First Citizens Sports Foundation

HALL OF FAME



Phyllis Pierre Walker

Netball

Inducted in 1985

The first national captain for a sport which gave the country its first world champions, Phyllis Pierre-Walker dominated her sport for over 15 years, fittingly earning the right to play at world level as the sport of netball grew to host its first global tournament.

In the Goal Scorer position she was magnificent, thrilling fans with her rate of conversion and saving her teams when they were behind on the scoresheet. Pierre-Walker possessed the means to change an outcome.

She grew up in the Belmont Orphanage which, during the 1940s, established a reputation for its girls becoming class netball players, just as the Orphanage's boys were scouted as good boxers. Her abilities on court soon superseded the secondary school level and, by the age of 16, Pierre-Walker was playing in the highly competitive Port of Spain Netball League (POSNL) for Hilanders. That was in 1949, and as she continued to rack up shooting awards with her scoring rate, she was selected to captain the first Trinidad and Tobago side that toured abroad to Grenada in 1952. The team

dominated proceedings and set the tone for years to come. Between 1954 and 1964, except for 1962, Pierre-Walker was captain of the Trinidad and Tobago team for every regional tournament.

The tours continued across the region, with Trinidad and Tobago becoming a force that could contend on a global level, but without the resources to travel further afield to gauge their prowess. That changed in 1963 when the first World Netball Championships were held in England. Pierre-Walker may have been 29 years old, but her shooting powers were as good as ever and, backed by a squad that contained the likes of goalkeeper Janet Bailey, they attended as 'Trinidad & Tobago', while the rest of the Caribbean (except Jamaica) combined to compete as the 'West Indies'.

The Trinidad and Tobago team began with a 58-22 drubbing of Wales, a close 33-28 victory over South Africa, and a 59-11 demolition of Northern Ireland. They also won against Ceylon (45-23), Jamaica (28-24), and Scotland (36-28), but losses against England, Australia and New Zealand meant that they finished just outside the medals in 4th spot.

When she returned to Trinidad Pierre-Walker, who was now playing for the Police netball team, continued in the POSNL until 1966. During her league career she was never beaten in shooting tournaments – one of the reasons that she became one of the early stars of the sport. For her ground-breaking contribution to netball, in 1985 Phyliss Pierre-Walker was inducted into the Trinidad and Tobago Sports Hall of Fame.