



Maybank Championship 2017 Preview

Danny Willett

"I know the course pretty well. I first came here eight years ago, my first event on tour which I was first reserve for and then didn't get in. I've been back here for a couple of corporate days in between so I know the course well.

"It's a lovely little track, I know they've re-laid the greens since I was here last November and the course is in really good shape considering all the work that they've had to do to get it up to standard. I think the guys should be in for a treat.

"It's a fun golf course, a lot of decisions to make off the tee. If you want to lay yourself and make your second shots easier you can, but then you have longer into the greens. It depends on how you want to play it. It's good to finally get a competitive tournament here finally.

"I played on Bermuda grass in college and I think that helps on a lot of the Asian courses. I think that helps for us guys who have played on that grass a lot. Playing for a couple of years in Alabama it was mostly Bermuda grass and that helps.

"The weather is nice and warm so my record here is pretty good. I've had a few close calls so we'll see how things play out.

"I've only played three tournaments, ten competitive rounds of golf and some of it has been good, some of it bad. I'm going through some changes with a few bits so just trying to bed them in now – I thought I had it pretty good last week but it didn't quite filter through for all four days on the golf course.

"I played the Pro-Am this morning and I'm going to do a little bit of work in the afternoon so hopefully I can keep some good feelings going. Usually I come out of the blocks quite quickly, in the last few years anyway.

"This year has been a little bit slow so far but hopefully we can progress working forward and hopefully this year keep progressing.

"It's been great in the past year. Obviously a lot has changed and it's been a bit up and down, there's been the highest of highs and some pretty poor lows in there as well. I think I had dented confidence on the back of last season and I'm trying to get through that now.

"But you can't take away from what last season was, it was by far the best season of my career. I know that it ended a bit poorly the last few months but you can't take away what happened for the first six months of that year.

"I played great in Sun City at the start of last year and then brought the form into Dubai and won there and then played nicely in a few of the World Golf Championships, finished well in Doral, and went on to win at Augusta. Then I finished second in the Race to Dubai.

"I think if you look at it on the whole it was a great year. If you break it down into sections, there were definitely some better than others so I'm just trying to look back on the bad sections and try and see where it went wrong and try and improve on that.

"It's been fantastic and it's great to be back in Asia to play golf again. Hopefully I can have a good week here on a golf course that I like.

"It's just about time management for me now. Everything's a little bit busier, a little more going on and all a little bit more rushed. I just need to make sure that everything I do on a week-to-week basis is planned so I can make time for everything else, whether it's family or gym or rest or whatever it may be.

"We lead a pretty strange life, tour professionals. We get some really high highs and fantastic experiences, we travel the world and see some great places. But at the same time it's very busy when you're out there working and practicing, trying to get everything to come together on any given week.

"It's pretty stressful, so it's just making sure you've got the time there to do everything you need to do for yourself and to make sure the extra bits are in there, doing the media and spending time with the family if they're out. So time management would be right up there on the list.

"The schedule works pretty well this year actually. I sat down and looked at the schedule with Chubby at the back end of last year and there's actually a bit of a natural break on the European Tour after this week where there's some good events but if you don't want to do a lot of travelling, some guys will miss some events.

"It makes perfect sense now to go and play a few events in America to lead up to World Golf Championships and Majors so I'll try and do two in a row over there to try and get my numbers up. I've got to get my 15 events up in America and I've got my numbers in Europe so I'm fine for that. It's just now about looking at golf courses I want to play and which I'll do well around.

"It will be busy but I think it's worthwhile giving it a good go in America this year and seeing how we go and then if I like it then I'll carry on down that road and if I don't like it then luckily I've got exemptions on both sides of the Atlantic for five years now so I can make decisions and do what I want to do.

"I tried not to put too much pressure on myself after Augusta but that expectation levels go up because you know what you can achieve when you play well so it's very difficult to drop those levels.

"But unfortunately if you keep those levels high all the time then frustration levels sometimes match, so I'm trying to find a good balance between my expectations and what I want to achieve. One thing I've found difficult is lowering those expectation levels, and ultimately play better. It'll be nice to get my name on a few more Major trophies.

"This golf course gives you a lot of choices. A lot of courses you're hitting driver every hole and you don't have to think much about it, every hole looks pretty similar. I find that a lot of the golf courses in Asia give you a lot of choices and this one highlights that perfectly.

"If you want to take on the golf course from the tee, it gets pretty tight from around 300 to 330 yards. If you want to lay it back you need to avoid a few of the fairway bunkers or else you can lay it short of them.

“It gives you loads of options, whether or not you want to hit a wedge into the green or an eight iron into the green or a six iron into the green. That then determines whether or not you want to hit driver, three wood or five wood.

“That for us golfers is fun to play, it’s not the same. You have to speak to your caddie and ask him what he thinks, instead of him just standing there and giving you driver and then walking down the fairway.

“I think if you were to speak to the guys throughout this week they’ll probably be hitting a lot of different golf clubs. That highlights good golf courses for me, when it gives you options, even though you’re all trying to get to the same place.”