

BetFan

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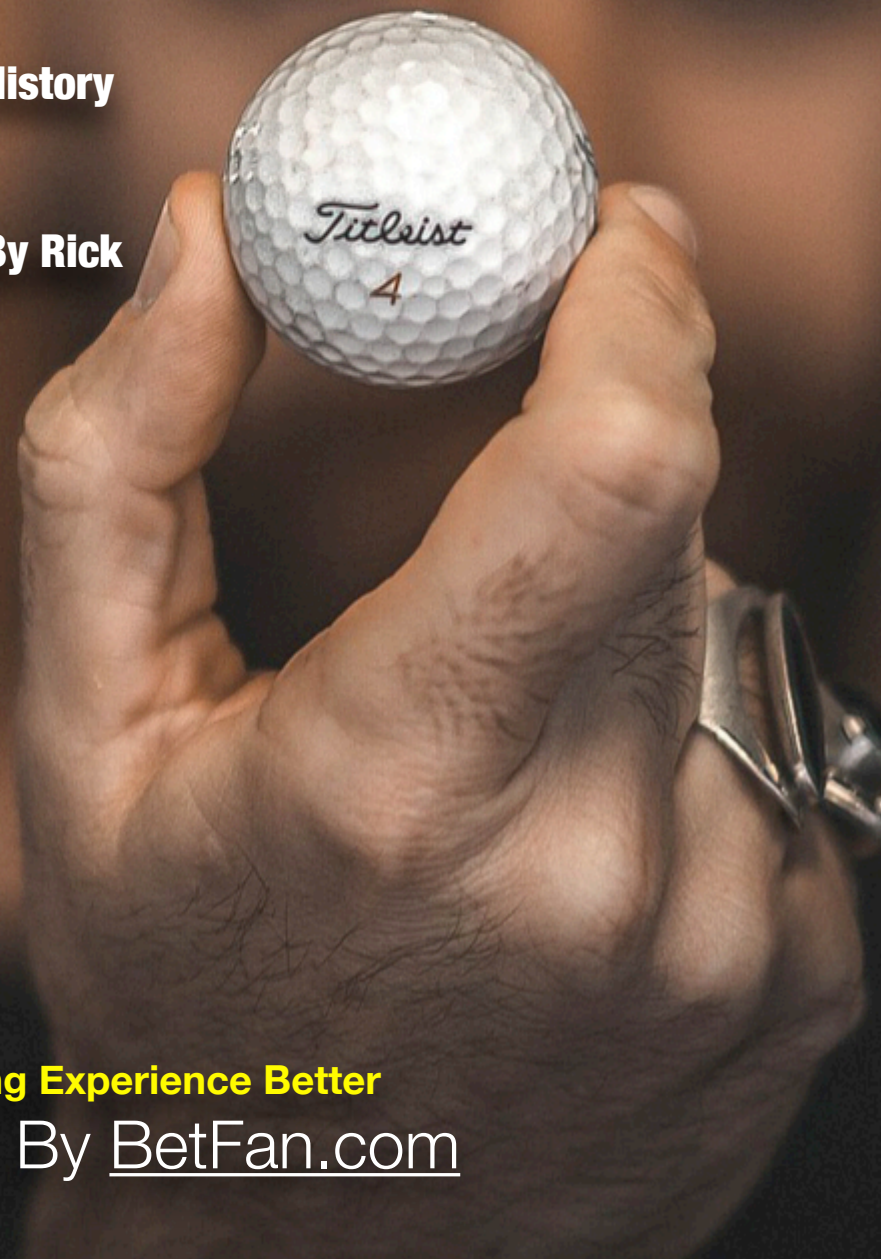
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TODAY'S FREE SPORTS BETTING TIPS...

StatMan

Haydock 15:50 - Eceparti @ 15/8 with Win Bet

Early Odds

Chepstow 16:00 - Glen Vine @ 11/2 Win Bet

Each Way Wonders

Market Rasen 16:10 - Paddys Runner @ 8/1 Each Way

Mclroy Now Focuses On Making History - By Ian Hudson

The Valspar Championship on the US PGA Tour has attracted a decent field despite being played in the week after one of the biggest tournaments of the season. Rory Mclroy won the Players Championship which is known as the fifth major due to the quality of the field. He has not entered this week which means the favourite and highest ranked player is Dustin Johnson. The Maybank Championship on the European Tour is a lucrative event but the field is disappointing. The host course is in Malaysia which is a long journey from TPC Sawgrass where the Players took place.

Mclroy has won four major championships but the latest win in the weeks that matter most was in 2014. The former world number one won his first Players Championship on Sunday and is now the favourite for the US Masters, the only major he has not won. There are regular events on the US PGA and European Tours this week but the best players now turn their attention to the Masters Tournament which is the first major championship of the season. It is the only major played on the same course each year so players are familiar with the challenge at Augusta National.

The golf season calendar has been changed so that the biggest five championships of the season are staged from March to July. The Players Championship now has a March date and the USPGA Championship is scheduled for May. Golf is now part of the Olympics so every four years there will be a sixth global tournament in August. The leading players structure their season around the majors and Players Championship. There are also World Golf Championship events but these tournaments are more about money than prestige. The best players in the history of the sport make their names in the major championships.

Mclroy is in the form of his life and is the ante post favourite for the Masters, the title he craves most. Only five players in the history of the sport have won each of the four major championships at least once. Jack Nicklaus and Tiger Woods are the latest players to achieve this feat. They are also the only players to win 15 PGA tournaments at a younger age than Mclroy. That is the company the Irish player is keeping as he embarks on the second stage of his career approaching the age of 30. Mclroy could have won 10 majors by the end of his career but his priority is a first Masters and membership of the group who have all the majors.

The Valspar Championship is being played at Innisbrook Resort at Palm Harbour in Florida. The tournament was first played in 2000 and has had several titles but it has always been played on the Copperhead Course at Innisbrook. Unlike most resort courses Copperhead doesn't set up simply as a putting contest for long hitters and provides a balanced test. Sound iron play is required as there's a significant reward for hitting the greens in regulation and unusually the course has five par 3s. The putting surfaces are smaller than average and tricky to read. Sergio Garcia ticks most of the boxes and has finished in the top 20 on his last four visits.

The Maybank Championship is being played at Saujana Golf and Country Club in Kula Lumpur for the third successive year. At 7,135 yards the course is relatively short for its par of 72. The course puts a premium on accuracy over distance but handling the weather conditions will be more important than any particular skill. The Asian Tour players will be at an advantage and the defending champion is Shubhankar Sharma from India. Gaganjeet Bhullar has a decent profile and is the tentative tip to win the 2019 Maybank Championship.

Today's Sports Betting Preview - By Rick Elliott

Wales Can Win Friendly Without Conceding

It seems strange that as they are about to embark on the qualifying process for Euro 2020 that Wales are playing Trinidad & Tobago in a friendly. Germany's home match against Serbia has more relevance because the nations could meet in the finals that are being staged in 13 cities across Europe. Wales reached the semi-finals of the last European Championship finals but did not qualify for the last World Cup. Key men like Gareth Bale are unlikely to play for 90 minutes tonight.

Ryan Giggs famously rarely turned up for friendlies so it will be interesting to see the strength of the first 11 he sends out against Trinidad and Tobago in Wrexham tonight. The priority is beating Slovakia in Euro 2020 qualifying Group E in Cardiff on Sunday. Both teams have not scored in the visitors last seven matches which have produced just six goals. The best bet of the night is WALES TO WIN TO NIL at 4/5 with **Ladbrokes** in a match dominated by defences and with few chances.

The Tour Championship is a new concept in snooker which brings together the eight based players based on ranking points won in the last year. The event is being played in Llandudno which is hardly a sporting Mecca. The matches are played over 17, 19 and 25 frames so there is less chance of shocks than in best of seven matches. MARK ALLEN is the number one seed due to his consistency over 12 months so he can begin the tournament by beating Kyren Wilson at 4/5 with **Coral**.

The best meeting of the day is at Haydock Park but the racing is nothing special. We are in the lull of the jumps season between Cheltenham and the Grand National. Tiger Roll is on course to becoming the first back-to-back winner since Red Rum in 1973 and 1974. The richest race of the day Haydock's novices' handicap chase at 3.15 but there are only four runners which is no good for each way betting. SCORPION SID will relish the heavy ground and is the nap at 10/11 with **Ladbrokes**.