

WHAT TO WATCH

Washington Nationals

Wed. » vs. Mets, 7:05 p.m., MASN
Thursday » vs. Mets, 12:35 p.m., MASN
Friday » vs. Braves, 7:05 p.m., MASN
Sat. » vs. Braves (1), 1:05 p.m., MASN
Sat. » vs. Braves (2), 7:05 p.m., MASN
Sunday » vs. Braves, 1:35 p.m., MASN
Monday » at Mets, 7:10 p.m., MASN
Tuesday » at Mets, 7:05 p.m., MASN

D.C. United

Saturday » at Crew, 7:30 p.m., CSN

Washington Kastles

Wednesday » vs. Capitals, 7:10 p.m.
Friday » vs. Breakers, 7:10 p.m.
Saturday » at Sportimes, 7:30 p.m.
Sunday » vs. Explorers, 7:10 p.m.
Tuesday » vs. Freedoms, 7:10 p.m.

Tour de France

Wed. » Stage 16, 6:30 a.m., NBCSN
Thurs. » Stage 17, 7:30 a.m., NBCSN
Friday » Stage 18, 8 a.m., NBCSN
Saturday » Stage 19, 8 a.m., NBCSN
Sunday » Stage 20, 8 a.m., NBCSN

British Open

Thursday » 4:30 a.m., ESPN
Friday » 4:30 a.m., ESPN
Saturday » 7 a.m., ESPN; 3 p.m., ABC
Sunday » 6 a.m., ESPN; 3 p.m., ABC

NEWSMAKER

Jeremy Lin

HOUSTON — The point guard is leaving New York and taking Linsanity to Houston. The New York Knicks announced Tuesday night that they will not match the Houston Rocket's three-year, \$25 million offer for Lin, a restricted free-agent. New York officially had until 11:59 EDT to decide whether to re-sign Lin, who became an international phenomenon in the media glare of Big Apple. The Rockets made it tough for the Knicks to sign off on keeping him by back-loading their offer sheet with a \$15 million salary in the third season. — AP

ON THE WEB

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Pitches & Putts » Golf
Redskins Confidential » Redskins & NFL
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GOLF » BRITISH OPEN



ANDREW REDINGTON/GETTY IMAGES

Tiger Woods enters this week's British Open searching for his first major championship since winning the 2008 U.S. Open.

A turning point for Tiger?

Woods is trying to end drought without major

By Kevin Dunleavy
Examiner Staff Writer

Sixteen years ago, Tiger Woods arrived at Royal Lytham & St. Annes for the British Open as an amateur. It would be the last time he would play a professional tournament for free.

In shooting a 66 in the second round and tying the tournament record for the lowest score by an amateur (281), Woods became convinced he was ready to compete on the PGA Tour. A month later, after winning his third straight U.S. Amateur, Woods ended his college career after two years at Stanford.

"I was still iffy about whether I should turn pro," Woods told reporters on Tuesday. "But [the Open] gave me so much confidence I could do it at a high level. I could shoot those low scores and play against the top players in the world on a very difficult track."

This week, Woods returns to Royal Lytham seeking another turning point in his golf career. It's been four years since he last won a major. Since capturing the 2008 U.S. Open

Open Championship

When » Thursday-Sunday
Where » Royal Lytham & St. Annes, Lancashire, England
TV » ESPN/ABC

on a fractured leg, Woods has won nine PGA Tour events, including six leading into majors, but remains stalled at 14 majors, four shy of Jack Nicklaus' record.

As Woods' dominance has subsided, 15 different players have won the last 15 majors. The last nine have been claimed by first-time major champions. Woods said that winning now is tougher than it used to be.

"I think the fields are deeper," Woods said. "You need to have the hot week at the right time. There are more guys now that have a chance to win major championships than ever before."

Another carrot for Woods: If he were to win the Claret Jug, he would regain his status as the world's No. 1 ranked player.

That's hardly a motivation for No. 1 Luke Donald and No. 3 Lee Westwood, both long overdue for

their first major title. With each passing major, pressure mounts on the Brits, especially when the Open is played in England.

While Westwood has contended, Donald has done so rarely, often shooting himself out of it early. Despite a stroke average of better than 70 the last three years, Donald has not broken 70 in the first round of his last 20 major starts. His opening 79 in the U.S. Open last month was his worst PGA Tour round since 2005.

"I just have been getting a little bit too uptight and anxious," Donald said. "It's a very normal mode to switch into because the pressure is that much more. You want it that much more."

Players have been nearly unanimous in their praise of Royal Lytham, which has 206 bunkers and heavy rough, but has been softened by rains. Woods was surprised by the presence of ball marks on the greens, a rarity, especially on the links courses in the Open rotation.

"The rough is more lush. The fairways are softer. The ball's not chasing as much. This is different," Woods said. "It's a slower golf course. But still nonetheless, it has some mounding in it and the bunkers are penal."

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COMMENTARY

Weathering Open storms



Starting on Thursday at 4:30 a.m., ESPN will begin their exclusive live coverage of the British Open from Royal Lytham & St. Annes in Lancashire, England.

One thing consistent about the Open Championship is the challenging weather conditions. Paul Azinger, who will serve as an ESPN analyst, and Mike McQuade, vice president event production, discussed the Open conditions during a conference call.

From a broadcast perspective, how does the weather affect the Open Championship?

McQuade » "The wind is always an issue. I think at this point we're sort of used to that. I think the one thing that we've tried to do to sort of overcome all of this is this Flight Tracker that we've used the last couple of years, and this year I think it's on six different holes. ... I think the one area where we want to continue to get better is sometimes the weather becomes so bad ... [and] you don't sense how bad it is because most of the commentators by and large are in a booth with the windows closed, and you don't hear the rain as much."

How does poor weather conditions affect players?

Azinger » "It depends what kind of player you are. With a lot of guys, it's a lot like throwing a rabbit in a briar patch; when the wind is blowing like that, they just love it. And for some they completely dread it. There was a time when a lot of players would skip the Open Championship from America because they didn't like the conditions. They didn't like the awkward bounces and it felt unfair over there, so you have to accept it, I believe, and deal with it. Every player is different. Every golf swing is different. Golf swings are like fingerprints; there's no two alike. Same with the mental aspect of the sport. Some guys accept that, and some guys hate it."

Examiner columnist Jim Williams is a seven-time Emmy Award-winning TV producer, director and writer. Check out his blog. Watch this! on washingtonexaminer.com.

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