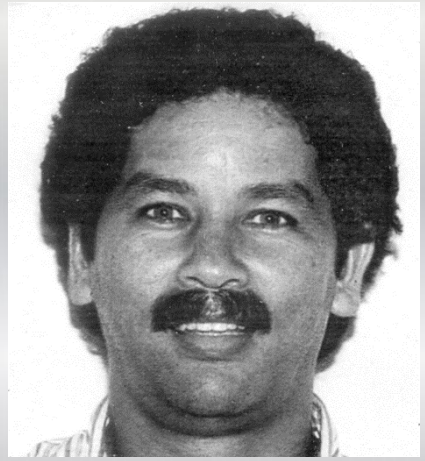
First Citizens Sports Foundation

HALL OF FAME



Larry Gomes H.B.M.

Cricket

Inducted in 1995

He was an integral part of the most dominant team to have ever played the game of cricket, the left-handed lynchpin in a batting line-up of right-handed wreckers of opposition bowling. He earned the name 'Mr. Dependable' as the quiet accumulator of runs with an elegance that epitomised exquisite timing.

Hilary 'Larry' Gomes was born into a large cricketing family in Arima, with five brothers that all played the game and his older brother, Sheldon, leading the way into the Trinidad and Tobago team with young Larry close behind. All the Gomes boys joined the Arima Sporting Club, which was the most dominant cricket team in eastern Trinidad during the 1950s to the 1970s. A young Larry, while attending Holy Cross College, honed his all-round talent (left-hand batsman, right-handed off break bowler) in the nets at the Princess Royal Park (now renamed the Larry Gomes enclosure) and exuded an early professionalism that would continue throughout his career.

By the 1972/73 season he was representing East Trinidad in the Texaco Cup, debuting with 53 runs as East defeated Central Trinidad. His next game in the tournament was even better, as he scored his maiden first-class century with 123. Performances like that put him onto the radar of English County teams looking for young talented cricketers, and Gomes signed with London team Middlesex for the 1973 summer.

Gomes played the entire season, from April to September, gaining invaluable experience of almost non-stop cricket and setting him nicely for the coming seasons. In the 1974 Shell Shield he debuted with 98 versus Guyana, had a solid tournament, then returned to Middlesex for another season with improving scores. The 1975 Shell Shield brought a massive 171 against Jamaica and his continued good form in England for Middlesex earned him a call up for the West Indies team that toured England in the summer of 1976, the infamous 'grovel' series. He made a duck in the 1st Test at Nottingham and then played against the County teams on that tour.

He scored another century against Guyana in the 1977 Shell Shield that kept him on the selectors' minds. That same year, world cricket was rocked by the Kerry Packer World Series that divided the sport and removed many front line players from their national squads. This presented opportunities for the likes of Gomes and he was chosen for the 3rd Test in Georgetown against Australia. After his duck in England, this time his Test outing was much better, though that was not evident when he got out for 4 in the first innings. He made up for it in the second innings, with 101, his maiden Test century in only his third Test innings. More was to come in the fifth and final Test in Kingston where his 115 runs helped the Windies to a 3-1 series win.

The late 1978 tour to India saw Gomes continue to claim his place, with 63 runs in a drawn first match, 51 and 82 in the 2nd Test, and 91 in the 4th Test. He was batting at number three in the order and averaged 40.50 for the series, cementing his place in the new look Windies. His efforts were recognized when he was named Sportsman of the Year 1978.

1979 brought more centuries – 127 versus Jamaica, 131 versus Barbados – and he was selected for the 2nd Cricket World Cup that summer but did not play in any of the tournament matches. By late 1989 the Packer issue was resolved, and the Windies top players returned but Gomes held his place, now considered as a first-choice batsman. He struggled with the conditions in Pakistan, posting one fifty in the 4 Test series.

When the team toured Australia in 1981, Gomes began his love affair with Australian bowling (he would finish his career with 6 centuries against them and an average of 70.44 for Tests played in Australia). 126 at Sydney opened his account, 124 in Adelaide ensured the Windies won and drew the hard-fought series.

In 1983, in Port of Spain, India had removed Desmond Haynes, Gordon Greenidge and Viv Richards, for 1 run scored. The Oval crowd was silent when 'Mr. Dependable' walked to the crease. In one of the most memorable partnerships, Gomes and captain Clive Lloyd both scored centuries, taking the team from 3 for 1 to 4 for 238. He then went to his second World Cup, where he scored three fifties, chipping in with his off breaks (taking two wickets in the final) as India shocked the world by defeating the Windies.

Gomes had a difficult series in India at the end of that year but recovered by the summer of 1984 to be an integral part of the Windies demolition of England, in England. He made 143 in the 1st Test, 92 not out at Lord's, 104 in the 3rd Test, finishing with an average of 80.00 as the Windies won the five-match series 5-0.

He was not yet done with 1984, the Windies toured Australia and Gomes was purring, knocking off 127 in the first Test, 60 and 120 in the 3rd Test, and 68 in the 4th Test, with another series win. He also scored his only One Day International century with 101 against Sri Lanka in a triangular tournament with Australia included. With such fine form he was named Wisden Cricketer of the Year, the top accolade in the sport, and took a second Sportsman of the Year award.

Gomes played in the 1986 series against England in the Caribbean where Windies inflicted another 5-0 series win. He was solid but not spectacular with one 50, carrying the same form to Pakistan and New Zealand. He played his last Test match in Christchurch, New Zealand, making way for the new crop of Windies batsmen.

Gomes returned to regional cricket, playing in the 1988 Red Stripe Cup (formerly the Shell Shield) with young Trinidad and Tobago players like Brian Lara, Ian Bishop and Rajendra Dhanraj.

In 1992 he was awarded the Hummingbird Silver Medal for services to sport, while he was honoured with the Larry Gomes Stadium in his native Arima. In 1995, Larry Gomes, the 'Mr. Dependable' of West Indies' cricket's greatest era, was inducted into the Trinidad and Tobago Sports Hall of Fame.

Matches: Test 60; ODI 83; First Class 231

Batting: Test 3,171 runs, Average 39.63, Hundreds 9, Fifties 13; ODI 1,415 runs, Average 28.87, Hundreds 1 Fifties 6; First Class 12,982 runs, Average 40.56, Hundreds 32, Fifties 63

Bowling: Test Wickets 15, Average 62.00; ODI Wickets 41, Average 25.48; First Class Wickets 107, Average 39.32

Fielding: Test catches 18; ODI Catches 14; First Class Catches 77
Sportsman of the Year: 1978, 1984