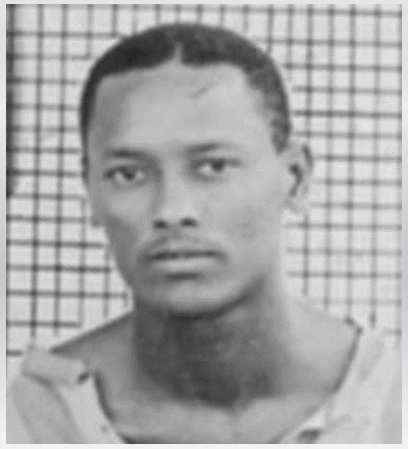
First Citizens Sports Foundation

HALL OF FAME



Matthew Nunes

Football

Inducted in 2004

When a player recognized as one of Trinidad and Tobago's greatest footballers states that he based his game upon another, then the object of that hero worship is a special player indeed. This is the case with Alvin Corneal, who upon seeing Matthew Nunes play in the late 1950s, tried to emulate him.

A product of the Modern Academy High School, Nunes was both an inside-forward footballer and an outstanding batsman. His dribbling and passing marked him out as an exceptional talent from an early age, making football the priority. His play was described as carefree and cavalier; he was aware that opposing teams worked out plans to nullify his play, but he reveled in undoing them with his skill. Nunes joined Maple in 1951 to play in the premier league of the era, the Port of Spain Football League (POSFL), where he wasted little time establishing himself as one of the POSFL's top scorers in the 1951-53 seasons. The team won the league in each of those seasons.

Those performances in front of thousands of fans in the Queen's Park Savannah put him onto the Trinidad and Tobago national squad in 1952, making his international debut on a trip to Suriname. Though lacking the national team experience of his teammates, when Trinidad and Tobago were about to embark on an unprecedented football tour of England in 1953 Nunes was included in the final squad that boarded the SS Golfito in June of that year.

The British media described Nunes as '5 foot 10.5 inches. His selection was due to him having a brilliant season for his club, Maple. He is a clever inside-forward, particularly on the left side. He has wonderful ball control and a shot to goal with either foot. Trinidad thinks he will be the star forward of the tour'.

Those words proved to be prophetic. The team secured 5 wins and 3 draws in their 14 games in unchartered territory. Nunes scored 4 goals and was involved in setting up many more.

It was the national team's first exposure to international competition outside of the Caribbean region, a crucial first step on the journey that would eventually lead to the highs such as the 1967 Pan Am Games bronze and 2006 World Cup qualification.

His showing – and link up play with fellow forward Shay Seymour – earned both players a contract with English Second Division team Bury FC. Their debut showed their intention, Nunes dribbling past the opposition before giving Seymour a pass to slam the ball into the goal. The move to Bury was also helped by West Indies cricketer, Sir Frank Worrell, who spoke to the club and let Nunes and his family stay at his home in Lancashire.

Bury finished 13th in the league and, despite being happy with their Trinidad and Tobago duo, had to release them due to financial constraints. Nunes played for Dartford in 1955, then Kent in 1956, before returning to Trinidad to play once again for Maple and with a new crop of talent such as Corneal. Though he was now focused on developing his career as an accountant with Texaco, he remined involved in competitive football until the early 1960s. Nunes would later emigrate to New York City.

A player who blazed the trail for Trinidad and Tobago footballers to play abroad in the home of football (England), Matthew Nunes' skill as a forward received the highest praise from his fellow players, a fitting accolade. In 2004, he was inducted into the Trinidad and Tobago Sports Hall of Fame.

POS League: **Winner (1951-53)**