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# **This Could Be Billy Horschel's Week But Not Next Week** - By Ian Hudson



**Billy Horschel has not missed a cut in eight months and he can get in the winner's enclosure this week at the Texas Open which is one of his favourite tournaments. It's the week before a major so most of the best players are absent and there is no event in Europe. The US Masters is the first major championship of the season and the biggest week of the year to date. Horschel has outstanding course form at TPC San Antonio which hosts the Texas Open for the 10th successive year.**

The course is a regulation par 72 at over 7,435 yards which is about average by modern standards. There is the usual quota of four par 5s and four par 3s. Two of the long holes measure over 600 yards and a third is just below that length. Three of the short holes are over 200 yards in length. The course is 1,100 feet above sea level so the altitude should make the ball fly further but not by a great amount. However, the course puts a premium on accuracy and over distance and straight hitters excel. Horschel is currently a top 50 player for greens in regulation.

TPC Antonio has never averaged under par for the Texas Open. Last year it was the third hardest par 72 track for non-majors. The greens are average in size and hitting them in the correct number of shots is an important skill. Finding fairways makes the challenge easier because the primary rough can be penal. Other key factors are strokes gained putting and scrambling. Winds are a way of life in south Texas but the forecast suggests still conditions but things can change.

The average winning score over the last nine years at San Antonio is 12 under. All but one of the tournaments was won by 1 or 2 strokes but there has not been a playoff. The last four winners have been from the United States but there have been three champions from overseas since 2010. Zach Johnson won the tournament in 2008 and 2009 on another course. The 2015 Open champion is the right profile for the Texas Open but he is not playing this week. Johnson also won the Masters Tournament in 2007 which is one of his 26 professional wins.

The Masters is the only major that is played on the same course every year. Augusta National is a test of length off the tee and putting under pressure on the lightening fast greens. San Antonio is a different type of course which explains why the leading contenders for the Masters are preparing away from the course. Major champions rarely win the previous week and the winner of the par 3 contest has a poor record when the serious action at the Masters begins. Horschel ticks many of the boxes this week but Augusta is not his cup of tea.



The selection has played eight tournaments at San Antonio and has made six cuts. He has finished third twice, tied fourth and was tied 11th last week. Horschel combines course form and current form and has the right mix of skills. He is on a solid run of form and the right type of player for Texas where he could record a sixth PGA Tour win. Horschel has a poor record in the majors, with one top 10 in 21 starts which have resulted in nine missed cuts. History indicates he will not contend in the Masters next week but he has a great chance of winning the Texas Open on Sunday.

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

### **Cardiff Are 100/1 To Beat Manchester City**



**Cardiff were desperately unlucky to lose at home to Chelsea in the Premier League on Sunday but luck should play no part in the outcome of tonight's fixture at Manchester City. The home team must win to overhaul Liverpool at the top of the table in a fixture that is one of the most one-sided in the history of the Premier League. In racing there is an adage that you should back the outsides of three but no sensible punter will be betting on a Cardiff win even at 100/1.**

Chelsea were abysmal for much of the match in South Wales and two howlers by the referee helped them secure three points. Cardiff were actually the better side and deserved something from the match. They have scored in three of their last four visits to big six opponents so they are capable of scoring against City.. The home team might rest some players but they have strength in depth and the best bet is **BOTH TEAMS TO SCORE** at 29/20 with **Coral**.

The boost of finally playing at their new stadium is much needed by Tottenham who have lost four of their last five Premier League fixtures. From being on the periphery of challenging for the title Tottenham are now scrapping for a top four finish. A win against Palace at their new home is the minimum expectation but the visitors have had an extra day's rest. Palace are an effective counter attacking outfit and Tottenham are short of confidence so the **DRAW** looks feasible at 4/1 with **bet365**.

Chelsea certainly rode their luck against Cardiff but for most of the match they were disjointed and seemed complacent. Fans were calling for the head of Maurizio Sarri and the win might have delayed his inevitable departure. However, Chelsea have enough to beat Brighton at Stamford Bridge this evening. They have won the last

nine meetings and Brighton have lost all but five of 15 Premier League road trips this season. CHELSEA -1 is the recommendation at 5/6 with **Coral**.

The Listed race over one mile at Leopardstown at 5pm is the richest race of the day in Britain and Ireland on the eve of the start of the Grand National meeting at Aintree. Joe Farrell was the horse for money yesterday in betting for the most famous jumps race in the world. Today's feature is for horses aged four and older with penalties and allowances. VERBAL DEXTERITY has decent form at a much higher level and with the ground to suit is the selection at 3/1 with **bet365**.