

## Business



Amherst-based Birdair provided roofs for three stadiums in Brazil that will host a total of 19 matches during the World Cup.

### Birdair has World Cup stadiums covered

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Published: May 28, 2014, 07:02 PM

Updated: May 29, 2014, 12:29 AM

When World Cup fans attend matches in Brazil next month, they can thank Birdair for making their experience more comfortable.

The Amherst-based company provided roofs for three stadiums that will host a total of 19 matches in the planet's premier soccer tournament. The World Cup will run from June 12 through July 13 in a dozen Brazilian cities.

Two of the stadiums were extensively renovated for the World Cup, while the third was newly built. In each case, Birdair designed the roofs at its corporate offices and produced them at its manufacturing plant in Mexico. (The U.S. team is not scheduled to play any of its first three matches in these stadiums but could end up playing in one if the team goes deeper into the tournament.)

FIFA, the sport's governing body, requires World Cup stadiums to provide some kind of roof for spectators, said Michele Roth, a Birdair representative. Birdair has developed a lengthy résumé of stadium projects around the world, including three at the most recent World Cup, in South Africa in 2010. The company did not disclose the value of its contracts for the Brazil stadiums.

Along with being a sporting spectacle, the World Cup generates lots of construction wherever it is played, including at the three stadiums Birdair contributed to in Brazil.

Estadio Mineirao underwent a three-year modernization to prepare to host six World Cup matches, including one semifinal. The stadium in Belo Horizonte was built in 1965 and has national monument status. Birdair produced a 141,000-square-foot, Teflon-coated fiberglass membrane to cover its crowds.

Estadio Nacional, in the nation's capital of Brasilia, will host seven matches. FIFA said the original 1974 stadium was "all but demolished" to prepare for reconstruction. The stadium was expanded

and is now covered by a 920,000-square-foot, double-layer suspended tensile roof from Birdair. Host nation Brazil – considered a contender to win the tournament – will play Cameroon in this stadium June 23.

Arena Fonte Nova in Salvador was newly built for the tournament and will host six matches. Birdair, under a subcontract, produced and installed a 301,399-square-foot roof that provides for natural day light and solar shading. Defending World Cup champion Spain will play the Netherlands there June 13.

A Birdair subsidiary named Taiyo Birdair do Brazil installed the roofs at Estadio Mineirao and Arena Fonte Nova; at Estadio Nacional, the subsidiary was part of a consortium that handled the roofing work.

Birdair has been part of Taiyo Kogyo Corp., a Japan-based architectural firm, since 1992. While Birdair wins attention for high-profile stadium projects, Roth said the company's core business is actually on a much smaller scale, such as bus shelters and amphitheaters. Birdair recently completed projects for the new outlet mall in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., and Hornblower's passenger boat location in Niagara Falls, Ont.

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