

Cricket's most successful 'runs machine'

April 3, 2001

Sir Vivian's individual accomplishments which include being the only West Indies captain not to lose a Test series, and scoring the fastest Test century ever recorded, (off just 56 balls), should make you understand why this powerful hitter of the ball has earned the names of "The Master Blaster" and "Cricket's Run Machine."

The hard-hitting batsman from Antigua, who in 121 Tests recorded 8,540 runs at an average of 50.23, the highest aggregate by a West Indian will be inducted to Hartford's Cricket Hall of Fame at a ceremony to be held at the Radisson Hotel, Cromwell, Middleton, Saturday, September 29. More than 400 well-wishers and friends are expected to honor the man who entered international cricket with an approach to go after the bowlers and single-handedly hammer them out of the attack.

During his playing days, Sir Vivian's abounding confidence, the kind which makes him feel that he can never get out is cited as the reason for his outstanding success. When he goes to bat, he fears no bowler, does not concede that he can be dismissed, pays little attention to the name players, state of the pitch or the nature of the game. At the crease he looks anything like the master that he is, until the ball is in flight. From there on, he brings into play one of the best techniques in the business, the ability to score runs quickly off any bowler and does so without any flashiness about it.

Like all the great ones Sir Vivian is blessed with the vision to "see" the ball early, was a demon on the back foot, whether cutting, driving, pulling or hooking and was just as prolific on the front foot where the best footwork takes him quickly and comfortably to the pitch of the ball to send it crashing through the covers, back down the wicket, sizzling anywhere between mid-on and wide mid-wicket or sailing over the boundary. Because of his penchant for run-making, it is seldom that one sees Sir Vivian on the defensive. However, if necessary, he would reel out a sound, basic defensive technique.

Players like Sir Vivian does not come on the scene very often. They are the kind that keeps the game alive and brings the crowd to the game. With the present state of the sport in the West Indies at the moment, the fans could well do with another Sir Vivian. There is no one at the moment in the game to whom we can draw any comparison, but like the game which can be very unpredictable at times, the discovery of another "run machine" like Sir Vivian could well be on the horizon.