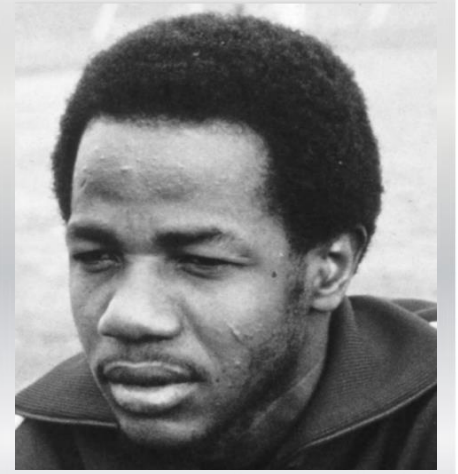
First Citizens Sports Foundation

HALL OF FAME



Steve David

Football

Inducted in 2008

The slightly gangly six-foot frame of Steve David was prominent in front of goal, in any match in which he played, and the prolific David certainly played many matches at all levels. He was part of a beautiful incarnation of the national team in the 1970s, his skill helped to grow the attractiveness of the sport in North America, with a sometimes-stunning goals-to-games ratio.

David was born and raised in Point Fortin as part of a large family of four sisters and two brothers. Like many boys in the 1960s, he gravitated towards football while in primary school, then played for St. Benedict's College at secondary school level. By the age of 18 he was starring in the South Amateur Football League as a center-forward, finishing the 1969 season as top scorer. Upon leaving high school, David – always pursuing further education to realize his dream of becoming an architect – joined the police force, which allowed him to earn a living and play for one of the best teams in the country, Police FC.

He enjoyed four seasons with the team, earned his national cap in 1972 and was named on of the Port of Spain Football League's top five players in 1971. Later that year he was selected for Trinidad and Tobago's football team for the Pan Am Games held in Cali, Colombia. The team were seeking to emulate the 1967 squad that earned a bronze medal and gave a good showing to finish fourth. Their campaign included wins against USA and Canada (5-1, 1-0 respectively) and a 2-2 draw with Colombia, giving David invaluable exposure at the international level.

The talented squad that included, in addition to David, Everald 'Gally' Cummings, Warren Archibald and Kelvin Barclay, were eyeing an even bigger prize: qualification for the 1974 World Cup. David was on fire during the qualifying tournament, finding the back of the net twelve times and earning hat-tricks against Antigua & Barbuda and the Netherlands Antilles. In late 1973, Trinidad and Tobago played Haiti in Port-au-Prince, brimming with confidence, and needed a win that would create history and secure their place at the 1974 World Cup in the then West Germany.

On match day, Cummings scored first, which was disallowed, with Trinidad and Tobago scoring three more times, with two from David. But, the goals were all disallowed. Eventually, one of David's goals was allowed but Trinidad and Tobago lost the game 2-1. Dubious officiating was the cause and FIFA banned the referee and the linesman for life but accepted the final 2-1 to Haiti result. The Trinidad and Tobago team were in tears, denied the chance to play on the biggest stage of them all. In the final pot of six teams, Trinidad and Tobago scored 11 goals, 7 of which David contributed.

Stung by the outcome, David returned to Trinidad where his raised profile was now attracting interest from the CONCACAF region, so when San Luis FC of Mexico came calling, he accepted. After one season, the Miami Toros signed David to play in the top level North American Soccer League (NASL), the forerunner to the MSL. Suddenly, David was playing with and against the likes of Pele, Franz Beckenbauer and George Best.

He was an immediate hit, his goals helping the Toros to the championship final where they lost 4-3 to Los Angeles. He finished the following season as the NASL's top scorer with 23 goals and six assists, a performance that relegated the legendary Pele to second in the standings for the 1975 MVP award.

David experienced a slump in form in 1976, scoring a single goal in 13 matches, and the Toros traded him to the Los Angeles Aztecs for the 1977 season where his goal-scoring form returned. He scored an amazing 26 goals in 24 appearances that included a memorable double against the Pele-led New York Cosmos, the first off a sublime assist from George Best, the second a header from a free kick. His winning post-match comments summed up his attitude: "I'm not surprised I'm scoring two goals a game. I should have four goals a game. I'm not putting enough chances in. I'm disappointed in myself. But I'm happy to be in Los Angeles. I wasn't happy last year." Unsurprisingly, that 1977 season saw him reclaim the title as the NASL's top scorer. He was also second, behind Beckenbauer, in the MVP award votes.

In 1978 he was traded to Detroit Express before a mid-season move to California Surf, with 16 goals in 40 games. For the 1980 season, David joined San Diego Sockers before another mid-season move to San Jose

Earthquakes, where he provided another good tally of 17 goals in 38 games for what would be his final year in the NASL.

Now 30 years old, David opted to play in the Major Indoor League Soccer, first for Phoenix Inferno from 1981 to 1983, then for Phoenix Pride for the 1983 to 1984 season He was prolific once again, with a combined ratio of 113 goals from 134 matches.

David retired from professional sport and remained in the USA but stayed close to Trinidad and Tobago football. Always vocal about the national team and of the need to grow the grassroots of the sport, David launched the 'Field of Dreams' project that come to fruition in 2020. It encapsulates his ideas of building a multi-sport facility for the youth in his native Point Fortin to train and learn and reinvigorate sporting camaraderie amongst the south Trinidad communities, as well as harness the talent.

Talent is an element that he knows all about. For over a decade he thrilled fans home and abroad with his 16 goals for Trinidad and Tobago, or his place as the 8th all-time leading scorer in the NASL. One of the nation's greatest footballers, Steve David was inducted into the Trinidad and Tobago Sports Hall of Fame in 2008.