

Olympics Chooses Zeon Zoysia for Fairways at 2016 Games

By: Jim Novak

When the game of golf returns to the Summer Olympics in Brazil in 2016, two TPI members will be rolling out the green carpet. **David Doguet** of Bladerunner Farms in Poteet, Texas who won the contract to use Texas grass to cover the golf course and TPI member **Marcelo Matte**, owner of Green Grass Sod Farms of Brazil who was selected as the sod producer to grow and install the Zeon Zoysia on the course.



Dr. Frank Rossi, associate professor in the Department of Horticulture at Cornell University has confirmed that when golf returns as an Olympic sport at the 2016 Games in Rio, the grass in the fairways, roughs and tees of the new golf course built especially for the Games will be Zeon Zoysia.

The last time golf was part of the Olympic Program was at the 1904 Games in St. Louis, Missouri, U.S.A., when the United States and Canada were the only two competing countries. More than a century later, golf again will be played at the 2016 Rio Olympic Games. An indication of golf's globalization since 1904 is that in Rio, at least 30 countries are expected to be represented in both the men's and women's competitions, from all continents represented in the Olympic Games.

Rossi who is a consulting agronomist on the project stated "Everything approaching the greens, 88 percent of the grassed area, will be Zeon Zoysia." The choice of Zeon Zoysia as the grass for the majority of the acreage on the golf course, approximately 88 acres of fairways and roughs, reinforces the organizing committee's desire to create a sustainable golf course. Zeon Zoysia has very low requirements for maintenance and inputs, according to David Doguet, president of Bladerunner Farms, the company that bred Zeon Zoysia. "Zeon Zoysia is very environmentally friendly. The grass needs very little water, and very low amounts of nitrogen fertilizer, while still looking and playing great. The grass will create a world-class playing surface for the Olympics, and for many years to come," Doguet said.



"TPI members David Doguet of Bladerunner Farms in the U.S. and Marcelo Matte of Green Grass in Brazil are producing the grasses needed for the Olympic golf course that is underway on several different fronts. While there was initial concern about the process, currently all systems are go for delivering the course for a test event in 2015."

Frank S. Rossi, Ph.D.
Associate Professor Turfgrass Science
Dept. of Horticulture
Cornell University