

Who Will Win at Merion?

Written by BRUNO



Merion East 5th hole

Ever since I first laid eyes on Merion's East Course on July 4th, 2011, it has been my personal favorite parkland type course design. I have analyzed every aspect of Hugh Wilson's brilliant layout during my site visits and also when I played Merion with Greens Department staffer Dave Petfield two summers ago.

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My conclusion regarding what it will take to win the U.S Open - the champion will need to be a world class iron player and be amongst the best shortgame players in the world. Those two attributes immediately bring three names to mind: Tiger Woods, Phil Mickelson, and Luke Donald.



Merion's 115 yard - 13th hole

Lets breakdown those three. Tiger is having his best year (up to this point) in a long time. His iron

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game is superior, and his shortgame and putter are close to what they were in his dominant

years. Once again ranked #1, TW has the swagger back, and that's scary for the rest of the tour.

Although Tiger is the favorite, he has never competed at Merion, has never won a major on a par

70 layout, and struggled mightily in his last outing (at Muirfield Village for The Memorial). He will

contend this week, and if his the putter lights up, his 15th major is a real possibility . . . but he is

not my pick.

Phil Mickelson has 5 runner up finishes at the U.S Open, and for the opposite reasons, Lefty has

a serious chance. Mickelson did compete at Merion in the 1989 U.S Amateur, and he was red hot

last week at Memphis finishing tied for 2nd . . . but like TW, Phil has a few reasons that might hinder

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his chances. After seeing the rain on Monday, Phil left Merion and traveled back to California to attend

his daughter Amanda's 8th grade graduation on Wednesday. Great to see that Phil has his priorities

in order, but that's a lot of travel - from San Diego to Memphis, then Memphis to Philadelphia, then

Philadelphia to San Diego, then San Diego back to Philadelphia. Considering he turns 43 years old

on Sunday, and has never won this event, it might be a tall order to overcome so many hurdles.

having said all that, if anyone can defy logic, it's Phil. His irons and shortgame are as good as Tiger's,

so the tools are there.

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The major player in the market for Merion is the private equity firm, which has a long history of investing in the industry. The firm has a strong track record of identifying and acquiring high-quality assets, and it is well-positioned to capitalize on the growth opportunities in the Merion market. However, the firm's success will depend on its ability to execute its strategy and to manage the risks associated with the investment.