



News

Golf Approved for 2016 Olympic Programme on Vote By International Olympic Committee Membership

Competition will be held in Rio de Janeiro, selected as site of 2016 Games

Copenhagen, Denmark (October 9, 2009) – After an absence of more than a century, golf will return as an Olympic sport in 2016 along with rugby sevens following their approval by the International Olympic Committee membership during the IOC's 121st Session.

They will be part of the Olympic Programme in Rio de Janeiro, which last week was selected as the host city for 2016 Games by the IOC. Golf was last an Olympic sport at the 1904 Games in St. Louis, Missouri, USA, when the United States and Canada were the only two competing countries.

"We are elated that the IOC membership has accepted golf as an Olympic sport, and look forward to seeing the world's best golfers compete for gold at the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro," said Ty Votaw, Executive Director of the International Golf Federation Olympic Golf Committee, which has coordinated golf's Olympic bid. "We thank the IOC for its support, and also congratulate rugby sevens for its inclusion in the 2016 Games."

Votaw and Peter Dawson, chief executive of The R&A and joint secretary of the International Golf Federation, were accompanied by professionals Pdraig Harrington of Ireland, Michelle Wie of the United States and Suzann Pettersen of Norway, as well as 16-year-old (British) Amateur Champion Matteo Manassero of Italy, for a final presentation to the IOC prior to the vote.

"We are extremely grateful that Pdraig, Michelle, Suzann and Matteo were able to join us to help communicate the genuine interest world-class players of all ages share in golf becoming an Olympic sport," Dawson said.

Golf and rugby sevens were recommended for the Olympic Programme by the IOC Executive Board in August following an extensive review process involving seven sports that were vying to be added to the 2016 Olympic Games. Although they emerged as the finalists, both sports still required final approval today by a majority of votes cast by the members of the IOC.

"In addition to those golfers who will have an opportunity to compete as Olympic athletes, we are excited for the national golf federations that will reap the benefits from today's decision in terms of growth and support within their countries," Dawson said. "This is a very significant day for golf." Leading up to today's final vote, golf and rugby sevens emerged from a year-long evaluation that included formal presentations by the seven sports, the submission of a Detailed Questionnaire and responses to questions raised by both the IOC Programme Commission and the IOC Executive Board. The IOC Executive Board announced its recommendation of two sports following a meeting in Berlin, Germany on August 13.

"We strongly believed that golf deserved to be added to the Olympic Programme and felt that we presented a compelling case to the IOC," Votaw said. "We have received unprecedented support from international golf organisations throughout this process, as well as from the world's top-ranked men and women players, which was critical to our success. We also stressed the universal nature of golf, with 60 million people playing the sport in more than 120 countries."

Based on player feedback, the IGF has proposed a format of 72-hole individual stroke play for both men and women. In case of a tie for either first, second or third place, a three-hole playoff is recommended to determine the medal winner(s).

The IGF also has recommended an Olympic field of 60 players for each of the men's and women's competition, using the Official World Golf Rankings as a method of determining eligibility. The top-15 world-ranked players would be eligible for the Olympics, regardless of the number of players from a given country. Beyond the top-15, players would be eligible based on the world rankings, with a maximum of two eligible players from each country that does not already have two or more players among the top-15.

Current world rankings from both the men's and women's games show that at least 30 countries would be represented in both the men's and women's competitions, from all continents, under this proposal.

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 123 Federations from 118 countries.

The IGF created the IGF Olympic Golf Committee to drive its effort for the sport's inclusion in the 2016 Games. Organisations represented on the committee are The R&A; European Tour; USGA; PGA of America; PGA TOUR; LPGA; the Masters Tournament; The Asian Tour; Australian Ladies Professional Golf Tour; Canadian Professional Golf Tour; Japan Golf Tour Organisation; The Ladies Professional Golfers Association of Japan; Korea Ladies Professional Golf Association; Korean Professional Golf Association; Ladies European Tour; Ladies Asian Golf Tour Ltd; PGA Tour of Australasia; The Sunshine Tour and The Tour de las Americas.

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