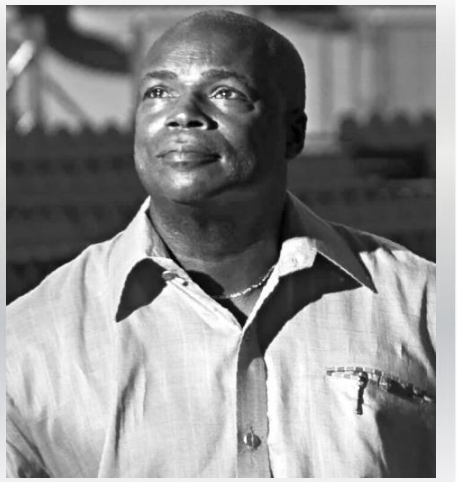
First Citizens Sports Foundation

HALL OF FAME



Hasley Crawford T.C

Athletics

Inducted in 2000

When Trinidad and Tobago won its first Olympic gold medal, it did so in the Games' most popular event (with no disrespect to other disciplines and athletes). It did it through the tremendous speed, power and fury of a 6-foot-2-inch dynamo from San Fernando, who had been gunning for the title 'fastest man in the world' for years beforehand. Finally, in 1976, the nation had struck Olympic gold. Finally, Hasely Crawford could mount the top step of the greatest podium.

The seventh of 11 children, his father was a footballer and his mother ran track, something that young Hasely emulated by running races around his block against his siblings and in the schoolyard at San Fernando Boys School. There, the PE teacher saw his blatant speed and arranged for the then 10-year-old Crawford to join the Brooklyn Sports Club. It meant that he came under the tutelage of fellow hall of famer, Zeno Constance, who was able to instil the importance of discipline from an early age. But Crawford was still small for his age, and was getting top fives in races but not winning.

His father passed away when he was 14, leaving the cash-strapped family in a quandary. But Crawford was determined to succeed, passing the entrance exams for San Fernando Technical Institute with its sports programme. Earning an apprenticeship with Texaco immediately afterwards, Wilton Jackson was now his coach, and for Crawford it was a new level of commitment. Condition work in the cane fields of south Trinidad built him up, while he sacrificed a social life, even training on Christmas Day. By 1970 the work paid off. At Guaracara Park he beat the 100m National Champion, Carl Archer, then at Palo Seco he won both the 100m and 200m, in the process booking a place for the Central American & Caribbean (CAC) Games in Panama. A stomach virus put paid to his chances at the CAC, making him more determined to make his mark on the international stage, an opportunity that would be provided to him in July 1970 at the Commonwealth Games in Edinburgh. He opened with 10.31secs in the heats and cruised through to the final. His powerful frame burst out of the blocks at the pistol, and 10.33secs later Crawford crossed the line in third place behind Jamaicans Don Quarrie and Lennox Miller.

Crawford's bronze was significant for reasons other than him earning his first major medal. It also secured him a scholarship at Eastern Michigan College. He was now on the US college circuit, competing regularly against some of the best sprinters in the world. In return, he became a regular winner for the school at National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) events. But he remained frustrated that, despite being a college star, funding was still a problem.

He returned to Trinidad in 1972 to win the 100m national title, with his focus on a much bigger prize, the 100m at that year's Olympics in Munich. In Germany he won his opening heat in 10.50secs, then ran 10.19secs in the quarterfinal, and 10.36secs in the final. In the middle of the Cold War, the media had spoken of the prospect of Valeriy Borzov of Russia winning. Crawford was also embroiled in the hype, later admitting that he was consumed with beating the Russian, which caused him to try to beat Borzov in the semi, when both men had already qualified. In the process Crawford injured his right thigh, which required heavy strapping going into the final, with Crawford deciding not to take an injection. As the starter's pistol went, the explosiveness out the blocks was too much for the injury and Crawford was forced to pull up, his Olympics were over.

The incident made him even more determined to return to the Olympics with a different outcome. In the US, he became the first runner to win the NCAA 100m and the AAU 60m titles in the same year, 1975. Then he travelled to Mexico for the Pan Am Games and took the silver medal in the 100m behind Silvio Leonard of Cuba. Now it was time for Montreal.

On a short tour to Europe prior to the 1976 Olympics he was running 10.2secs easily, showing that he had timed his form just right. In Canada, he walked out into the opening ceremony as flagbearer, but would return to the stadium a few days later with less conciliatory intentions; Crawford was there to do battle.

He won every race from the heats to his semi-final, posting 10.42, 10.29 and 10.22. As one of the favourites for a race that the whole world was about to watch, Crawford was understandably nervous, nauseous even.

But the Trinidad and Tobago back-up team lent their support, and before he left for the holding room he told team manager, Dr. Basil Ince, “Don’t worry, I’m going to beat them all.”

His lane one draw was far from ideal, as he would have the entire right side to gauge his progress but, on this day, it did not seem to matter. Into the blocks, the silence was broken by the starter’s pistol. Crawford was the third fastest off the line, Borzov just ahead of him but by 20m Crawford was out in front and continuing to pull away. At 80m it looked a done deal, but Don Quarrie of Jamaica was coming up rapidly to Crawford, who broke his stride but made a split-second recovery to cross the line with his right arm raised in triumph – 10.06secs to Quarrie’s 10.06, and Borzov 3rd in 10.14secs. Crawford was the fastest man in the world. Trinidad and Tobago was ecstatic.

In high demand after his win, 1977 was spent on the European circuit and he returned to Trinidad and Tobago colours in 1978, first for the CAC Games in Colombia where he was part of the gold medal winning 4x100 Relay team before going to the Commonwealth Games in Edmonton, Canada, repeating his 1970 100m bronze with 10.09secs. In the 4x100 Relay, he again won a medal, this time silver, behind Scotland but ahead of Jamaica. In 1980 and 1984, he returned to the Olympics but did not progress past the quarter-finals on each occasion. After retiring from competitive running, he worked with the Ministry of Sport, remaining impassioned about sport and reminding all about the virtues of never giving up, even when faced with setbacks.

Upon his return in 1976 he was awarded the nation's highest honour, the Trinity Cross, and a national airline aircraft was named after him. His feat was immortalized in song with the calypsonian Maestro's lyrics:

Then they say they never see that yet,
Start to finish moving like a jet,
Lane one, champion,
Montreal, gold medal
Gold! Gold!
The fastest human in the whole wide world!

In 1997, the country's national stadium was renamed after him. He was made a Sports Ambassador for the nation and welcomed into the Caricom Hall of Fame in 2005. In the year 2000 Hasely Crawford, the country's first Olympic gold medallist, was inducted into the Trinidad and Tobago Sports Hall of Fame.

CAC Games:	**1978 Gold 4x100m Relay**
Commonwealth Games:	**1970 Bronze 100m** **1978 Silver 4x100 Relay** **1978 Bronze 100m**
Pan American Games:	**1975 Silver 100m**
Olympic Games:	**1976 Gold 100m**
Sportsman of the Year:	**1972, 1976, 1977**