

What more can one say about Shivnarine Chanderpaul that has not already been said? Consistent, dependable, determined, dour, doughty, gritty, immovable, professional, rock-like, single-minded and other adjectives to the same effect have all been used repeatedly to describe the batting of the man from Unity and the most recent honorary citizen of Dominica. Granted, almost no one calls him classical, dazzling, elegant, entertaining, powerful or stylish, but his remarkable powers of concentration, his fighting qualities and his unwillingness to sell his wicket cheaply, as exemplified by his undefeated, match-saving 116 in the Second Test against India, have won him admiration and plaudits around the world.

Tony Cozier, the doyen of Caribbean commentators, once said, "He is not known as 'Tiger' for nothing. There is no grittier fighter in the game." The former Somerset captain and Australia-based cricket scribe, Peter Roebuck, writing about what was then the third fastest Test century off 69 balls by Chanderpaul against the mighty Australians at his beloved Bourda in 2003, was moved to state that he had "risen above the imposters of West Indian cricket to prove himself the backbone of their team."

But it is Roebuck's June 2008 masterpiece on Chanderpaul that really captures the nature of this unassuming yet driven man's game best, in terms that are still applicable today: "[His game] has been an exposition of proven technique and resolute temperament. Chanderpaul has been scoring lots of runs for years, most of them in the face of the adversity that has long gripped West Indian cricket. Indeed, he has displayed laudable immunity to the forces of distraction, destruction and downright incompetence that have often swirled around him. Always he has moved along at his own pace in his own way. At times he has been a tortoise, on other occasions a hare, but always he has been staunch and skilful. His entire career tells of durability."

And on the fourth evening of the Second Test, after Chanderpaul had defied the Indian attack and stood fast yet again, the Indian fast bowler and man of the series, Ishant Sharma, gave a sense of the frustration and concern that Chanderpaul was causing his team, when he said, "Chanderpaul is the most irritating batsman to bowl to."

Of course, on the fifth day of his 133rd Test, a new record for West Indians, he duly and appropriately scored his 23rd Test century. Only Brian Lara (34), Sir Gary Sobers (26) and Sir Viv Richards (24) have scored more and only Lara has made more than his aggregate of 9,367 runs. And for those who argue that quantity and longevity alone do not constitute true greatness, it should be noted that with an average of 49.04, he is surpassed only by George

Headley (60.83), Sir Everton Weekes (58.61), Sobers (57.78), Sir Clyde Walcott (56.68), Lara (53.17), Richards (50.23) and Sir Frank Worrell (49.48), among West Indians to have played more than 20 Tests.

True, he would never be considered the equal of these immortals of the great game in terms of panache or the ability to stir the blood, but surely only a churl would deny him a place in the pantheon of West Indian legends, given the scope of his singular achievements in the most dismal period of West Indian cricket history. Regardless of what some – including members of the current coaching unit and selection panel – might say or suggest, the cricket-loving West Indian public and the wider cricketing world recognise Chanderpaul's worth to a team fighting for respectability and a region longing for better days on the field of play. He may or may not have long left in the game but one thing is sure, Shivnarine Chanderpaul will not go quietly into the night.

Source: [Stabroek News](#)