

United Petrotrin Players win Big 6 Title in T&T Pro League

by Afiya Butler

Months of stiff competition and gruelling preparation have finally paid off for the recently formed United Petrotrin Football Team and today its members can boast of having copped one of the more coveted trophies in the Trinidad and Tobago Professional Football League.

In December 2005, the United Petrotrin Football Team beat back five of the country's major professional football teams to win the National Commercial Bank Big Six Tournament of the T&T Pro League.

"This was a booster for the team," said Manager Larry Joseph. "We came from nowhere to win that trophy. We started the league in the second-to-last position with a lot of points behind everybody and ended up second to last overall. We were basically struggling in the League up to that point, but in this competition we were able to beat all the big teams like W Connection, Jablotech, North East Stars and others. That caused a great stir in the football fraternity. I don't think our previous scores prepared anybody for that turnaround."

The United Petrotrin Football Team played against North East Stars in the finals of the Big Six tournament. This Competition was held at the Larry Gomes Stadium on December 10. Both teams needed one final win to secure the Big Six title.

The competition in this match was stiff, as players from both teams displayed skill and determination on the field. The first half of the game ended with no goals being scored on either side. The United Petrotrin Team made a few changes during intermission and substitute forward Jamal Ayres was selected to replace Peter Prosper. With these changes the competition became even more intense in the second half and in the 82nd minute of the game, Ayres broke the ranks of the North East players to score the first and only goal of the game.

"That was crazy!" Mr. Joseph recalled. "After the game everybody left the bench. The supporters ran onto the field. Petrotrin's Manager, Corporate Communications Mr. Arnold Corneal came down and met the players on the track and congratulated them for their performance. Everybody was really overjoyed. Even North East players came across and congratulated us and the Chairman of the Professional League Mr. Dexter Skeen was on hand to give us the trophy when we came off the pitch on the same night."

Following that game, United Petrotrin held its own prize-giving function at the Petrotrin Sports Club, Pointe-a-Pierre on December 19. A number of players were recognized for their performance during the season at that function.

These included five outstanding players for the season: goal keeper Ken Francis, Kelvin Hernandez, defender Brendan Christopher, midfielder, Lee Haynes and midfielder Brent Garcia; Most Valuable Player in the final game Kelvin Hernandez; Most Disciplined Player during the season Reon Pegus; Most Improved Player Brendan Christopher and Gerald Forbes for scoring the most goals during the season. United Petrotrin Captain Mr. Anthony Rougier was also recognized for his outstanding contribution to the team.

Mr. Joseph said the senior team has already begun preparations for the 2006 football season, which begins in April.

"At the moment we are training in the gym and doing some field preparation," he said. "We have raised the bar by winning the Big Six so we must now show everybody that it was not a fluke. Our preparations must be much harder than this year. We are hoping that we would be better prepared this year and would place higher in the league to win at least another trophy."