

Travelers Championship

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TPC River Highlands

Cromwell, Connecticut, USA

Jon Rahm

Press Conference



TRAVELERS CHAMPIONSHIP

THE MODERATOR: Okay, good morning everyone. We would like to welcome FedExCup leader and world No. 2, Jon Rahm to the Travelers Championship. Jon, welcome back. Making your fourth start and first since 2020, so I'm sure things look a little bit different since COVID time.

What's it like to be back?

JON RAHM: It is a tournament I like. It's one of those events that, again, you start as an amateur, they had faith in me, so every time I can I try to come back. I really get along with everybody involved with the organization of the event and the people in charge have been really good to me and my family, so it's always a spot I try to make time for.

It's just too bad that they got put in a tough time in the schedule for me after the U.S. Open the last few years. For the most part I've gone to Europe and play Irish Opens, Spanish Opens and things like that.

So that's why I haven't been as much as I would like, but looking forward to it. It's great golf course, one that if I'm not playing I love watching on TV as well.

Definitely a tournament that, you know, especially being the last designated event of the year.

THE MODERATOR: Already four wins this season and entering the week off a Top 10 at last week's U.S. Open. How are you feeling entering this week?

JON RAHM: Feeling good, especially after the final round I had last week to sneak in there the Top 10.

Like I said, I'm really looking forward to it. It's a tournament that I like and I've always enjoyed and I cherish. Hopefully I can have a strong showing like I know I can have and give myself a chance on Sunday.

THE MODERATOR: With that, open to some questions.

Q. Is it going to be easier or tougher to get going after

obviously coming off a win at the Masters and not a win? Is it going to be easier or more difficult?

JON RAHM: Oh, way easier, way easier. I was pretty drained on that Thursday still when I tee'd up at Harbour Town, and mainly because that week was unique in how demanding it was on the weekend with all the starts and stops and the tough whether. Every time I win it takes a little bit more out of you.

For the better part of the weekend I was never in contention, so all that stress and intensity that comes with it wasn't there. Even though I finished great, my round was done at 3:00 p.m. and I was able to enjoy most of the broadcast like everybody else.

That extra energy spent on battling Sunday afternoon at the Open, so energy-wise I'm much better.

Q. I was talking to Dave last week and he was saying that you spend so much time practicing like under like competition, giving yourself little games to play, competition drills, this kind of stuff. I'm just wondering why that helps you? Why that's good for your game?

JON RAHM: Well, it's different for everybody. I don't find it personally very productive when I go and just do a drill or I have to be here until I finish this, make X amount of putts, X amount of this and that, because I don't feel like I'm giving 100% all the time, right?

I think it was basketball coach John Wooden who said he always liked to have exact amount of time start to finish so every player would give 100% instead of reserving energy, so a lot of those games that I have are timed. Could be eight minutes, could be 20 minutes, and if I don't got it done, I don't get it done, which is very similar to what we do in real life in pretty much anything.

You can try as hard as you want but you won't always get the chance to succeed, and this is golf. So it's easier to give it my all on a drill for ten minutes and then change to the next one. Because if you do poorly you kind of need let it go and got to the next and try to accomplish that.



So for me, it's not my entire practice, but I can do two or three games in each aspect of the game that in total is basically one to two hours. Sometimes I get it done in the first few minutes and it's done; sometimes I don't get it done.

But it's just a way for me to put 100% of my attention and focus on getting something done in that moment and have it spread out in different segments. When you're doing other time of work sometimes you need to repetition, so it's not always 100% everything just games like that.

Q. It's a little bit different coming to this designated event in that you won as you mentioned the Masters and it's a pretty quick trip to South Carolina. This one involved cross-country flight. How do you physically and mentally get yourself prepared when you've got that kind of travel? What are the things you do to recover or things that you know in your experience like, I don't want to do this when I'm in California before I through or here?

JON RAHM: Each one is different, right? My main thing if I have a long flight like that would be staying hydrated, making sure I'm hydrated. You can get dehydrated on a plane when you're there for five hours very, very quickly, so making sure I'm keeping up on that takes care of a lot.

And then you're losing three hours as well, so making sure you get your meals in so your body can recover after a week like that. It goes back to the basics.

And then when you land, if you have time and a gym are whatever it may be, to get a little bit of exercise in. It doesn't need to be crazy. It could be 30, 40 minutes of just some kind of stretching or whatever to get the blood flowing a little bit more so your body can just naturally recover and get things moving.

If you just sit for five hours and then you arrive here late, have dinner, and go to bed, I don't feel my best the next morning. That would be the three things I would do. Nothing special really.

Q. How long did it take you to understand or get into that, and when you started as a professional on the PGA TOUR looking back, 2015, '16, how different is the way you would prepare now compared with what you did then?

JON RAHM: Well, you learn a lot about yourself. In college you don't travel nearly as much and you don't travel nearly as far.

The exercise part, I found that being very beneficial when I go across the Atlantic, when you go to Europe, Dubai flights like that.

But landing and going straight to the gym, and actually if it's mid-afternoon trying to get a hard workout in, has helped me by far the most get over jet lag and things like that. It's like a reset to the body, so I try to apply the same thing when I come here.

Q. You had the Memorial then the drama of the big announcement and the U.S. Open and now another designated event. Are you ready for a break?

JON RAHM: (Laughter.) Before all that I already had a break after this week in my schedule just because I feel like it's important to have that time off during the season, and earlier on I chose to play certain events or just didn't have the opportunity to do it.

Yeah, even before all of that happened, yeah, I think it's something I had on my schedule. I'm looking forward to it, not because I need a mental break per se, but because I do need a bit of rest to then be able to attack the rest of the season. We still have plenty of golf to go starting at The Open Championship.

So what's happened doesn't make that much of a difference in that sense.

Q. Any advice for the players that were in those final groups this past weekend for how to get ready to answer the bell this week?

JON RAHM: No. I mean, a lot of them are already plenty experienced, right? The only one that hasn't been in that situation was Wyndham. After winning I'm pretty sure he doesn't care how it goes this week.

So, I really couldn't tell you. It's so personal. All I could tell him is to enjoy the win as much as possible. You know, if you want to focus and play this week, go ahead, but just take the time to enjoy those moments, just because, you know, they're not easy to come by.

So to make sure you celebrate when something like that happens in the present instead of years after when you've already -- not forgotten, but it's already passed.

Q. Jon, what will be the lasting headline for you from the 2023 U.S. Open and your experience there?

JON RAHM: For me personally?

Q. Yeah.

JON RAHM: Oh, God, I don't know. I'm not good at headlines. Nowadays it's clickbait, so I wouldn't know what to tell you. I don't know. I don't know.

The only thing I could say is a tournament is 72 holes, right, so don't give up. I was pretty far back on Sunday morning and then snagged my way into a Top 10, so play your hardest until the end.

In 10, 20 years when we look, see, oh, he had a Top 10 in this U.S. Open nobody is going to remember how you do it. When it comes to that, that's what I was going to say.

If it's as a tournament as a whole, I wouldn't know what to tell you. It's obviously a great major and obviously a very different one to what we've had in the past to previous U.S. Opens.

Q. Just a follow up on what you said before about celebrating. After you won the Masters you told me that Rafa Nadal told you to take time to celebrate. I don't know that we got a full in-depth on how you did celebrating at Silver Leaf.

JON RAHM: And you won't.

Q. Okay. But have there been some special moments then that you can describe?

JON RAHM: I don't think he meant having a party or anything like that. I think it's just reminding yourself to enjoy what you accomplished. What he meant is as competitors you always want to focus on the next thing, and golf and tennis is similar because there is always the next tournament.

So instead of just focusing on the next thing and forgetting what you accomplished, to remember and reflect on what you've done and then be able to move on. I don't think he meant as a party or celebration. Just more reflecting what you accomplished and to make sure that in the moment you're thinking about it before it's gone.

That's what I understood from it at least.

Q. Jon, this tournament has typically had a hard time when the U.S. Open is on the west coast getting players to come back the next week to the east coast. If this had not been a designated event, is this an event would you have skipped? And how much does what the Travelers does to make golfers feel comfortable, charter flights and that kind of thing, entice players to come all the way back?

JON RAHM: Well, there are two events I wouldn't have played this season if it wasn't for the world we had this year, right, and that's the reason why I haven't played them in the past. Major weeks can be taxing and I've always tried to set up my schedule around not playing those weeks.

Now, I can't tell you what I would've done this year because it's a little bit different now than if I would've gone to Europe or not. But that is -- I mean, it is a tough one, right, especially when you're going across the country completely.

I can tell you with certain confidence that I probably wouldn't have been here even though I love the tournament so much. With that said, they've done a great job like you said making players comfortable. Having a charter flight always makes it a lot easier. Maybe not for the best two or three players in the world, but for other people that are high quality players as well that come and compete in this event.

Yeah, they do everything they can. It's just sometimes if it doesn't fit the schedule, it doesn't fit the schedule. In this case I'm really glad this year happened the way it happened so I can come back.

Q. Did you get any more answers to your questions about the merger? Heard any more? Feel better than last week?

JON RAHM: I didn't really talk about it much last week, and I guess I might know more in a few hours once we're done with the player meeting tonight.

I don't think we're going to get a lot of answers, but I'm going to at least get an idea of where the membership head is at. That's all I can say. We don't know anything. I don't know if the people in charge know much more than we do.

There are so many unanswered questions that at this point I wouldn't want to waste time thinking about it because there is a lot of what ifs and unknowns.

Q. Going back to last week, LACC, pretty unique course. We've heard a lot of talk about in the media over the past week. You've had success a lot of different places. What kind of golf do you like to play? What kind of course do you enjoy?

JON RAHM: I enjoy all kind of golf, to be honest. I've spoken on why I play good in California many times. You know, a lot of similarities to the greens I grew up on back home and a lot of the golf courses are similar as well.



But I wouldn't be able to tell you one type of golf that I enjoy. I like it all. I like it all. I can't really describe one.

But if I had to go down that route, even though I won tournaments shooting low scores, I'd really rather go with tournaments that, you know, it's not a birdiefest. There is a challenge for everybody. Somewhere in the 10- to 14-under range. That's why I love Torrey so much. You can make birdies, but bogeys and double bogeys are lurking as well.

Leaning towards tougher conditions is where I would be happier, but I couldn't tell you exactly one type of golf course.

Q. Real quick off that, is there a different sense of gratification you get winning on a golf course where the scores are harder to come by than a course potentially like this where we've had record low scores? There has been a 58 here; seems like every year 61, 62, that kind of thing. As a player, do you feel like there is a greater sense of accomplishment when you win on one type of those venues as opposed to the others?

JON RAHM: I would say so, yes. Yeah.

One my most cherished wins is always going to be Memorial because of how difficult the golf course was. When you go out there and perform like that and beat people on a very tough test, it's a lot more gratifying, yeah.

Just because, you know, you're obviously battling the rest of the field, but you're also battling the golf course and yourself. When you go to Kapalua you know you need to shoot 25-under to have a chance. It's not a fight against the golf course. It's not as intense.

So, yeah, I would say if you can -- if I were ever to go to a tournament and win with over par score I feel like that would be a really satisfying week. Doesn't happen often anymore, but I feel like that would be a really satisfying win.

THE MODERATOR: Perfect. That's all the questions we have. Thanks for taking the time. Good luck this week, Jon.

JON RAHM: Thank you.

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