

MAKING HISTORY:

Written by TMAC GOLF
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The names of the 120 men and women who will create golf history in Rio de Janeiro next month have been ratified with the publication of confirmed places for the Olympic Games competition at Reserva de Marapendi Golf Course between August 11 and 20.

The National Olympic Committees (NOCs) have now entered the athletes who will represent their country for the first Olympic golf competition in 112 years, following the publication last Monday of the Final Olympic Golf Rankings.

With no fewer than 41 countries included in the start list for the men's competition from August 11-14, followed by the women's event from August 17-20, the composition of the Olympic fields highlights the broad global diversity of the sport in Rio de Janeiro, representing the ultimate shop-window for the sport and having the capacity to reach a brand new audience, especially among the younger generation across all the continents.

That diversity is underscored in the representation of current major champions across the men's and women's competitions. Henrik Stenson, the new Open champion following his epic showdown with Phil Mickelson at Royal Troon, represents Sweden with Danny Willett, the Masters champion, is part of Team GB.

On the women's side, New Zealand's Lydia Ko finished No.1 on the Olympic Rankings, having won the ANA Inspiration earlier this season, while Brooke Henderson, the KPMG Women's PGA Championship, will fly the flag of Canada.

Additionally, every continent is represented in the Rankings, affording golf a unique opportunity to grow the game in underexposed territories and to achieve greater visibility with the potential television audience during the Games in Rio. Across the two individual competitions, Africa has five eligible players; Asia 32; Australasia & Oceania seven; Europe 52; North America 14 and South America 10.

The announcement of the confirmed places in Rio de Janeiro comes at the end of the two-year qualification process to identify the full list of players eligible to be entered by their respective NOCs in accordance with the qualification criteria.

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The International Golf Federation (IGF) subsequently sent confirmation of the quota places to the NOCs, which have now confirmed to the IGF whether they have used of their allocations, as each NOC has its own criteria for final nominations. The IGF, in turn, has reallocated all unused quota places before the Rio 2016 Sport Entries Deadline today (Monday, July 18).

The NOC for the Netherlands declined to enter its two athletes, Christel Boeljon and Anne Van Dam, who both qualified through the women's Olympic Rankings. The New Zealand NOC also opted not to enter Cathryn Bristow. Dottie Ardina from the Philippines declared herself unavailable for selection. These places have now been reallocated by the IGF, with Victoria Lovelady (Brazil), Stephanie Meadow (Ireland) and Maha Haddioui of Morocco completing the 60-strong field.

On the men's side, Italy's Francesco Molinari, Camilo Villegas of Colombia have declared themselves unavailable and their places in the confirmed men's start list are Matteo Manassero and Jose-Filipe Lima respectively. Angelo Que of the Philippines also withdrew, with his place going to Rodolfo Cazaubon of Mexico. Full information on the Qualifying System for the 2016 Olympic Games can be found here:

<http://www.igfgolf.org/olympic-games/qualification-system/>

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