

Issue 273

Saturday 8th September 2018

# BetFan

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
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Win Bet - Haydock 13:50 - Mekong @ 2/1

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Win Bet - Ascot 15:55 - Ghostwatch @ 5/1

## **Rick's Sports Betting: Experience Is Behind Bjorn's Ryder Cup Picks** - By Rick Elliott

The years are flying by and it's Ryder Cup time again. I'm not sure where those two years have gone since the last match in the United States. The home team had a comfortable win 17-11 at Hazeltine National Golf Club. That followed six losses in seven matches but the Americans are the favourites to lift the trophy at Le Golf National near Paris. Europe's captain, Thomas Bjorn, has gone for experience with his four wildcard picks. US counterpart, Jim Furyk, has done things differently.

Eight players qualified for both teams through the qualifying process. Europe's qualifiers include five rookies while the US team has the top three players in the world rankings in their eight. Both captains had to weigh up experience against current form and Bjorn has opted for a former while Furyk has mixed things up with the three picks he has announced. Tiger Woods and Phil Mickelson are the old hands while Bryson DeChambeau is the hottest player just now. He chooses one more player after the BMW Championship and TONU Finau is the favourite to get the call.

The Ryder Cup is being played in France for the first time. The event is one of the rare occasions in which the UK and the rest of Europe play under the European Union flag. The team representing Europe includes six British players. I wonder how many are Leavers or Remainers? My guess is a 50/50 split but I don't think the result of the referendum will be discussed in the team room. The Ryder Cup is all about unity and perhaps a model for how Europe can work.

Bjorn's team is a good mix of experienced Ryder Cup campaigners and players in form with an even split between British players and golfers from the rest of Europe. The balancing act between selecting players who have felt the unique pressure of playing in the Ryder Cup and qualifiers who have won their place is illustrated by the Spanish contingent. Jon Rahm earned his place by winning points while Sergio Garcia received an invitation from Bjorn. The captain was overloaded with rookies so went down the experience route with his picks.

Garcia was striving to win his first major for the best part of 20 years. He won the Masters Tournament last year to achieve his ultimate goal. Money is not an issue and he has got married and had a child so his priorities have changed. You can't blame a player in his later 30's who is now smelling the roses. Garcia's professional life has suffered but he looks happier off the course. He can be a positive influence around the team playing for Europe.

You can multiply his influence by a few factors in the case of Ian Poulter. He missed the Ryder Cup in 2016 due to injury and the European team were poorer for his absence. Poulter is more than an inspiration with his character because he has produced the goods in the Ryder Cup over five appearances. When it comes to head-to-head golf against the Americans Poulter is the self-titled Postman because he always delivers. The rookies will be motivated by his involvement.

Henrik Stenson is just a reliable pro who keeps his cool under intense pressure. His career has had ups and downs but he has found some equanimity and he won his first major in the Open in 2016. Stenson has built up a solid partnership with Justin Rose and they are probably pencilled in to play together on the first morning. Stenson won't let anyone down and can be a calming influence.

Paul Casey also got the nod from Bjorn and he plays in the Ryder Cup for the first time since 2008. He moved to the United States and as he was not a European Tour member could not play in the last Ryder Cup. Casey has found a compromise which allows him to play in enough European Tour events to be a full member and be available for selection for the Ryder Cup. Bjorn believes the experience of his four picks is more important than current form.

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

### **England Are Coming Home**

Football didn't quite come home but England return to Wembley for their first match after the World Cup with a Nations League meeting with Spain. Gareth Southgate was asked if his starting 11 will be as close as those who played in the semi-final against Croatia but he said he is now looking to the future.

However, his strongest side was obvious in Russia and if there are major changes we can assume the manager is not taking the Nations League seriously. The focus then must be Euro 2020 the semi-finals and final of which are being played at Wembley. ENGLAND are 8/1 with William Hill to be the champions of Europe for the first time.

One of the great positives of the World Cup was the connection between the England team and supporters. A succession of managers was not able to motivate a team that potentially was better than the current crop. Southgate will want to maintain the momentum so you can assume he won't send out the second string that could be well beaten by Spain and that result would spoil the homecoming. .

The visitors have a new coach in Luis Enrique who the players will be keen to impress. Despite not having a brilliant World Cup they are a top-class outfit. Spain

have scored in their last 24 fixtures and England should approach the fixture with confidence. Therefore, the best bet is BOTH TEAMS TO SCORE and that option is 10/11 with **Ladbrokes**.

England are returning to action and the racehorse Enable is back on the track. The winner of the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe as a three-year-old has been kept in training and the main objective is to win the Arc again which is back at Longchamp next month. Enable took advantage of the sex and weight-for-age allowances last season but the latter does now not apply. However, the filly gets eight pounds of Crystal Ocean in the September Stakes at Kempton in the 2.05 race. With that weight advantage ENABLE is the horse to back at 8/13 with **Coral**.

## **Man of The Match – The Value of The All-Rounder - By**

Dave Owens

The current test series between England and India has lived up to its billing as an excellent test series between two strong and evenly matched sides in English conditions. The pre-cursor to a good series is the unknown element about which factors will end up being the difference between the two sides and separate them at the end of the allotted number of tests. India have battled excellently throughout, winning the second test comfortably and battling hard in losing efforts that they could have easily won.

The series has had quite a few recurring themes during the four tests played so far this summer. The main theme has been the dominance of the bowl over bat with both top orders struggling badly against two fine bowling attacks in helpful bowling conditions throughout the tests. The exception to this being Virat Kohli who in another sub-plot has established himself now as the undisputed top batsman in the world.

The struggles of batsman throughout have led to the major difference between the sides being the length of batting England possess with a highly unusual amount of high class all-rounders at their disposal to come after the regular loss of early wickets and specialist batsman and making excellent and what has proved match defining contributions with the bat in what mainly have been low scoring affairs. Having an area of strength in a tight (and low scoring) contest can make the Man of the Match market very appealing.

Selecting one player from 22 can seem quite a daunting and difficult proposition. With one area of the game being more prominent than the other, ruling out batsman from both sides (except for Kohli) can almost half the field in one go. This then would put the focus on the bowling line ups from both sides, usually a side would have one or maybe two outstanding candidates and have conditions in their favour which would make them a more appealing prospect than the rest of the attack.



Both sides though had well balanced bowling lines ups with each member of their attacks capable of taking wickets and the pitch's themselves aiding both seam and spin and keeping all bowlers interested and as such the bowling and (wickets) being shared around, leaving no one performer to stand out significantly from the others. The lack of runs from the batsman and wickets being distributed evenly offered a real opportunity for all-rounders to make a real impact and alter the course of matches with late order runs with the game in the balance and the chance to chip in with wickets when their team were in the field. This has proved to come into effect in all four of the tests played. The first match, in which runs were at a premium saw a late blitz from Sam Curran turn the game around with 63 precious runs in the second innings and added by five wickets across both innings saw him take the award. A similar theme came to prominence in the second match with India bowled out cheaply and England struggling in their efforts with the bat and rescued by Chris Woakes batting at No7 and making a match winning 137 not out, combined with four wickets to make him an easy winner.

India managed to pull a test back and win the third match, their only all-rounder Hardik Pandya was incredibly unlucky not be the man of the match with a match turning spell of five wickets in a session to swing the game massively in his side favour and followed up by a second innings unbeaten 50 which only lost to the very rare batting brilliance of Kohli a few runs short of making a century in both innings of the test. The last match as well saw Moeen Ali score a vital 40 in a low scoring game with wickets in both innings for his MOTM and prove it truly has been a series for the all-rounder.

Unfortunately, my man of the match picks were England's best and most consistent all-rounder in Ben Stokes and India's only genuine performer in both facets in Hardik Pandya – proving to be the right type of cricketer and role influence the game but the wrong man to do it.

**Click the link below it would be a pleasure to have you on board.**

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**Trackside In Ireland** - By Declan O'Donoghue

TEN SOVEREIGNS is probably worth his weight in gold now, yet he only made his debut two weeks ago!

Talk about instant stardom. But the way he has twice accelerated away from his rivals at The Curragh was little short of breath taking.

He'll be a huge attraction in the Middle Park where it will take something very special indeed to lower his colours.

In saying all that, I'll not be rushing down to the bookies to lump on for the 2,000 Guineas as he could well finish up as a sprinter.

A thoroughly exciting sprinter no doubt, but a speed merchant, pure and simple.

His runaway victory in the Round Tower was obviously the highlight of last Saturday's Curragh fixture, but Aidan O'Brien had plenty more to enthuse over also.

Ballydoyle is clearly firing on all cylinders again and 13 winners over four Curragh meetings in the last fortnight is ample proof of that.

Just Wonderful was highly impressive when coming from last to first to take the Flame Of Tara.

Paddy Power cut her to 16/1 - from 50's - for the 1,000 Guineas and we'll certainly know a lot more after her next outing as Aidan is aiming high.

The Marcel Boussac, the Fillies Mile and the Moyglare are all under consideration and she is certainly entitled to compete at that exalted level.

Seamie Heffernan and Kenya simply scooted home in the normally fiercely competitive Tote Irish Cambridgeshire.

"We gave him a good break after his last run in France and he was just ready to start back" O'Brien explained.

"Coming here we thought he would improve from the run, and hopefully he will" he added.

Sydney Opera House had started the day well for the all conquering Tipperary outfit when taking the mile juvenile maiden.

O'Brien said "We thought he'd win last time at Leopardstown but he was beaten by a very good horse of Kevin Prendergast's (Madhmoon)".

"He could come back here for the Beresford Stakes and will make a nice middle distance horse next year."

Jessica Harrington's I'm So Fancy is becoming a real Curragh specialist.

She battled well to take the Snow Fairy Stakes by a half length from Sir Michael Stoute's raider Desert Diamond.

Her next appearance could be back at Headquarters in the Blanford Stakes tomorrow week, part of a mouth watering Irish Champions Weekend.

**After 14/1 shot Stella d'Oro last week, the gravy train keeps rolling for Declan's exclusive and highly selective Irish Racing Service.**

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