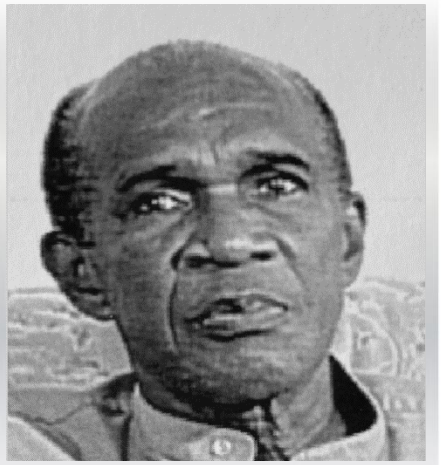
First Citizens Sports Foundation

HALL OF FAME



Lionel Sylbert 'Shay' Saymour

Football

Inducted in 2008

Part of the 'Belmont Battalion' as his Colts was affectionately known, Shay Seymour was a speedy forward with innate dribbling skills which often allowed him to create scoring chances that appeared impossible mere seconds beforehand. The skill of this diminutive centre-forward would take him to unprecedented heights as both a national player and a professional based in the home of football, England.

Another sportsman who emanated from Belmont and benefitted from its proximity to the Queen's Park Savannah, the young Shay followed his elder brothers into football matches that took place there on Sunday mornings, while attending the Belmont RC Primary School.

He soon graduated to his local team, Colts, who were the pride of Belmont, taking on the best teams in the country – Malvern, Maple, Casuals, Notre Dame, Shamrock – in battles that attracted thousands of spectators.

With Seymour banging in the goals, the Colts team of the 1940s was a force to be reckoned with, winning the FA Trophy and BDV Cup competitions. His prolific performances in front of the opposition's goal earned him selection for the national team, just at the time that there were more opportunities for matches against varied opposition and the TAFA (Trinidad & Tobago Football Association) was embarking upon ambitious plans to grow the team's exposure.

Seymour became part of the legendary Trinidad and Tobago squad dubbed the 'Family XI'. It was a successful period for the team that had played together since the late 1940s, hence the nickname. They won on their travels, won at home and won two inter-colonial tournaments. It proved to be the catalyst for them to undertake a bigger challenge: a tour of the United Kingdom.

This they duly did in 1953, boarding the SS Golfito in June of that year. It was the national team's first exposure to international competition outside of the Caribbean region, a crucial first step on the journey that would eventually lead to highs such as the 1967 Pan Am Games bronze medal and 2006 World Cup qualification. In Britain, the team secured 5 wins and 3 draws in their 14 games in unchartered territory.

Seymour scored against Barnstaple Town, Torquay United, Cornwall (one each in two matches) and the FA Amateur XI. He had given such a good account of himself that he was offered a contract to play for Weymouth FC, which he duly accepted. He became the second Trinidad and Tobago player to play professionally in England, after fellow hall of famer Alfred Charles' stint at Burnley in 1933. Matthew Nunes, Trinidad and Tobago's

other forward of note and Seymour's strike partner, also earned a contract from that ground-breaking tour and the two national front men shared an apartment in Radcliffe.

Seymour had a solid career at Weymouth, playing for three years before moving onto to Poole Town FC. Interestingly, he also played cricket during his time in the United Kingdom, performing at a high standard and regularly representing Bournemouth Cricket Club.

Unsurprisingly, when he returned to Trinidad at the beginning of the 1960s, Seymour made use of his vast experience, helping to coach youngsters and using the game of football to mould them into responsible young adults. With this in mind, he returned to the UK in 1969 to undertake an English FA Preliminary Coaching Course at the University of Exeter.

He remained close the sport, attending many matches as well as awards functions, always with his air of humility which was the complete antithesis to his forceful attitude on a football pitch. In 2008, one of the pioneers of Trinidad and Tobago football, Shay Seymour, was inducted into the Trinidad and Tobago Sports Hall of Fame.