

US Open 2018 Special



From Golf Bet Gold

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Golf's second Major Championship of 2018, the US Open is being played on June 14th to 17th at Shinnecock Hills Golf Club, on Long Island, New York, where Brooks Koepka is defending champion. Traditionally, this is the toughest of the four Major Championships and this year we expect a similar story as the event returns to Shinnecock Hills for the fifth time. More than 500 yards have been added to the length of the course since it was last played here in 2004, when South Africa's Retief Goosen won with a score of 4 under par. In this guide, we look at the event and the formbook to help us make some profit.

Before getting into the detail, you might ask what qualifies me to do this. I hope that my proven ability in making money from golf betting over the last 16 years and particularly strong record in calling Major winners answers this. Since 2010, my record betting on the four Major Championships is as follows:

- 2018 backed 0 of 1 Major winners.
- 2017 backed 2 of the 4 Major winners at odds of 45/1 and 16/1.
- 2016: backed 0 of the 1 Major winners.
- 2015: backed 3 of the 4 Major winners at odds of 11/1, 9/1 and 14/1.
- 2014: backed 2 of the 4 Major winners at odds of 40/1 and 5/1.
- 2013: backed all 4 Major winners at odds of 28/1, 28/1, 20/1 and 40/1.
- 2012: backed 2 of the 4 Major winners at odds of 40/1 and 20/1.
- 2011: backed none of the 4 Major winners.
- 2010: backed 3 of the 4 Major winners at odds of 13/1, 66/1 and 55/1.

That equates to backing 18 of the last 33 Major winners at a strike rate of 55% and average odds of 25 to 1, making substantial profits. In golf betting, my undoubted strength is the Majors which have been my biggest earners over the years, and I raise my stakes to reflect this for these events. The US Open has been one of my happiest hunting grounds as I have backed the last five winners from 2013 to 2017 inclusive.

Since launching Betfan's Golf Bet Gold service in 2014, I've tipped 9 of the last 17 Major winners and made over 500 points from these events. The Golf Bet Gold service has delivered a profit of 925.92 points since its launch in 2014, so you are in safe hands in terms of trying to make profits from golf betting.

To give you a taste for this week's US Open as a betting proposition, I've produced this short guide to help us in our quest to find the winner. So, let's get on with it:

The US Open was first played in 1895, making it the second oldest of golf's four Majors, and has been held at Shinnecock Hills 4 times, starting in 1896 when James

Foulis won, then in 1986 when Raymond Floyd won with 1 under par, 1995 when Corey Pavin won with even par and most recently in 2004 when South Africa's Retief Goosen won with 4 under par. The course, which is one of the oldest in the USA, has also held the Walker Cup and the US Amateur Championship.

Shinnecock Hills is a 7,445 yards fast running links style par 70 course. It is built on an open site with very few trees, just one water hazard and lots of bunkers. The par 70 comprises of two par 5s at 589 and 616 yards, four par 3s at 252, 189, 159 and 180 yards and twelve par 4s ranging between 374 and 519 yards. Two of the par 4s are below 400 yards, two above 500 yards and the other eight are between 400 and 500 yards. As is usually the case for Major Championships, this is a long golf course and will likely prove to be a tough par 70, particularly with the usual 10 to 15 mph winds that blow in this area at this time of year. The forecast looks decent with dry conditions, warm temperatures and typical wind speeds, which will be one of the main difficulties facing the players when hitting to the numerous raised and sloping greens.

The field of 156 players, which is comprised of 27 former Major winners, 20 amateurs and 109 other professional players will compete over 72 holes of stroke play with the lowest aggregate score winning. If there is a tie, there will be a 2-hole play-off immediately following play then sudden death thereafter if scores are still tied. Previously, the US Open used an 18-hole play-off which has thankfully been abandoned for this newer more exciting format which should deliver us a winner on Sunday night.

Over the last 20 years, the US Open has been won 11 times by Americans, 4 times by Europeans, twice by South Africans, and one apiece by Argentinians, New Zealanders and Australians. Narrowing this down to the last 10 years sees 6 American wins and 4 by Europeans. The last three winners have all been Americans, which reversed the previous trend where Europeans had won 4 of the previous 5 times, although the overseas challenge is still a serious threat to the host country's chances of providing the winner.

Expanding our analysis onto the Majors in general, we can see that the players with the highest number of Major wins over the last 10 years are as follows:

- 4 wins: Rory McIlroy.
- 3 wins: Jordan Spieth.
- 2 wins: Phil Mickelson, Padraig Harrington, Bubba Watson and Martin Kaymer.

A further 26 players have won a single Major over the same timeframe.

Of those with multiple Major wins, it is easy to dismiss the chances of Padraig Harrington (not playing) and I'd also rule out Martin Kaymer due to poor form, That leaves us with 4 multiple Major winners who can contend in the shape of **Rory McIlroy, Jordan Spieth, Phil Mickelson and Bubba Watson.**

Of those with 1 win over the past 10 years, I'd look at **Patrick Reed, Sergio Garcia, Brooks Koepka, Justin Thomas, Jimmy Walker, Henrik Stenson, Dustin Johnson, Jason Day, Justin Rose, Adam Scott, Webb Simpson, Jason Dufner, Charl Schwartzel, Louis Oosthuizen and Tiger Woods** as possible contenders for this year's renewal giving us 19 Major winners from the past 10 years, who have some sort of chance to win the US Open and make it onto our initial shortlist.

We then consider players who have yet to win a Major but have shown us they have the game for them as we know that very few Major winners come from out of left field. Over the last 5 years and counting (i.e. 21 Majors), 24 players have performed well in Majors courtesy of having multiple top 5s:

- 8 top 5s (36% strike rate): Jordan Spieth
- 7 top 5s (33% strike rate): Rickie Fowler
- 6 top 5s (29% strike rate): Jason Day, Rory McIlroy and Henrik Stenson
- 5 top 5s: (24% strike rate): Phil Mickelson and Adam Scott.
- 4 top 5s: (19% strike rate): Sergio Garcia, Justin Rose, Dustin Johnson, Brooks Koepka, Branden Grace, Hideki Matsuyama and Jim Furyk.
- 3 top 5s (14% strike rate): Marc Leishman, Louis Oosthuizen and Matt Kuchar.
- 2 top 5s (10% strike rate): Cameron Smith, Jason Dufner, Lee Westwood, Jonas Blixt, Scott Piercy J.B. Holmes and Patrick Reed.

Of this group, 12 are already Major winners that were identified earlier in this article and one (Jim Furyk) was a Major winner from more than 10 years ago. That leaves 11 players who have had multiple Major Championship top 5s over the past 5 years without winning one. Of these, we can strike out Jonas Blixt, Lee Westwood and J.B. Holmes, all of whom haven't qualified to play, and both Scott Piercy and Jim Furyk due to loss of form. which leaves just **Marc Leishman, Cameron Smith, Matt Kuchar, Hideki Matsuyama, Branden Grace and Rickie Fowler** to add to our original list of 19 players and give us a working shortlist of 25.

A further 11 non-Major winners who have had a single top 5 in a Major over the last 5 years catch our eye as the most likely contenders in the shape of **Paul Casey, Tommy Fleetwood, Brian Harman, Jon Rahm, Thomas Pieters, Xander Schauffele, Rafa Cabrera-Bello, Haotong Li, Francesco Molinari and Tyrrell Hatton**. Of these, Thomas Pieters can be ruled out as he isn't playing.

That increases our initial shortlist to 34 players made up as follows.

Multiple Major winners in last 10 years (4 players): Rory McIlroy, Phil Mickelson, Bubba Watson and Jordan Spieth.

Single Major winners in last 10 years (15 players): Patrick Reed, Sergio Garcia, Brooks Koepka, Justin Thomas, Jimmy Walker, Henrik Stenson, Dustin Johnson,

Jason Day, Justin Rose, Adam Scott, Webb Simpson, Jason Dufner, Charl Schwartzel, Louis Oosthuizen and Tiger Woods.

Multiple Major top 5s in last 10 years with no Major wins (7 players): Marc Leishman, Brandt Snedeker, Cameron Smith, Matt Kuchar, Hideki Matsuyama, Branden Grace and Rickie Fowler.

Single Major Top 5 in last 10 years with no Major wins (10 players): Paul Casey, Tommy Fleetwood, Brian Harman, Jon Rahm, Xander Schauffele, Rafa Cabrera-Bello, Haotong Li, Shane Lowry, Francesco Molinari and Tyrrell Hatton.

That analysis leaves us with 36 players, comprising 19 proven Major winners and 17 non-Major winners, who are the most likely group to provide the winner. We can also look at players who have yet to contend in Majors, but who have shown they have the right calibre through regular tournament play. These would include the following 27 players:

- Patrick Cantlay (1 PGA Tour win)
- Bryson DeChambeau (2 PGA Tour wins)
- Daniel Berger (2 PGA Tour wins)
- Charley Hoffman (4 PGA Tour wins)
- Russell Henley (3 PGA Tour wins)
- Matthew Fitzpatrick (4 European Tour wins)
- Kiradech Aphibarnrat (4 European Tour wins)
- Pat Perez (3 PGA Tour wins)
- Kevin Chappell (1 PGA Tour win)
- Alexander Noren (9 European Tour wins)
- Gary Woodland (3 PGA Tour wins)
- Adam Hadwin (1 PGA Tour win)
- Ross Fisher (5 European Tour wins)
- Kevin Kisner (2 PGA Tour wins)
- Brendan Steele (3 PGA Tour wins)
- Kyle Stanley (2 PGA Tour wins)
- Tony Finau (1 PGA Tour win)
- Shubhankar Sharma (2 European Tour wins)
- Emiliano Grillo (1 PGA Tour win)
- Byeong-Hun An (1 European Tour win)

- Chesson Hadley (1 PGA Tour win)
- Peter Uihlein (1 European Tour win)
- Si Woo Kim (2 PGA Tour wins)
- Thorbjorn Olesen (5 European Tour wins)
- Brendan Steele (3 PGA Tour wins)
- Andrew Johnston (1 European Tour win)
- Matt Wallace (2 European Tour wins)

We could add more to this list, but in my view the winner will almost certainly come from our original list of 36 players who have either won a Major or posted at least one top 5 finish in a Major. To give us some more clues, we can look at past US Open form, where we can see the following players with notable records over the last 10 years:

US Open winners: Dustin Johnson (1 win, 2 top 5s and a top 10 from 7 starts), Brooks Koepka (1 win and 1 top 5 from 4 starts), Jordan Spieth (1 win from 6 starts), Justin Rose (1 win from 9 starts), Rory McIlroy (1 win and 1 top 10 from 8 starts) and Tiger Woods (1 win, 1 top 5 and 1 top 10 from 6 starts),

US Open non-winners: Jason Day (3 top 5s, 2 top 10s from 7 starts), Phil Mickelson (3 top 5s from 9 starts), Justin Thomas (1 top 10 from 2 starts), Rickie Fowler (2 top 5s and 1 top 10 from 9 starts), Branden Grace (2 top 5s from 5 starts), Jimmy Walker (1 top 10 from 4 starts), Hideki Matsuyama (1 top 5 and 1 top 10 from 5 starts), Sergio Garcia (1 top 5 and 2 top 10s from 10 starts), Henrik Stenson (1 top 5 and 1 top 10 from 9 starts) and Louis Oosthuizen (1 top 5 and 1 top 10 from 7 starts).

The only course form for we have of relevance is the pretty dated 1995 and 2004 US Opens, where we can only glean the following: Phil Mickelson had a 4th and 2nd, so obviously loves the course, Tiger Woods had a missed cut and a 17th which suggest he doesn't like the course given how good he was at the time. 2004 also saw missed cuts from Justin Rose, Paul Casey and Ian Poulter, as well as a 20th from Sergio Garcia. So, course form is thin on the ground with Phil Mickelson the standout candidate in terms of this angle.

Hopefully this pre-tournament guide will give you a feel for the event and some of the key contenders. You can be sure that the Golf Bet Gold service will be looking to make some decent profits from the event and has been working hard to this effect, particularly by looking at the all-important current form together with various statistical angles.

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