

Weir looking forward to trying luck in Unionville

BY MIKE HAYAKAWA
Sports Editor

Mike Weir is looking for history to repeat itself.

It was at the 1999 Canadian skins game at Le Diable golf course in Mont Tremblant, Que. where the 31-year-old Bright's Grove, Ont. native pocketed 10 skins and emerged the overall winner over well-known American rivals David Duval, John Daly and Fred Couples.

That victory, he said, supplied the momentum he needed to do well in succeeding events.

With Angus Glen Golf Club preparing to host this year's Telus Skins Game, presented by Ericsson on July 23 and 24, Weir is hoping to rekindle the magic from 1999 and earn the bulk of the prize money, a total of \$360,000 Cdn.

This year his challengers are Vijay Singh, currently fourth on the world golf rankings, Sergio Garcia, who is sixth, and seventh-place Duval. Weir is no slouch himself as he's seeded 11th in the world and is fourth on the PGA championship points standings.

Weir hopes a strong performance on the newly created Unionville-based public north course will be a harbinger of things to come.

After the '99 Skins Game

I played well," recalled Weir during a teleconference call prior to leaving for the British Open.

"I went to the Western Open and I finished second. The Skins Game gave me a lot of confidence. Back then David Duval was number one and I beat him in that Skins Game. It was big for me."

Following that event, Weir won the 1999 Air Canada Championship and 2000 World Golf Championship. He was also the top performer on the international team in the 2000 President's Cup.

That's not to say Weir has been dogging it lately.

Taking to the links for 15 events this season, Weir made the cut 14 times and is ranked ninth on the PGA money leaders' list with earnings of \$1,648,486 U.S.

"I think I've been very consistent," he assessed. "Except for a couple of stupid mistakes at L.A. Open, I should have made the cut there."

"But each year I feel I'm getting more consistent. It's due to my swing and my experience and in knowing the courses."

He also credits long-time coach Mike Wilson with helping him work on his mechanics. Right now the pair has been tinkering with

Weir's swing. "I've been working on it. I managed to get a little into play recently where I hit some encouraging shots that I couldn't hit before," he said.

As for the Skins Game — now in its ninth season and

held in the Toronto area since 1995 — Weir acknowledges it will present a challenge. Even though he hasn't played the north course yet, Weir is familiar with the surroundings at Angus Glen and enjoys the facility.

"The Skins Game has fea-

tured golfers of amazing calibre and I know the competition will be tough again this year," he said.

At the 2000 event he collected three skins and \$75,000 at Predator Ridge Golf Resort in Okanagan Valley, B.C.

Tickets for the event can be bought through Ticketmaster at (416) 870-8000 or via the Internet at www.ticketmaster.ca.

The event is being televised live on The Sports Network at 9 a.m. both days.

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