

# CRAZY Bets



Glitzy golf: Usually inseparable, how will Michael Douglas and Catherine Zeta-Jones fare in opposition on the links?

## A high-profile Hollywood bust-up?

BY SKYBET'S SIMON YAU

TEARS and tantrums returned to our screens last weekend with the start of the second series of the X-Factor and it seems the British appetite for the pop wannabes is huge with 6.6 million viewers tuning in for the first show and Skybet make Simon Cowell 5/4 favourite to be the winning manager.

Cowell proved his eye for talent last year when picking out winner Steve Brookstein and has already made a legion of enemies from the opening show. Fellow managers Sharon Osborne and Louis Walsh are not short of put downs themselves and they are both available at 2/1 with Skybet to find the next UK singing sensation.

We also turn our attentions to the world of glamour this week and unsurprisingly Skybet's odds compilers have been studying the form meticulously for the Miss England competition. The final takes place on September 3 in Liverpool and the winner will go to the Miss World event in China. Blonde bombshell Miss

Brighton and the exotic-looking Miss Maya are joint-favourites at 15/2 with Skybet.

Miss Willow Boswell Wright and Miss Hammasa Kohistani both have modelling background, however it's interesting to see that one of this year's finalists, Miss Personality (10/1), was voted into the competition by the Miss England 2004 finalists. If Nicole De Carle's personality matches her looks, it's no wonder she's one of the leading fancies.

Miss Sheffield (25/1) certainly looks poised to hit the big time as she will be appearing on ITV later this year as a Britney Spears look-a-like. You can drool, sorry, run the rule over all the finalists by visiting [www.skybet.com](http://www.skybet.com).

This Bank Holiday weekend sees the inaugural All\*Star Cup – a Ryder Cup-style event that pits together celebrities from Europe and the USA.

Team USA are 4/6 favourites to win the competition which is staged over Sunday and Monday, however 11/10 Europe will be able to glean inspiration from non-playing captain Colin Montgomerie, who has become a legend

in his own right for his part in Europe's victorious Ryder Cup teams.

Skybet are offering odds on top points scorer for both teams and Europe can pin their hopes on former footballing stars Peter Schmeichel and Ian Wright (both 7/1) although with the tournament based on players' handicaps, model Jodie Kidd (7/1) could be the surprise package.

Movie star Michael Douglas (5/6) gets to rekindle memories of his "War of the Roses" movie as he battles wife Catherine Zeta Jones (5/6) for real and Skybet have a Fore Better Fore Worse market to see who will score the most points over the competition.

We have a whole plethora of match bets available from Olympic Greats (Steve Redgrave v Mark Spitz) to Model Pro (Cheryl Ladd v Jodie Kidd).

For the full range of All\*Star Cup specials visit [www.skybet.com](http://www.skybet.com).

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# THE POWER OF X

BY NICK WEINBERG

HOW can we fill the gaping hole left by the conclusion of Big Brother? Before you start to think what's the point in living... X-Factor is back.

And with it comes a selection of specials that are designed to make laughing at talentless wannabes even more entertaining.

Simon Cowell, Sharon Osborne and Louis Walsh yet again hold court over endless hopefuls hoping to break into the big time. Sharon, wife of notorious rocker Ozzy, is 2/1 to be the winning manager, as is Irishman Louis Walsh. Predictably, Simon Cowell is 6/5 favourite. (All bet 365).

The gender of the top band is, at this early stage, a close-run thing according to the bookies. Bet direct make an all male or female band 6/4 shots to go furthest, whilst the odds on it being a mixed gender band is 9/4.

The gender of the top solo artist also interests the bookies. Betdirect think it'll probably be a male, offering odds on 8/11 whilst rating the chance of it being a female as evens.

Even the race to succeed the late Richard Whiteley as presenter of Countdown isn't immune from reality TV involvement.

Big Brother Six's Derek Laud, the posh one for the less informed, is available on the exchanges at 9.5. (Betfair.)

Gyles Brandreth leads the pack at 2.7 but there is a queue of big names, relatively speaking, snapping at his heels, determined to take over the flagship programme.

Jo Brand can be backed at 4.6, whilst Mr Smooth himself Des Lynam is 4.8. Carol Vorderman, for so long Whiteley's sidekick is listed at 7.2. Further back, Eamonn Holmes is 12.4



Sing for your supper: X-Factor judge Simon Cowell managed eventual winner Steve Brookstein last year and is 6/5 favourite to be top manager again this series

and Bob Holness, himself no stranger to TV quizzes, is 13.9.

Further a field are William G Stewart, of Fifteen-to-One 'fame', Bruce Forsyth and Phil Tufnell.

As cricket fever grips the nation, coral have opened a book on the 2007 cricket world cup. Current world champions Australia are favourites to repeat the feat, available at 13/8.

They're closely followed by their ashes rivals England at 11/2.

The Sub-continent's representatives look likely to challenge. India are available at 6/1 and Pakistan are 8/1. The region's minnows Bangladesh are understandably unfancied at 500/1.

Propping up the rear in the betting stakes. Ireland, Holland, Canada, Bermuda and Scotland are all listed at

1000/1 to pull off the shock of all shocks.

Regular readers may recall we suggested in this column that you look into generously-priced England cricket players, prior to the Ashes, in the Sports Personality market.

I hope you snapped up those early prices because Andrew Flintoff is now 11/8 favourite to scoop the gong with

bet365. At one point Flintoff was being traded at around the 25's mark on betfair. His England captain Michael Vaughan is 10/1 whilst Kevin Pietersen is available at 20/1.(bet365)

Meanwhile, Kenneth Clarke has weighed into the Tory leadership challenge and is available at 6/1 with Victor Chandler. David Davies remains odds-on 4/7 favourite.