

Jonathan Agnew

the US Open Golf and the highlight had to be Andy Murray making history at Wimbledon.

But, so far, 2014 has been a major let-down for British sport. The less said about England's effort in the World Cup, the better; Murray was thrashed in the quarter-final at Wimbledon; Chris Froome crashed out of the Tour de France after such a stunningly choreographed Grand Départ in Yorkshire; and England's cricketers were beaten by Sri Lanka for the first time at home.

We still have the Commonwealth Games to look forward to in Glasgow but, if British sport is looking for redemption, it might well come on the greens of Royal Liverpool in Hoylake where the 143rd Open Championship is taking place this week. The American Phil Mickelson is the defending champion, and this is the first Major that Tiger Woods will have played since serious back surgery. He showed his intentions by arriving at Hoylake five days early, just as he did when he won there in 2006. But if it is not to be Mickelson or Woods, what are the prospects of one of our own golfers lifting the nation's flagging spirits? Many will consider that Justin Rose

starts as our best hope, and he will be all too aware that it has been 22 years since an Englishman (Nick Faldo) won the Open Championship, and 45 years since Tony Jacklin did so on home soil. Since bursting on to the scene as a young amateur, Rose's Open track record has been disappointing, but he won on the PGA tour a fortnight ago, so his confidence is high.

If not Rose, then what about Rory McIlroy who won the PGA Championship the week after calling off his engagement to the tennis star Caroline Wozniacki? He is a power player, who hammered a 436-yard drive at the Scottish Open last week, but where his inconsistency

was highlighted by his first-round 64, and his second-round 78.

I will be cheering on Lee Westwood, a cricket lover who I have interviewed on *Test Match Special*. Westwood missed the cut at the Scottish Open last week, but he did finish second in the Open 4 years ago, while Ian Poulter could win if he could only reproduce his Ryder Cup form.

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We have enjoyed some spectacular summers of sport in recent years. The 2012 Olympics and Paralympics will take some beating. Last year, England retained the Ashes, Justin Rose won