

# Brazil's global appeal on full display in Toronto exhibition against Chile

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By Israel Fehr

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TORONTO – A quick glance at Toronto's Rogers Centre on Tuesday night and it could've been mistaken for the famous Maracana Stadium more than 8,000 kilometres away in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

The South American flavour was rich as over 38,000 fans packed the stands to watch Brazil and Chile play an international men's soccer friendly. It was Brazil's first game in Canada in almost 20 years (when they tied Canada 1-1 in 1994) and the first time the five-time World Cup champions had played in Toronto.

Portuguese and Spanish chatter, chants, and cheers bounced off the walls of the dome; flags waved; people danced. There was a vocal Chilean contingent on hand but it was the legion of supporters sporting Brazil's iconic yellow and green that stood out.

"I don't think there were any Canadians, I saw Chileans and Brazilians," cracked Brazil manager Luiz Felipe Scolari. "Probably there was a lot of Canadians there and we received in our hearts the love that they provided to us."

In the world's most popular sport, Spain currently holds the belt as the most dominant nation as the current World Cup holders and winners of two straight European championships, but it's Brazil's brand that still resonates above all others around the world.

With the internet, most of the myths and mystery around the Brazilian national team are gone, but the fascination still remains. There's an undeniable attraction to their history of winning and to the way they play the game.

The country consistently produces players with wildly talented skills. It's a phenomenon that's been attributed to socio-economics, culture, and race.

It was all on display Tuesday night in Toronto. Hulk and Robinho scored to give Brazil a [2-1 win](#) over Chile. They attacked with great fervour and flair, living up to their billing as flashy showmen.

Since Pele led Brazil to their first World Cup in 1958, the Selecao have won the World Cup in every decade except the 1980's – quite the feat considering the tournament is contested every four years.

21-year-old Neymar is the latest of Brazil's long list of singularly-named superstars. The expectation is that he will lead this summer's World Cup hosts to their sixth triumph and follow in the footsteps of those who came before him.

At home in Rio de Janeiro with the World Cup on the line or on the road in Toronto for a friendly, it's all the same for Brazil. They might not always be the best team on the planet, but they're always the centre of attention.

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