

12th March 09 - Brazil gets ready for South American Championships

Home team Brazil will play Chile in the opening game of the eighth South American Championships in Sao Paulo on April 8.

This year's tournament is significant for two reasons - it is being held in Brazil for the first time and the four-team event will be a warm-up for the World Cricket League Division Three tournament later this year.

Also, no 'festival' teams have been included, perhaps as a result of disquiet shown by the ICC Americas office after an 'Ecuador XI' played at the last tournament in Lima in April, 2007. Cricket has never been played in Ecuador and only one player in the squad lived in the country.

Two-time champions, the Miami Masters, which has competed in the SAC under the banner, Guyana Masters, will not be defending their title.

Another first is the introduction of the Twenty20 format to the event, with the two matches being played on April 12.

Brazil is likely to celebrate home-ground advantage by fielding four home-grown players. And fittingly the tournament will be played at the Sao Paulo Athletic Club. "It was at this club that Charles Miller introduced cricket, rugby and soccer to Sao Paulo in the 1880s," Associacao Brasileira de Cricket official, Norm Baldwin, told Cricinfo. The clubhouse hosts the Brazilian Cricket Museum.

The draw for the eighth South American Championships is:
April 8; Brazil v Chile; April 9 - Argentina 'A' v Peru; April 10 - Argentina 'A' v Chile; April 11 - Brazil v Peru; April 12 (both Twenty/20) - Chile v Peru, Brazil v Argentina 'A'.

Argentina fielded a full-strength team in the first two events, but has provided its 'A' team since then to allow a more even tournament.