First Citizens Sports Foundation

HALL OF FAME



Gerald Ethridge Gomez H.B.M.

Cricket

Inducted in 1985

With the toughness required for battle that is Test cricket, 'Gerry' Gomez cemented his place in the Trinidad and Tobago history books. There can be no discussion of Trinbagonian cricket players without mention of the all-rounder, a stalwart who represented the regional team from 1939 to 1954.

His father played cricket at inter-colonial level, passing on the genes as well as the impetus for a young Gerry to take up the game. He attended the hotbed of sporting talent that was Queen's Royal College (QRC) in the 1920s and 30s. His cricket performances were good enough to earn him a national team call-up at the age of 18 to play against Grenada. A high score of 85 earned him selection to play in the inter-colonial tournament (precursor to the Shell Shield and current 4 Day championship) in British Guiana. Solid performances in the middle order established Gomez as a dependable batsman; he was yet to work on his bowling.

In the following two seasons Gomez, now a fixture in the Trinidad and Tobago squad, scored his maiden first-class century (119 at Bourda) in 1938 and 161 not out against Jamaica in 1939. The latter game served as a trial for the upcoming Windies tour to England; Gomez was on his way to the home of cricket.

The exciting prospect of playing a full series in England was cut short by the beginning of World War II, by which time Gomez had scored 22 runs in his three Test innings. Returning to Trinidad and Tobago, with all international cricket suspended, Gomez, like many gifted sportsmen at the time, played football for Trinidad and Tobago and maintained his cricket through the Goodwill competition where he scored 216 not out at his home ground, the Queen's Park Oval, in 1943. In 1946 he almost repeated the feat with a score of 213 verses Barbados to save Trinidad and Tobago from defeat in an inter-colonial match. He backed this up with 190 verses British Guiana. As the war ended and Test matches resumed, Gomez had lost none of his ability. In fact, he had vastly improved and slotted back into the West Indies team that welcomed England to its shores in early 1948.

Gomez started with a bang: 86 in the first Test at Bridgetown that was drawn. A score of 62 in the second Test at Port of Spain maintained his scoring form in another drawn match, while his 36 and 25 not out at Georgetown was part of the winning effort in the third Test. They then won the final Test in Kingston to take the series, with Gomez scoring 23, having only to bat once in the game. It was an historic moment for the West Indies, of which Gomez was an integral part.

By now Gomez was bowling regularly for Trinidad and Tobago, with his fast-medium swing claiming many victims. It would come in handy on the Windies' next Test series on tour to India. In the first match, Gomez raised his bat after a brilliant 101 at Delhi, his maiden Test century, while adding two wickets. Three wickets in the 2nd Test and 4 in the 3rd, five in the 4th Test (along with scoring 50) helped the Windies to a slight 1-0 victory. On that tour, his bowling added another string to the West Indies' bow, evidenced by performances like his 9 for 24 against South Zone at Madras.

A more daunting prospect was taking on England, in England, in 1950. The visitors lost the first Test but at Lords – the home of cricket – Gomez scored 70 as part of a magnificent partnership with Clyde Walcott (168) to take the game away from England and secure the Caribbean team's first victory at the hallowed ground. Buoyed by the win, West Indies won the next two Tests, with Gomez's 74 at Kennington Oval for the 4th Test helping the team to a 3-1 series win. Again, Gomez was part of West Indian history.

One fifty for Gomez in each of the 2nd and 4th Tests in Australia was part of the different fortunes that West Indies were undergoing on their 1951 tour, but with the series already lost Gomez roared in the final Test with 7 for 55 in the first innings and 10 for 133 in the match.

In home series against India in 1953, Gomez's bowling outshone his batting, but as if to emphasize that he was not quite yet done with the bat, he captained the Trinidad and Tobago team to British Guiana later that same year and led from the front with scores of 148 and 108 not

out. He remained one of the first picks on the West Indies team until his final Test at Kingston in the series against England in 1954.

Retirement from competitive play did not mean retirement from cricket, Gomez remained involved with the game as an administrator. He was instrumental in the setup of the West Indies Cricket Umpire Association, even standing as an Umpire in the 1955 Test between West Indies and Australia in Georgetown. Appointed the manager of the West Indies team in 1960, Gomez was a popular choice for critics and players. He eventually became an executive member of the Trinidad & Tobago Olympic Committee, President of the Boy Scouts Association, President of Queen's Park Cricket Club (QPCC), a vice President of both the Lawn Tennis and the Football Associations. He also commentated on cricket, with the QPCC paying tribute to him with the construction of the Gerry Gomez Media Centre.

A true all-rounder, he was awarded the Hummingbird Gold Medal in 1974 and the Chaconia Gold Medal in 1996. In 1985 he was inducted into the Trinidad and Tobago Sports Hall of Fame.

Matches: Test 29; First Class 126

Batting: Test 1,243 runs, Average 30.31, Hundreds 1, Fifties 8; First Class 6,764 runs, Average 43.63, Hundreds 14, Fifties 29

Bowling: Test 58 Wickets, Average 27.41; First Class Wickets 200, Average 25.26