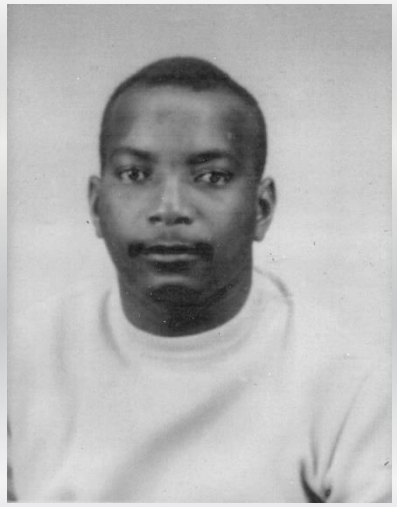
First Citizens Sports Foundation

HALL OF FAME



George Achille

Basketball

Inducted in 2000

When predictions were made in the early 1950s, that the teenaged George Achille would become one of the greats of T&T basketball, they were based on his phenomenal ability on the court, especially with scoring. Achille would make a seamless transition to the senior ranks and continue exactly what he did as a junior: dominate. His club teams and T&T benefitted immensely, as did local basketball.

From the mid-1940s onwards, basketball would experience its largest growth in popularity, with play taking place in the secondary schools in Port of Spain, which is where Achille first shone. At the Belmont Intermediate school, Achille was instrumental in the team winning the 1954 school's championship, with eager scouts taking note of his performances. The school was also where Achille met and played with fellow Hall of Fame inductee Merrick 'Jim" Anatol.

Great players hunt in pairs and in Anatol, Achille had found the perfect partner to run circles around the opposition. 'Achille & Anatol' would become a familiar sound in the years to come to the delight of fans and the despair of rivals.

Achille was given a scholarship to the Progressive Institute in Port of Spain, an entity that gathered the best young sportspersons and developed their skill as well as their education. He was reunited with Anatol who had been recruited to Progressive one year earlier, and the effect was immediate. In the season-opening exhibition match, Progressive (then in the Second Division) destroyed The Braves, the runners-up from the First Division. Progressive were so dominant that the Trinidad Amateur Basketball Association fast-tracked them through to the First Division, bypassing the Intermediates. The team would challenge on all fronts, winning the Canning's Knockout Shield and providing stiff opposition for perennial winners Woodbrook Limers.

The sport was growing at a rate, evidenced by a tour to Trinidad by Suriname in 1957, with the high-scoring Achille being called up to represent his country, as T&T won the three-match series 2-1.
Achille and his teammates then toured Suriname for another three-match series, with the hosts winning this time, by the same 2-1 score line; the team also enjoyed a dominant tour of British Guiana. Achille was also part of a successful tour to Martinique which proved the country's growing ascendancy in regional basketball, followed by an exhibition match for T&T against the world-famous Harlem Globetrotters at the Queen's Park Oval.

T&T hosted British Guiana and Martinique in 1958, with Achille continuing his prolific scoring rate, which was integral to T&T winning both series. One year later he attended the Central American & Caribbean Games (CAC) held in Caracas; the team did not go past the first round, facing the stronger Latin nations for the first time in what was their toughest competition to date.

Achille returned to the domestic leagues which was now bolstered by the addition of the Trinidad Five-A-Side tournament, further proof of the sport's popularity. The Progressive Institute remained at the forefront of all the competitions, with Achille playing competitively until the mid-1960s. Together with the likes of Anatol, Carl Blackman, Victor O'Garro and Aldwyn Hislop (all fellow Hall of Famers), George Achille shone during one of the most scintillating eras of local basketball, as such he was inducted into the T&T Sports Hall of Fame in the year 2000.