

**Media Update: Grassing of the Olympic Golf Course in Rio Underway,
Rio Games open 2 years from this month.**

August 11, 2014, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: As the world awaits the return of golf as an Olympic sport for the first time in more than a century, the folks behind the scenes work to plant [Zeon Zoysia](#) grass on the Olympic Golf Course. They must have the course ready by the time the Games open just two years from now in August 2016.

Marcelo Matte, owner of [Green Grass Brazil](#), grows the grass on his Brazilian sod farms for planting directly onto the Olympic Golf Course. A licensed sod producer of both grass varieties used on the course—Zeon Zoysia on tees, fairways and roughs, and SeaDwarf Seashore Paspalum on the greens—Matte also spearheads the installation of the grass on every playing surface of the course designed by American Golf Course Architect [Gil Hanse](#).

Matte said he began growing the grass in January 2013 in order to have enough grass inventory available to quickly plant the golf course when construction progress allowed. In all, Green Grass Brazil will produce between 35 to 40 hectares (85 to 100 acres) of grass in order to plant it onto the 18-hole golf course. Matte employs 20 staffers to install the grass on the golf course, along with expert help from David Doguet, the American turfgrass breeder from [Bladerunner Farms](#) in Poteet, Texas, who developed Zeon Zoysia for use on golf courses.

Planting of the grass from the sod farm onto the actual golf course playing surface began in May 2014. Matte said he is using several different planting methods at the golf course. Most of the Zeon Zoysiagrass surfaces are being planted using Big

Roll sod, large spools of sod in one continuous piece that unfurl over a long surface. Some of grass is installed as sod slabs that fit together like puzzle pieces. On the greens, the SeaDwarf Seashore Paspalum is being planted as sprigs, basically broken up pieces of sod that are deposited as live grass material and sliced into the soil of the greens surface. No seeds are being used at the golf course. All of the grass is planted as live material. A litany of heavy equipment is used to plant the golf course such as sprig harvesters, sprig planters, fork lifts, rollers, tractors, and trucks.

Both the Zeon Zoysia and the SeaDwarf Seashore Paspalum are considered drought tolerant grass varieties. Zeon Zoysia, which has low fertilizer requirements, grows a dense, extremely high-quality playing surface that tends to choke out weeds. This feature of Zeon Zoysia is critical, Matte said, because “we do not have permission to use herbicides yet.” SeaDwarf Seashore Paspalum stands up to the salty water conditions that will be used to irrigate the greens at the site.

Planting of the grass at the golf course should continue through December, depending on the pace of construction of the facility. Matte said it will take a full growing season, November through May, for the grass to completely grow in.

Though Matte has grassed many golf courses in his career, “this one carries an enormous responsibility. It is a very important project for everyone involved. It is a once in your life opportunity to be a part of the first golf course made for the Olympic Games. When it comes, I hope everyone in Brazil will be proud of the course. Also the world will watch golf on TV for the first time in the Olympics. I think it will be the largest amount of people watching golf ever,” Matte said.

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About Zeon Zoysia

Zeon Zoysia is a fine-bladed zoysiagrass variety suitable for use on golf courses, sports fields and lawns. It has low water requirements and low fertilizer requirements, drought tolerance, salt tolerance, shade tolerance and adapts to a variety of soils. <http://www.bladerunnerfarms.com/bladerunner-farms-grass-varieties/zeon-zoysia/>

About Green Grass Brazil

Green Grass is Brazil's premier producer of high-quality turfgrass for golf courses, sports fields and lawns. The company produced turf for soccer stadiums in the 2014 World Cup held in Brazil and is currently grassing the Olympic Golf Course under construction for the 2016 Olympics in Rio. www.greengrass.com/br

About Bladerunner Farms

Bladerunner Farms is the world's largest privately held zoysiagrass and buffalograss research and development facility. Current releases include: Zeon Zoysia, L1F Zoysia, Lowrider Zoysia, Y2 Zoysia, JaMur Zoysia, Density Buffalograss and Eco Buffalograss, Cutlass Zoysia and Habiturf. Bladerunner works in conjunction with the University of Georgia to conduct research. Grasses are licensed west of the Mississippi by [Doguet Ventures](#), east of the Mississippi by [The Turfgrass Group](#) and outside of the US by Team Zoysia International. Bladerunner Farms is headquartered in Poteet, Texas, just south of San Antonio. 830-276-4455, info@bladerunnerfarms.com , www.bladerunnerfarms.com