



Press Release

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International Golf Federation (IGF)

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RIO STREETGOLF PROGRAMME LAUNCHES IN RIO DE JANEIRO

A new golf Olympic golf legacy programme designed to make golf more accessible in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil launched in May 2015 at the Maracanã Stadium.

Supported by The R&A, the Golf Foundation and the Rio Golf Federation, Rio StreetGolf is a schools and communities social legacy project that aims to change perceptions, break down sporting and social barriers and highlight the key values of golf – honesty, respect and integrity.

The programme will serve as an important Olympic legacy along with the newly constructed golf course in Rio's Barra da Tijuca district that will host the men's and women's Olympic golf competition. The golf course is set to become a public facility at the conclusion of the 2016 Olympic Games.

On 6 May, 15 boys and girls from Japeri became the first people to play golf at the Maracanã Stadium, considered football's spiritual home in Brazil. The children took part in five golf challenges throughout the stadium in the hallways and along the side of the pitch, demonstrating that golf can be played in non-traditional locations away from the golf course.

The new programme follows on from the opening of Brazil's first public golf course in 2005 in Japeri. Constructed in a low income area on public land, it now serves as a valuable gathering place for young golfers who have the chance to attend bi-weekly lessons taught by coaches funded by The R&A.

Cristian Barcelos, 20, learned to play golf at the age of 12 at Japeri and two years ago became the first player from outside a private members' club to win the Brazilian Junior Golf Championship. Barcelos and fellow Japeri resident Breno Dominjos are two of the five-man team being trained by the Golf Foundation to deliver StreetGolf to children across Rio de Janeiro.

"It is brilliant to be able to teach golf to kids from my community in the home of my favourite football team," said Barcelos. "No one believed that we were going to play golf in the Maracanã."

Rio StreetGolf uses adapted golf balls and clubs to make the sport possible in any urban environment. The programme will see more than 15,000 kids and adults play StreetGolf through a mixture of schools and communities programmes and four high profile StreetGolf tournaments to be played in central Rio de Janeiro.

“This a really strong project for increasing awareness of golf in Rio de Janeiro and showing people from all backgrounds that this is a sport that is accessible to them,” said Luiz Henrique Lopes Leão Teixeira, President of the Rio Golf Federation.

Cristian and his friends, guided by the experts from the Golf Foundation, have spent the week teaching kids in schools and communities, including Mangueira, the favela overlooking the famous stadium.

The team will shortly start weekly training sessions at schools and communities across Rio, building towards the first public StreetGolf Tournament on 5th August 2015 - the one year countdown to golf’s return to the Olympic Games after a 100-year absence.

About the International Golf Federation:

The IGF was founded in 1958 to encourage the international development of the game and to employ golf as a vehicle to foster friendship and sportsmanship. Recognised by the International Olympic Committee as the official international federation for golf, the IGF is comprised of 133 Federations from 127 countries. The IGF serves as the International Olympic Committee’s recognized International Federation for golf.

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