SCHOOLCHILDREN IN the attire of the Barbados Tridents team.

COSTUMED REVELLERS at the opening ceremony of the Limacol Caribbean Premier League, at Kensington Oval last night. (Pictures by Sandy Pitt.)

Party start to CPL

JAMAICA REGGAE artiste Konshens did a set and then joined Trinidad soca artiste KES to sing the Limacol Caribbean Premier League's anthem How We Play.

BARBADIAN SOCA QUEEN Alison Hinds added her special flavour to yesterday's launch with some of her hit songs. (Pictures by Sandy Pitt.)

by NATANGA SMITH

THE FIRST EVER Limacol Caribbean Premier League (CPL) Twenty20 cricket series was launched at Kensington Oval in carnival style yesterday, with Caribbean music, blaring vuvuzelas, costumed revellers and fireworks.

The party started, aptly, in the **Party Stand**, where Jamaican reggae superstar **Konshens** and Trinidadian soca artiste **KES** combined to sing the CPL's official anthem **How We Play.**

The grounds were transformed into a colourful spectacle as 450 young costumed revellers paraded alongside 90 schoolchildren adorned in the kits of the six franchise teams.

They were joined by a host of adult revellers, all helping to portray the carnival atmosphere that the CPL will be transmitting across the globe in the coming weeks.

The national anthems of Antigua, Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, St Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago were then played, to be greeted by thunderous applause.

As the revellers left the field, Barbadian soca queen Alison Hinds took to the stage that was set up for the **MQI/Banks/LIME Pic-O-De-Crop Finals** Friday.

The cheers resumed at 7:05 p.m., when the St Lucia Zouks and the Barbados Tridents took to the field to warm up and toss balls into the nets. At the humid venue the Barbados team played a game of shirts versus skins football.

Konshens was a hit with his popular tunes, but he competed with the vendors selling food and the bar providing drinks.

At 7:30 p.m. Barbados Tridents captain Kieron Pollard won the toss and elected to bat against the squad headed by Darren Sammy. The announcement was met with loud applause from the Bajan patrons.

The trophy was brought on to the field and it was joined by West Indies cricket great Sir Garfield Sobers, CPL CEO Damien O'Donohoe, Denis O'Brien, chairman of Digicel, the tournament's strategic partner, Ajmal Khan, founder of the CPL, and Dave Cameron, president of the West Indies Cricket Board.

The trophy was unveiled and then fireworks exploded behind the **Party Stand** for five minutes, until the smoke covered the field.

KES and **Konshens** came back out to sing **How We Play** as the many cameras captured people in the crowd waving to themselves on the lone jumbo screen. More fireworks exploded as both teams again took to the field for the posed photo ops.

As the match started, the bottom section of the **Hall and Griffith Stand** was empty, as the players' dugouts were there but the rest of the stand was packed, with many who couldn't get in watching the game on the big screen through the bars.

Six franchises – the Antigua and Barbuda Hawksbills, Barbados Tridents, Guyana's Amazon Warriors, Jamaica Tallawahs, St Lucia Zouks and Trinidad and Tobago Red Steel – will play 24 matches across six venues.

The final will be playedd in Trinidad and Tobago on August 24.

SOME OF the 450 junior costumed revellers at the launch of the Limacol Caribbean Premier League yesterday.

CAPTAIN DARREN SAMMY (left) of the St Lucia Zouks making a point to captain of the Barbados Tridents, Kieron Pollard (right), to the amusement of West Indies cricket great Sir Garfield Sobers.