needed a solid batsman upon which to build their total.

Ganteaume was also a very good wicketkeeper, further enhancing his ability to contribute to any team. With solid first-class scores and performances behind the stumps, he made his debut for Trinidad and Tobago in February 1941, scoring 87 batting at number 8, at just 19 years old.

By 1944 he was promoted to open the innings, in the widely held belief at the time that 'keepers would make good opening batsmen as they had become accustomed to the batting conditions while wicketkeeping'. Ganteaume did enjoy opening the innings, and it showed in his low scores. When he was moved back into the middle order later that season, he emphasized the point by scoring 97 against British Guiana.

However, in 1946, he was again placed at the top of the order against Jamaica at Sabina Park and knocked off a memorable 159, his maiden first-class century. Now a fixture in the Trinidad and Tobago team and juggling his work life with representing the Maple Club as a forward in domestic football, Ganteaume was in his best ever batting form when the England team were about to tour the Caribbean for the first Test series in the West Indies since World War II ended.

When England played two warm-up matches against Trinidad and Tobago, Andy seized the opportunity. Opening the innings, he scored 101, 47 not out and 90, to place pressure on the selectors to pick him for the 2nd Test in Port of Spain. When Jeffrey Stollmeyer was then injured, Ganteaume's selection was assured, even if he felt it was reluctant. He

later commented that one of the selectors "could not disguise his resentment at having to announce something that he did not want to happen". West Indies cricket was still divided by racial lines, and Andy would be a player of colour, taking the place of a white cricketer.

England amassed 362 in their 1st innings, with Ganteaume reprising his opener role, together with George Carew, as the Windies replied. The pair each scored a century – Carew 107 and Andy 112 – putting on 173 for the first wicket. Ganteaume had achieved that rare thing: scoring a century on Test debut.

He did not bat in the second innings, with rain causing lost time and the match ending in a draw. Trinidad and Tobago celebrated his century by arranging a public subscription and raised funds to present him with a new bicycle and a silver jug to commemorate his achievement.

For the 3rd Test in British Guiana, Andy was not selected. Explanations that were provided included that his scoring rate was too slow, something that the player himself rebuked and blamed the policy of a preference of white players to represent the region.

His national career continued in both cricket and football, with him becoming a stalwart of the Trinidad and Tobago football team that played Inter-Colonial matches against British Guiana, Barbados, and eternal rivals Jamaica (against whom he scored the winner in 1947). Andy still divided his time between the two sports, something that was possible given the two separate seasons. He played national football until 1950 but maintained his place in the Trinidad and Tobago cricket team.

Surprisingly, he was selected for the West Indies team to tour England in 1957; he was now 36 years old. He played 19 first-class matches on the tour – including seven fifties - but no Tests. He played two more first-class matches for Trinidad and Tobago and then retired from playing but not from the Trinidad and Tobago and Windies set-up.

In 1961 he became the national schools cricket coach, then was made a Trinidad and Tobago selector two years later before becoming a West Indies selector from 1974 to 1985. He was also twice appointed the Manager of West Indies on tours to England (1974) and Australia (1984). In 2007 he gave his perspective on the trials and tribulations of West Indies cricket during his playing time in his book *My Story: The Other Side of the Coin*.

Andy Ganteaume was awarded the Hummingbird Gold Medal in 2010 for his services to sport, having been inducted into the Trinidad and Tobago Sports Hall of Fame in 1985.

Matches: Test 1; First Class 50

Batting: Test 112 runs, Average 112.00, Hundreds 1; First Class 2,785 runs, Average 34.81, Fifties 17, Hundreds 5