

# Crowning of Courtney Walsh

## ACROSS THE BOARD

WEST Indian cricket fans, wherever they were or whatever they were doing, will never forget March 27, 2000. It's a day that will live long in their memories; particularly those who were privileged to be at Sabina Park in Jamaica.

It was the day that Courtney Andrew Walsh became the king wicket-taker in Test cricket. While it was for some time a highly anticipated occasion, who could have imagined the outpouring of celebration and joy with which it was met.

Throughout the cricketing fraternity - not just in the Caribbean but across the rest of the world - the declaration has been the same: "It couldn't have happened to a nicer person; one of the game's true gentlemen."

By his exploits, both on and off the field, this veteran of Jamaica and West Indies cricket has endeared himself to fans and has earned the respect of opponents from Australia to Zimbabwe. However, no place is this fast bowler more adored than in his homeland where he saw fit to erase Indian Kapil Dev's name from the record books as he snared an unprecedented 435th Test victim.

Even before this accomplishment and the ensuing massive motorcade and other celebratory events, Jamaicans were showing their love for the man nicknamed "Cuddy". In their thousands they turned out for the second Test versus Zimbabwe, thus contributing to the Courtney Walsh Appreciation Fund to which US\$1 from every ticket sold for that game was donated.

This tangible gesture on the West Indies Cricket Board's part - which has netted at least US\$30 000 for Walsh - was but a small "Thank You" to a living legend. The WICB is grateful to Jamaica for its incredible support during the Sabina Park Test which was billed "A Dedication To Cuddy".

The Board also wishes to

extend sincerest congratulations to Walsh on his latest landmark. He has been one of regional cricket's finest servants and an exemplary role model for Caribbean youth. His dedication, professionalism and fitness are not only to be admired but to be aspired to by those following in his large footsteps.

For almost 16 years he has performed on the sporting stage receiving accolade after accolade and like a true champion, never seeking excuses but bouncing back from every adversity with more determination and vigour than before. When one considers how many have come and gone since his international career started in 1984, his continued excellence and quest for further success speak volumes about the work ethic of this humble, unwitting hero.

Jamaican deejay, Rohan "Zumjay" Stephens, in a spontaneously-composed tribute "Courtney" that has swept Jamaica by storm since being played at the Mound in Sabina Park, summed up sentiments about the six-foot sporting star. Walsh is most definitely "di big man inna cricket" - by stature and by deed.

Zumjay's words represent more than just a catchy song that sends Walsh's fans into a frenzy. They are an expression of awe, gratitude and respect for a man who has given much to his country, to the Caribbean and to cricket.

The song is a salute from every West Indian cricket follower who may never meet Courtney Walsh or even have the privilege to see him bowl in person but who holds this gentle giant dear in his or her heart just the same.

Hail the new king in cricket - Courtney Andrew Walsh!

Questions addressed by "Across The Board" can be sent to the West Indies Cricket Board, St. John's Wood, Antigua. E-Mail WICB@candw.ag or FAX: (285) 460-5452 or Saunders-Franklyn Associates Inc., Suite #4, 1st floor Wildey Plaza, St. Michael Barbados. E-Mail saunders@carib-surf.com FAX: (246) 437-5593.