

## 《2014年世界杯前瞻：世界杯将再次留在南美？》

2014 sees the World Cup returning to South America for the first time since 1978, when a Mario Kempes inspired Argentina saw off the Netherlands, keeping up the record that only South American teams have ever won the tournament when it's been held there. So will 2014 be any different? Will any of the big European nations, including the holders Spain, be able to do what no other team has managed in the past? Or does any other continent have the strength to see off the challenge from a strong South American group?

We'll start our review with the South American nations, and who else could we begin with, but the hosts Brazil. Rewind 18 months and they looked like they'd be struggling, but the appointment of 'Big Phil' Scolari has been inspired, and he's brought a belief to the team that was previously missing. Last year's 3:0 demolition of Spain in the Confederations Cup final shocked many experts, and all of a sudden the Brazilians have expectations on them. Whilst you can't argue with that scoreline, we still wonder if Brazil have the firepower to win such a long tournament. Neymar is expected to conjure up the magic, but they're relying on Fred to come up with the goals. No disrespect to Fred, but the last two Brazilian teams to win the World Cup, in 2002 and 1994, could count on the likes of Ronaldo and Romario to lead the front line, two genuine legends of the game.

Argentina, the host nation's big rivals, are in with a great chance too. Any team featuring Lionel Messi is going to be in with a shout, but when you add to that the likes of Sergio Aguero, Gonzalo Higuain and Ezequiel Lavezzi, then it's a team with one of the best sets of attacking options in the tournament. Likewise, Uruguay's attacking trio of Luis Suarez, Edinson Cavani and Diego Forlan is about as potent as it can get, and is capable of scoring goals against any team in the world, although whether the rest of their team is strong enough is open to debate.

Chile were one of the most exciting teams at the 2010 World Cup and recently gave England the run around at Wembley, whilst if Colombia can get Radamel Falcao fit then they could cause an upset or two. So of all the South American teams, only Ecuador look like they might struggle to get out of the group stages, with all the others more than capable of reaching the latter stages.

So with such a strong South American contingent, where will the main challenge come from? Well, the big guns from Europe is the obvious answer. And where else could you look for a team of Champions than Spain. Having won the last World Cup, sandwiched between two European Championship triumphs, this is a team that not only knows how to play fantastic football, but that knows how to win. So whilst Messi and Ronaldo get all the annual plaudits and player of the year titles, the likes of Xavi and Iniesta go about winning all the major trophies. So will they be as strong this year? Well, worryingly for the rest of the world, yes. Not only are most of the old guard still there but talented youngsters such as Koke and Thiago Alcantara have joined the ranks. Not only that, but they've managed to grab a prolific striker, Diego Costa, from under the noses of the host nation, with the Atletico Madrid forward opting to play for Spain, rather than the nation of his birth.

Of the other teams, Germany have a fantastic team, with some great options all over the pitch. The Italians can never be discounted at tournaments, whilst Portugal, with Ronaldo in the team will be dangerous, and Belgium, with such an array of talent will be amongst everyone's list of dark horses.

