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By Ian Hudson**



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



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Yarmouth 20.20 - Emily Goldfinch (Win) @ 7/1

Rose Can Win The Open At Carnoustie - By Ian Hudson

Justin Rose has the skills and temperament to win the Open Championship at a fast and furious Carnoustie. The dry weather and heat wave will make for a difficult test on one of the hardest courses on the Open rota. Course form could be key to the outcome and Padraig Harrington beat Sergio Garcia in a playoff for the last Open at Carnoustie in 2007. Rory McIlroy was the top amateur so has positive mental associations with the course. Rickie Fowler is one of the leading contenders from the United States and Rafa Cabrera Bello can contend for continental Europe.

In 2007 the weather was changeable but the wind was a factor. The course was softened by some rain and the winning score was 7 under. The par was 71 for the week and the course was 7,421 yards in length. Harrington came from six shots off the pace in the final round and then beat Garcia over four extra holes. The 2007 and 2008 champion can keep his form and focus in poor weather but the forecast for Carnoustie suggests it will be warm and still. The course layout is similar to the version 11 years ago. The par for this year's Open is 71 and the length is 7,402 yards, 19 yards less than in 2007.

Wind is one of the main defences of a links course and the test becomes much easier in still conditions. The Old Course St Andrews is an example of a relatively easy course when there is no wind. There are four short par 4s and reachable par 5s so even though the official par is 72 it can play to 68 in good weather. Carnoustie is different because it has the added challenge of relatively narrow fairways and penal rough. The course may be watered because the rough could be shorter due to the heat. This is the eighth Carnoustie Open and Paul Lawrie was the champion in 1999, the last time before 2007 that the Open was played on the course.

Phil Mickelson won the Scottish and British Opens in 2013 which is a rare feat. The left hander had never won a tournament in Britain or on a links course before that fortnight. Winning in consecutive weeks is a big ask and even more difficult when it's a major in the second week. Rose played in the Scottish Open at Gullane GC in East Lothian so his finishing position will be a form guide. The 2013 US Open winner has played in 16 Opens and made 10 cuts. Rose's best finish is tied 4th as an amateur at Royal Birkdale in 1998. He can excel on the tough Carnoustie links this time.

Fowler won the Scottish Open in 2015, the last time it was played at Gullane. He was not able to back that up in the Open the following week at St Andrews where he finished tied 30th. Fowler has played in the Open eight times and only missed the cut in 2013. He was tied 2nd behind McIlroy at Hoylake in 2014 but was not around for the 2007 Carnoustie Open. Fowler has finished in the top three of all four majors without winning one and he can contend again at Carnoustie. The weather at Hoylake four years ago was varied but Fowler coped.

McIlroy won the last of his four majors in the US PGA Championship in 2014. He just needs the US Masters to complete the career Grand Slam but played poorly in the

fourth round this year and fell off the pace. McIlroy has admitted to over preparing for the US Open and shot a first round 80 so was never going to win. He has good memories of Carnoustie and the Open so can contend for the Claret Jug. Cabrera Belo was tied fourth at Birkdale last year and can get in the mix but Rose is the player to beat in the Open Championship of 2018.