

# BetFan

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

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# **Justin Rose Can Win The Scottish Open This Week** - By

Ian Hudson

Phil Mickelson won the Scottish Open and the British Open the following week in 2013 but it's rare for a player to win a tournament and then a major seven days later. Justin Rose is the favourite for the Scottish Open which is a decent title in its own right. However, in some ways Rose may not want to win because his priority is the Open Championship at Carnoustie next week. Rickie Fowler is the headline act from the US Tour in Scotland this week.

Since 2011 the Scottish Open has been played on a links course and this year it is at Gullane Golf Club in East Lothian. It has had a date in the schedule before the Open since 1987 so it makes sense to play the tournament on a course by the sea. The event is now taken to some of the links courses in Scotland that do not have the space or infrastructure to stage an Open. It was last played at Gullane in 2015 when Fowler won the tournament.

The course is a par 70 layout over 7,133 yards which is relatively short and the main defence is the wind which often affects this type of golf. The Open is always played on a links course and a full range of skills is required for good scoring. Finding the greens in the correct number of shots is more important than driving accuracy because the fairways on links courses are often generous. It will be interesting to see how Carnoustie is set up next week. There is a balance between testing the best golfers in the world and making the course unplayable in the wind.

Playing the Scottish Open on a links course makes for a better field. In addition to Fowler US Masters champion Patrick Reed is playing. Matt Kuchar also competes and he chased home Jordan Spieth in the Open at Royal Birkdale last year. Rafa Cabrera Bello made the frame in that championship and Louis Oosthuizen won the Open at St Andrews in 2010. Mickelson is also playing in one of his favourite tournaments ahead of the Open but his major winning days are behind him.

The Scottish Open is being played at a composite course at Gullane. The course is undulating and it stands on typical links terrain. The fairways are average in width and the greens are relatively fast. The weather has been dry and hot over the past few weeks so the course will be fast-running. It will suit proven links players who can handle the vagaries of links golf. Rose is a worthy favourite but his focus may be on the Open that matters most next week.

Fowler must be considered based on his course form and positive mental associations with the location. However, it has been a quite year for a player who finished in the top five of all four majors in 2014 without winning one. He has been knocking on the door in the big ones and if he plays well this week must have a chance of winning the Open. Reed may not have the game or patience to cope with the bad bounces and difficult greens that are part of links golf. Kuchar had his chance in the Open in 2017 but would be a popular winner in Scotland this week.

Mickelson showed five years ago that if you are in form and confident back-to-back wins are possible. Poor weather will be a leveller or it can concentrate the mind. Come rain or shine Rose ticks most of the boxes this week so he can win the Scottish Open and contend in the Open next week.

## **Today's Sports Betting Preview** - By Rick Elliott

### **England Must Seize The Moment To Beat Croatia**

England have never played in a World Cup final overseas. England have only won the World Cup in England. England beat Croatia in their last two matches by an aggregate of nine goals to two. The last time England played France in the World Cup Bryan Robson scored in the first minute and England won the match 3-1. Even though the formal rules of soccer were set in Scotland football is coming home because England are going to win the World Cup. The current squad have nothing to fear from Croatia and France. The head is ruling the heart because the team are growing in each match so ENGLAND are the team to back to lift the trophy at 5/2 with **Ladbrokes**.

Harry Kane is three goals ahead of Antoine Griezmann and Kylian Mbappe in the race for the Golden Boot. If either player scores a hat trick in the final and Kane does not score another goal in two matches he could be overhauled. Assists count if more than one player scores the same number of goals. Griezmann has helped create two goals but Kane and Mbappe have not contributed with an assist. The favourite in the winner/top scorer market is Kane and France. The player of the tournament and best keeper awards are up for grabs. If JORDAN PICKFORD produces another man of the match performance he could win the Golden Glove and that outcome can be backed at 15/8 with **bet365**. Mbappe is the big favourite for best player honours.

Croatia have won their last two knockout ties after extra-time and penalties. Despite a classy midfield and the contribution from Luka Modric Croatia struggled against average teams. They played well in the group stages against Argentina but they were handed the first goal after a huge goalkeeping error. Croatia used the space well when Argentina were chasing the game. However, they couldn't beat Denmark or Russia in normal time. England eased past Sweden in the last round with no stress. The nail biter against Colombia was draining but that was eight days ago. ENGLAND can beat Croatia in 90 minutes and that result is on offer at 13/10 with **William Hill**. Everything is on the line tonight and on Sunday but England have got what it takes and even Gareth Southgate will win an award.....for best waistcoat of the tournament.