

# The American Express

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La Quinta, California, USA

PGA WEST Pete Dye Stadium Course

## Jon Rahm

### Press Conference

MODERATOR: We would like to welcome Jon Rahm to the interview room here at the 2022 American Express Championship. Back in the desert a place where you've had a lot of success. Can you just talk about being back here this week.

JON RAHM: Yes, it's great to be back. I haven't played the last few years because it hasn't fit the schedule and I believe last year was I had to pull out because of a bit of a back injury.

But I'm happy to be back. It's a place I've been coming to for a very long time, played in college, played the Nicklaus Course a couple times in college and played one of the other PGA courses as well. So I feel comfortable, I live in the desert, so I always look forward to coming here and hopefully having a good week.

MODERATOR: You had a runner-up finish two weeks ago. Can you talk about the state of your game right now.

JON RAHM: Yeah, I they ever thought ever in my career I would shoot 33-under and not win. It was a bit of a bittersweet feeling because you can't help to feel good about game and how good I played, but I still finished second by one shot, right?

So it was a bit of an odd week to say the least but it was a great start to the year. Every time you start and you have new clubs, even though they might work on the range when you're at home they need to be tournament tested and I was happy that things were working properly.

MODERATOR: Questions?

**Q. You did shoot 33-under just two weeks ago. I think the year you won here you shot 62 at La Quinta first day. Scoring is always pretty good around here. Is that pretty in the forefront of your mind when you start this tournament that you're going to have to go that kind of low?**

JON RAHM: You know you're going to have to surpass the

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20-under barrier. I think I went into a playoff at 20-under and that's because the leaders didn't have their best day. So yes, you're right, I shot 26-under at La Quinta, I think a few years back Phil shot 60, Adam Hadwin shot 59, and there's many other low scores out here. Patrick Cantlay last year was 18-under on the weekend a lone on the Stadium which is the hardest of the three courses.

So if the wind doesn't pick up, yeah, you know you're going to have to go out there and post a score. But we all know it, so it's almost like a green light to be aggressive. I also think one of the reasons why that happens is because after the overseed these greens are in such a good condition that it enables players to make putts and if you combine it with good ball striking you're going to have some low rounds.

**Q. Curious on where this area ranks for you in your golf index. We know you're in an Arizona guy, do you consider this the Scottsdale of California?**

JON RAHM: (Laughing) I mean, it's similar enough. It's very, very similar, right? It does get somewhat of a home feel when I wake up and look out the window and I'm like, well it's pretty much the exact same thing, right? So it's almost like the closest home away from home, really, because it's very much of the same.

Yeah, I mean, I would say the demographic might be a little bit older here but it pretty much is the Scottsdale of California.

**Q. You've talked a little bit about your golf swing being unorthodox but where does the belief and when did you develop the trust that it was right for you?**

JON RAHM: My swing coach back in Spain Eduardo when I was working with him is the one who told me never to change that. It's a trademark. He's the player or the coach who made my swing short because, believe it or not, before that I had a really strong grip and an over swing and trying to hit this massive slinging hooks and he's the one who took me to the other side and he said, Try to hit it in the fairway and then figure it out.

Yeah, he's the one who told me to never change it, because it's just part of my swing, it's something that

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comes natural to me and, I don't know, it's almost like I've always had the belief in myself and believe that I could do what I wanted or envisioned I could do with what I had, meaning with the swing I had.

And then I learned a lot more about it when I got to TPI for the first time in freshman year of college. That's when they said, never ever change that wrist position, that's part of your game, that's part of who you are, it never ever changes. And then started learning more about why I swung the way I swing and why my body moves certain ways and that's when I started getting a lot of confidence.

To be honest, I was not a good ball-striker until senior year of college. Like I've always said, I was a competitor, so I would go out there whether I was hitting it good or bad and just try and post the best score I could, period, because that's golf. You go out there and shoot the lowest score, doesn't matter how you do it.

And it was senior year when things started clicking and I realized and learned certain things about my swing that I had to do, know about my game, and that's when I started becoming a really good ball-striker, but the confidence has always been there, I've always had that belief in myself.

**Q. You used that Ted Lasso quote about trying to be a goldfish. Where are you, like what was the difference between how you felt after losing the playoff here to Adam Hadwin versus coming up one short in Hawaii to cam submit?**

JON RAHM: Well I won the playoff. Yeah, yeah. So the difference was big. (Laughing).

But from other times that I finished in second place -- when I said that I think it was just, I was just trying to be funny, but which, it's just true, I mean sometimes forgetting certain things is good. But what I meant more is not forgetting but just getting over it, right? Get over yourself. It's that simple.

You play bad, you did what you did, it's over, move on to the next thing. All can you do from that is learn. Learn from what happened, analyze what you did and move on. And that's it. And you don't want to forget everything, right, because then you repeat the same mistakes over and over again, but I meant exactly that, right, just learn and get over it as quickly as you can, because luckily in golf there's always a next week.

**Q. Do you feel like you did that this time?**

JON RAHM: Yeah, I mean, God, I shot 33-under, it's not like I have much to complain about. With an out-of-bounds

ball. So, if anything, I just need to get over that one swing and I'll be good to go.

**Q. Torrey Pines is known as being so long and difficult why have you become so comfortable there?**

JON RAHM: I said it many times, that coastline reminds me of home quite a bit, weather is similar to what I grew up in and again, it is a ball-striker's golf course.

Like you said, it's long, you have to hit it in the fairway, you have small greens, you're not necessarily having short irons in, so tee to green it's a premium there which luckily is one of my strengths. So those are the reasons why I've been able to play constantly so good and with so much confidence at Torrey Pines.

**Q. How did winning there under Open conditions kind of raise that comfort or confidence or did it?**

JON RAHM: Oh, it did, it definitely did. When a U.S. Open is, if not the toughest, it's always going to be one of the top two, three toughest tournaments you play all year. Having played good in the conditions we get in January, February and then play good in the conditions that we got in June, you know, just proved myself once again that I'm a versatile player that can do it in more than one conditions now.

When you're playing a course like Torrey Pines all I had to get used to was the firmness and the speed of the greens, because everything else I'm so familiar with. I played it so many times and I was so comfortable, so I didn't have much to learn or lessons to be learned like maybe on a golf course that I haven't played before. I have so many rounds in it that I felt like I had a bit of an advantage having played good there before in a U.S. Open.

**Q. What changed if anything when you won the Farmers in 2017? It was your first win and what did that do for you?**

JON RAHM: Well, I think when I played that first year at Torrey Pines I was a little bit unaware of how difficult the back nine could be and I just went on the attack mode. It was one of those weeks where I was striking it about as good as I can. And I shot 6-under on the back nine, eagling both par-5s and I thought that was just normal, that's stuff people do, because you see Tiger do it every once in awhile, right, and I'm like, this is just what you have to do, you have to do this out here on TOUR and that's why I played the way I did.

It wasn't until later on I realized, okay, yeah, if you par from 12 through 16 you're actually doing okay, you don't need

all these birdies and eagles.

But it gave me a lot of confidence. You always dream of that spectacular finishing to win a golf tournament and my first ever win was just that, making a 60-foot putt for eagle to win it on an iconic golf course. That was something that you dream of, it was a dream come true.

So obviously my confidence -- and I'm a really confident person, really confident player and it got even higher, just knowing that, God, the way it unfolded and the way things happened was very unusual for a first timer and, yeah, it gave me a lot of confidence that I could do certain things that I envisioned myself doing.

**Q. Understanding your goals for the year, what's your approach to the West Coast Swing and why do you choose the American Express to be that event that you like to start it at?**

JON RAHM: So I always play a lot on the West Coast because being in Arizona State alumni we played a lot in California and obviously Arizona, right. So those are events that it's almost like, it's like being at home, even though I'm not, but it's like being at home.

So, to me, it's where I'm comfortable at. I grew up on poa annua greens so any time I see poa annua greens I'm confident and everything else is very similar to desert play. So it's what I have confidence in, that's all I can say.

That's why I play so much of it is because at the start of the year it's important to get off to a good start and my level of comfort is very high and I'm very happy. Plus I'm not too far from home, so family and friends can be around and visit as well.

**Q. To go more into that, the importance of starting here, starting well, a place where you're comfortable, what do you feel like that does for your game as the season progress, obviously trying to win another championship?**

JON RAHM: Well I think I mentioned it earlier as well, right? We all put new stuff in the bag early on the year, we all trying to improve as players. I think it's key to get off a good start in that sense. Coming to courses and tournaments where I'm comfortable on is only going to help. So I think that's one of the reasons, but the main thing is because I come out here believing I can win each one of those events and that's the goal.

Luckily for me it's no more than a short flight or a not the longest drive to come to these events. So it's, again, like I said, it's where I feel comfortable. I spent a lot of time in

California, because of Callaway and my swing coach, Dave Phillips and obviously I live in Arizona, so it just makes sense.

**Q. Are there any fitness, nutrition, wellness routines that you maintain that keep you the champion you are?**

JON RAHM: Yeah, a lot of the stuff I don't really want to disclose, I try to keep it to myself. But I do hear and I do see a lot of comments from the people who think I don't work out which to me is laughable. I do work out. I work out every single day. I'm just not working out to be in the skinniest shape of my life, I'm working out to be the best golfer I can be. So I do have routines that I do every morning, every night.

**Q. Mindfulness, medication?**

JON RAHM: Oh, yeah, I do a lot of mental work as well. One thing I do that is kind of a bit of both is journaling. I like to write. That is something that it kind of helps as both. I kind of focus on myself and it's a way to, for me to restructure my thoughts and my emotions, it kind of helps me navigate through it and when I'm done I get almost the same sense I do when I'm meditating or practicing mindfulness because I'm so in the moment thinking about what I'm feeling. It's a great practice and it's something I do as well every day.

MODERATOR: Thank you so much for your time, appreciate it.

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