



## Zoysia as a Game Changer Tour

*By Jill Odom, Total Landscape Care*

Stacie Zinn Roberts, of What's Your Avocado? Marketing & Public Relations, won a 2016 Gardner Award - Special Projects for her "Zoysia as a Game Changer Tour." See what influenced her approach.

### **Please briefly describe your winning project.**

The Zoysia as a Game Changer Tour was one of the premier events held during the GCSAA's 2015 Golf Industry Show in San Antonio. Sponsored and presented by our client, Team Zoysia, more than 250 people from more than 20 states and 20 countries attended. The event was held the Monday of the conference. In the morning, buses brought attendees to Bladerunner Farms, the world's largest independent zoysiagrass breeding facility. Attendees rotated through a half-dozen stations where they heard presentations from and asked questions of some of the world's leading researchers on zoysiagrass for golf. In the afternoon, the buses took the group to the Golf Club of Texas where attendees toured the nation's first 100% zoysiagrass golf course to see the grass first-hand in a golf setting. Inside the clubhouse, there were multiple presentations from golf architects and superintendents.



**What were your main objectives in developing this project?**

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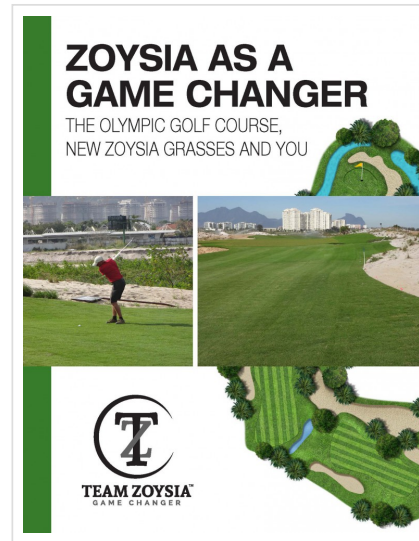
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We wanted to present concrete reasons why zoysia is changing the game of golf, emphasizing the sustainability and playability of the grass. We worked alongside the GCSAA staff to coordinate the event and make it a legitimate part of the educational offerings at GIS.

We also wanted to highlight how the biggest projects in golf — the Olympic Golf Course built for the Games in Rio, Tiger Woods' first U.S. golf course, and the new home of the AT&T Byron Nelson tournament — added credibility to our claim of zoysia's burgeoning importance to the game.



### What influenced your approach?

Our approach was strongly influenced by the GCSAA's need for the event to be non-commercial, yet tell our client's story. This balance is what shaped how we created messaging and content, selected speakers who presented, even how we structured the scheduling of the day, to create an event of value.

### Please tell us what you think stood out in your winning entry.

I think the overall scope of the event was what made the entry stand out. The first stage of promoting the event came in the January issue of *Golf Course Management*, where we authored a major feature story on zoysia grass in golf, and invited readers to attend the event in San Antonio the following month. We wrote a press release that went out to all industry media that resulted in coverage beforehand in all of the major industry trades, plus we had coverage the day-of and following from a half-dozen media who attended the event



based on our invitation. [GCSAA-TV covered the event](#). They created a 5-minute video that streamed online during GIS and that still lives on their website. In addition, Team Zoysia's three core founding members were also interviewed live on GCSAA-TV's stage during the show.

The Zoysia as a Game Changer Tour was so overwhelmingly successful that the GCSAA asked us if we would repeat the process again in 2018 when GIS returns to San Antonio.

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