

# AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am

Monday, February 6, 2023

Pebble Beach, California, USA

Pebble Beach Golf Links

## Justin Rose

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome the winner of the 2023 AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am Justin Rose to the interview room. Justin, your 11th PGA TOUR victory. I know this one moves up near the top of the list winning at Pebble Beach. If we can get some comments.

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, 100 percent. I mean, I feel like I have been fortunate enough to win at some great venues, but Pebble's right up there. Just that walk up 18 to sort of be able to build a bit of a lead to kind of enjoy it was a very special moment.

I think obviously when you're a bit starved for a win as well, the fact that it came today on a weather day like we had and at a venue that we had today was just worth waiting for.

THE MODERATOR: It was a long week. You came back this morning really strong out of the gate. Talk a little bit about the rest of the final round this morning.

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, strong out of the gate, for sure. But the first hole of the day was proving to be -- I was in the middle of the fairway last night. We knew we were going to have a slight wind shift to the northeast, which was meant to be down off the left. When I got to my ball it was kind of dead off the left, but it was playing really long out there. So I hit a 9-iron, hit middle of the green, spun off to the front right of the green. Putted up. Still, again, really hard to get a gauge of actually what have they done with the greens overnight. Had they cut them. Didn't really look like they had cut them. So left it four, five feet short.

I felt like that was a big momentum maker, I suppose. To miss from short range early would have been kind of just a frustrating start. But to make that putt was awesome.

Then bury a 30-footer on the next hole I felt like was exactly the type of start I needed today.

THE MODERATOR: Justin moves to number 10 in the FedExCup standings. We'll take questions.

**Q. Bring me back. When you returned to the golf course Sunday morning, Monterey Peninsula No. 9, did you see yourself winning this tournament?**

JUSTIN ROSE: I actually, to be honest with you, I had a goal -- yeah. You never know if you're going to win, right. But I knew I was in the tournament still. I had a goal of getting to, I thought I could get to 10-under after that day. I ended up getting it to 12.

But I was aware of -- I can't -- I think what I did realize that Sunday morning was I realized the opportunity I had. The way the wind had shifted. The way Monterey Peninsula was playing. When we got back out there I knew there were birdies to be had.

So I kind of, from a mentality point of view, that wasn't lost on me. I feel like that kind of intentionality around starting strong there that morning was the key to the week probably, yeah.

**Q. The 5-wood into 9. If your ball doesn't blow from three feet to seven feet away, which leads to a proper stoppage and you're playing the rest of MP on Saturday in those conditions, what does that do to your odds?**

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, I mean it hurts them considerably, yeah, for sure. Yeah, that was a break. That was definitely a break. It wasn't just my ball that moved. Had a couple groups earlier it was happening. Then also Greg Penner, our amateur as well, he hit a putt up there and it rolled off as well.

**Q. (No Microphone.)**

JUSTIN ROSE: I couldn't believe it was only one green the way it was blowing. Anyway, yeah, listen, that was just a moment that, I guess if you are out here long enough on TOUR occasionally you catch on a good break. So that was a good one.

**Q. You mentioned the wind and the elements. How would you sort of convey the distinctive challenge of Pebble? With the small greens, power certainly is**



**rewarded. But it seems like it's unique to a lot of courses in that it's not, power is not a prerequisite. That you can win in different ways here. There's different elements involved than maybe there are at a lot of places.**

JUSTIN ROSE: For sure. I think Pebble's a great golf course from that point of view. Greens are so tilted actually that when they're firm and they're small it plays very difficult. Because obviously it's tough to hold them. Then you got a lot of downhill tough chips.

They're so tilted that when it's soft like it is at the moment it's still very difficult to control the spin.

So, like you say, just by, if you're hitting wedges into the green you think you have a great opportunity to score. But actually it's very hard to control a wedge and stop it close to the hole given the tilt and how soft they were.

We even talked about the way to play 18 today. You're almost better off having an 8-iron or a little chippy 8-, 9-iron into the green than to have a 56 degree where it would be really hard to keep the ball not running, spinning down, spinning back off the false front there.

Yeah, it's a really strategic golf course. But a fun golf course too. It does offer up some opportunity and some birdies because of that.

**Q. Given that, the women are coming here for the first time in July for the U.S. Women's Open. How do you think it will suit the LPGA players? It seems like, because power is not mandatory, that it will be an interesting challenge for them. But I'm curious your view.**

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, I think obviously they hit the ball so straight generally as a generality. The fairways are quite wide here so I feel like it's going to be very much approach-play driven.

I would only imagine in the summer they can get the course nice and firm and fast. So I think anybody who has the ability to kind of flight the ball higher and with a little bit more stopping power is going to do really well on this golf course. That would be what I would think would be the prerequisite for doing well here.

**Q. You've been eligible for every major dating to St. Andrews in 2010. How much was that on your mind at all coming into the year, Augusta?**

JUSTIN ROSE: Augusta's definitely been a big part of being on my mind. I thought the simple way to approach it

was try to play my way into the top 50 in the world by whenever the date is. Some time in March.

So I kind of knew that -- I think my world ranking divisor is only 37. So I had a few free hits, if you like. So I knew that making some points was going to do me good.

That was my intention was to come out and play solid and earn some points and claw my way up the World Rankings and make it that way.

Obviously this is a better way to make it by winning a tournament. It's funny how you, by winning, you earn the points and everything takes care of itself.

So, yeah, big relief from that point of view to be able to plan a little bit more of the run into Augusta now. Because I was playing a little bit more than maybe I would have wanted to because of that fact. But to have the luxury now is unbelievable.

**Q. You were starting to play better in the fall. You mentioned Houston, but you had had some decent finishes. First of all, what was, how bad was your back when you withdrew from St. Andrews last summer and what do you consider what kind of gave you the spark of the turn around?**

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, the back wasn't that bad. It was -- St. Andrews was like a one, like a one-swing kind of thing. Something just happened.

Then I kept coming back. Not play golf for a week or two. Feel good, come back. And it would just be really like painful, I suppose. Niggly. But not like I wasn't injured in the sense of like I was totally out of it. But by playing golf I was really irritating it non-stop.

So I took a period of time, couple of months off. Really focused heavily on the gym. Took golf out of the equation for a couple of months. I guess through October, November.

Then I was just there in England just really training hard. Introduced sort of hitting balls slowly again. Feel absolutely fine because of that. I felt like I just had to do a bit of reconditioning on the fitness side.

There were a couple little moves in my swing as well that were aggravating it. Shifting left a little bit too soon, too early. Yeah, so just maybe compressing a couple of vertebrae or whatever it might have been.

But I think it was more of a biomechanic thing than it was actually, oh, there's a big issue.

**Q. No more niggles?**

JUSTIN ROSE: No more niggles, no.

**Q. When you won in 2019 at Farmers you, there was a lot of questions about the equipment back then with the Honma stuff. Do you think -- eventually obviously you changed out of that. Does the fact that you switched to that equipment to begin with, do you think that kind of stalled your progression along the way from 2019 to now?**

JUSTIN ROSE: If I look back at that whole period of time a lot of it was -- the reason I left TaylorMade was that they weren't prepared to do a 14-club deal, from memory. And I really wanted to use the Axis 1 putter which I still continue to use to this day. And I think statistically my putting in the last three, four years has been the strongest part of my game. And it's been improved since the previous decade. So that was my main reason for going in a different direction.

**Q. They insisted on 14?**

JUSTIN ROSE: I think that's the way it seemed to play out from memory. So that kind of left me with looking around at an option.

Honma I'm disappointed it didn't work out better because I actually feel like they make good stuff. I felt like maybe I fell afoul to the fitting process and just having someone to really help me through the change and the transition.

But I won with their stuff, so I mean definite testament to the fact that it was decent. I think I started going a little off the boil with my game as well. Then at that point is the challenge. Like, is it the equipment, is it the game. And that's where I wasn't quite able to put a line in the sand quick enough if I'm honest with myself.

But I haven't been that comfortable with my equipment for the last two, three years. Having choice is also quite tricky. Too much choice. So, yeah, I feel like the real key is having -- there's so much good equipment, it's almost having someone that really knows your game and helps you with the fitting process. I think that's probably the most important part of it all.

**Q. The other part is, since you hadn't won for four years when did the winning kind of kick in for you, that you kind of got into that mindset that you used to have?**

JUSTIN ROSE: Today you mean? Like this.

**Q. This week.**

JUSTIN ROSE: It became a reality obviously after the Sunday morning restart and playing my way into right into the lead there.

So late -- I finished eagle, par, birdie and I guess I went from being in the pack to jumped out front. So at that point you got to take on the challenge and say, Okay, this is it.

You can always put things down to process and try to play that mental game with yourself that it's just one shot at a time. But at that point you know you have a chance to win. That's real and you want to take that opportunity.

**Q. Curious, what hit you more in a negative way, not going, not winning in four years or dropping to 71 in the world?**

JUSTIN ROSE: Neither. I think just not feeling like I've been hitting solid golf shots. Actually the feeling of how I've played. That's been the frustrating part.

The result side I've kind of, I feel like I've achieved enough in the game where I don't strive for being back to No. 1 in the world. My only goal is to really play well enough where I feel like I can win majors.

Obviously, rule No. 1, you got to be in them. So obviously moments like this are very important because it gets me back in those sort of tournaments.

Two, I just want to keep working on my game to the level where I feel like if I have a good week and I play well like I got a chance to win a major. That's what I feel my forte's going to be all about. I feel like I pretty much ticked most other boxes. But the major championship hurdle is one that I want more of.

**Q. Apparently no European player had ever won this tournament, the pro-am. Obviously Graeme won the U.S. Open here, but this tournament. Are you surprised by that? And it's a long tournament, obviously. What does that mean, I guess? Is it any significance to you of that?**

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, listen, European players I think throughout the '80s and '90s didn't have a lot of success on the PGA TOUR, period. I don't think. Faldo did decently. But even he didn't win prolifically over here in the States. Westie, Clarke, those guys that were at the peak of the powers in the European Tour days, never really won a lot over here.

So there's really only been the emergence of Jon Rahm and maybe myself even in the last sort of decade or so that there's been more opportunities for European players. So, yeah, it doesn't surprise me a ton actually.

But Pebble is the type of golf course with the conditions and the elements that you think you could argue would suit European players a little bit more. Maybe there should have been more opportunity for them.

**Q. On 18 green it looked like you shared a nice moment with Peter. Do you mind just telling us what he talked about and just that moment with him?**

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, Peter is just one of the best guys out here on TOUR. He plays with so much enthusiasm and energy. Yeah, he was great to share the golf course with. We share a mutual coach who is actually based in England, a guy called Justin Buckthorp. I hope he doesn't mind me sharing that. But, yeah, we just kind of -- I don't even know if that camera was doing anything relating to the broadcast in England, but we kind of just saw a lens there and we were like, Hey, JB, two of your guys in one group.

I haven't played with Peter before in that type of situation. So we just kind of shared that little moment to say hi to a mutual coach and friend.

**Q. You mentioned the majors and how important that is to you. With the split nature of golf now today, how much did that weigh into kind of staying on the PGA TOUR, despite grinding like you said for four years and not being able to win until now?**

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, great question. I mean, access to the major championships is a large part of my decision to be playing where I'm playing, for sure. Obviously playing in events like this that have a great history, that give access to iconic golf course, all of those things. Winning events that really matter.

Yeah, but first and foremost playing in major championship golf. It's something -- I have won one, but that's where my childhood dreams lay. Having access to that was really, really important to me going forward.

**Q. To delve a little further into that, how much involvement did you have with the discussions on LIV?**

JUSTIN ROSE: Not a great deal. I have had obviously through the, I don't know, what, four or five year process that this has been, all been talked about. There's been moments where I leaned into it a little more closely and

moments where -- but when push comes to shove there was never a moment where you're like, Okay, well there's a pathway to achieve this, this, and this. So never really further than that.

**Q. On the other hand, obviously this week there's going to be a hearing in the U.K. in regards to those players that are not, that are on LIV that are still European Tour members. Do you have a position either way on that? Do you have a problem with these guys that are LIV guys playing in European Tour events or not?**

JUSTIN ROSE: Listen, it's definitely strengthened European Tour events, if you're looking at it from a field point of view and things like that.

But I think the -- I mean, yeah, part of me thinks you've made a decision, you should just get your head down and stick with that. But at the same time, a lot of these guys have given a lot to the European Tour over two decades. Maybe that should count for something too.

So, listen, I try to keep my nose out of it because a lot of them are my friends and they remain my friends. I don't judge their decision because everyone has their own parameters for what makes a good decision or not.

So, but listen, I still continue to stay in touch with them and wish them the best. I don't really want to make a determination on that one. I actually don't even know what the ins and outs are of the legal situation, what actually is at stake, to be honest with you. I've lost track of all that, to be fair.

**Q. How much -- where are you living and why?**

JUSTIN ROSE: I'm living in England. Because I'm English. (Laughing.)

**Q. I thought were you born in South Africa.**

JUSTIN ROSE: That's true, yeah. But I'm a mutt. No, children. I have a 13 year old and a 10 year old and felt like -- I was living in the Bahamas prior to that and that was wonderful, especially when the children were young. But we just felt like education in the U.K. was something that was important to us. Unfortunately, they're at that age already where putting their -- putting them first are, I suppose, is the reason.

**Q. To talk about the majors -- and I'll get to my one real quickly here -- I'm basically hearing -- and pardon me for making up a number -- but 60, 80 million dollars cash up front is not as important as getting into the**



**majors. Is that kind of what you're saying?**

JUSTIN ROSE: Not as important as winning a major or two, for sure. But you got to be in it to win it. I think that's it. Just sort of giving up on that opportunity is what you got to look yourself in the mirror and just say, you know, is that something that's worth it for me.

I've been one of the players that's very fortunate to have done very well at the game of golf. So moments like I've just had -- and it's nice to speak about it from -- I made the decision based upon blind faith. Hope to win. Hope to put myself in the situation. My game hasn't produced many, many of those opportunities of late. But still have had that belief that it's possible.

So to be in the situation on the 18th green at a place like Pebble holding a trophy, like that's what it's for.

**Q. Secondly, Ryder Cup. You talked about the Masters being on your mind. But where does the Ryder Cup fit into this for you?**

JUSTIN ROSE: Again, the way where I've been with my game I've had to be quite selfish and just focus on me and focus on my improvement and what I need to do to start playing better golf. I haven't even entertained what the Ryder Cup looks like for me. Other than I want to be there.

But I've also had to be -- and I said it to Luke -- Hero Cup and things like that, beginning part of the year I would love to have been involved in it. But I felt like what was really important to me was getting off to a good start on the PGA TOUR so I wasn't under pressure later in the season, so I could turn my attentions to the Ryder Cup and the European Tour as and when that becomes the important part of the phase of the season.

So the plan's gone pretty perfectly, to be honest with you. Three really good solid weeks out here and I built a platform now to be able to look at the rest of the year in a much more positive light and start earning points.

Yeah, obviously love to play my way onto the team. But wanted to be a player that if I'm playing well, Luke has to consider and feel good about being part of this team.

**Q. Just from an experience standpoint, everyone's looking toward a shift toward a younger team. How valuable do you think experience would be?**

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, I think every great team needs a blend. I think that the most important part for the European team I think is going to be the youngsters that do come through. Because you need the firepower, you need the

talent, you need the guys that are out there and aren't scared and are going to make a bunch birdies for you. But also two or three or four guys to be able to glue a couple pieces of the team together is really, really important combination.

**Q. One last Pebble question. Is there any hole out there, was there any moment today that sort of illustrates what we talked about earlier, the distinctive challenge of Pebble? In your mind is there one shot or hole that you don't face anywhere else, that is unique to this place?**

JUSTIN ROSE: I mean, it's just the sort of, I would say almost like take it back to No. 6 yesterday. It's a 3-wood into a 50-yard wide fairway. But I hit it in the left bunkers. Because it's just the enormity of the Pacific Ocean that's just there and the cliff and the sheer, you know, the magnitude of that that kind of just makes you aim 20 yards further than you should. That's just what makes those holes great.

If that was just rough down the right-hand side it would be a bit of a sort of a nothing hole, really. But the fact that that cliff is there, it makes everyone play further left. The other two guys hit drivers, they chose to hit drivers way left of the cart path, up into the hospitality area. But it's a 50-yard wide fairway. But, yeah, it plays with your head a little bit.

Obviously that whole loop, 7, 8, 9, 10, I think that really, that gives the golf course so much character.

**Q. I know you had a three-shot lead. But you're standing on the 18th tee. To your point about the enormity of the Pacific. And today the waves are crashing. It's not just visually, but it's -- I mean, how does that mess with you when you're standing there?**

JUSTIN ROSE: I was standing over -- I was choosing a line that I was never going to have to reload. Because if you hit driver and you pull it left it's like hitting it out of bounds. Obviously with a three-shot lead I was going to cover land as soon as I could. And at that point you might make bogey, but you should take out a number.

But, yeah, when I'm standing over the 4-iron, you know, yeah, you're aware of (makes a noise like waves crashing.) Yeah, you're aware of it. So that means it's something else to deal with, for sure. It's great, it's fantastic.

**Q. What was that noise again?**

JUSTIN ROSE: (Laughing.)

**Q. I noticed right before the trophy ceremony you**



**shared a moment with your family just on FaceTime. Just can you talk about how special it was to share this victory with them, even with them being thousands of miles away?**

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, obviously they were front and center of my mind as I finished. But I still felt very calm and really was just enjoying the moment. Didn't feel too overwhelmed or emotional.

But then as soon as I spoke to them on the phone I was like, okay, yeah, because I could just feel the tear ducts go a little bit. So, but that's great. It's why you play. It's who do you it for. So, yeah, that was special.

**Q. As we go back to -- are you playing L.A.?**

JUSTIN ROSE: I am playing L.A.

**Q. You're going back to England?**

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah. Doesn't make a ton of sense, I know.

**Q. Just given the 20-million-dollar purses, what was it that made you want to play, set the schedule you did?**

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, Phoenix has never been an event I played historically. So I would have only have added it for 20 million bucks really.

But I've been focused on actually FedExCup points, quite honestly. So 500 FedExCup points there or 500 here, or maybe, I don't know, I don't even know. They're still 500.

So that's, you know, that's been my primary motivation is to make sure that I'm where I want to be. It's nice to see I'm 10th in FedExCup. Because my position's been starting with a 1 for a long time it feels like. Like 101 or 102. So it's nice to have trimmed a whole digit off of that now. But that's been my focus. That's the main reason I set the schedule I did.

As well as just trying to -- I was going to play Hawaii, if I'm honest. I was going to play Hawaii, Palm Springs, San Diego, home for two weeks, back out for L.A.

Hawaii came around a little too soon. I said, I need another week's practice. Let's just add Pebble. That's honestly how this whole thing played out. Delighted that it did. Support this tournament. It really is a great tournament. I've loved being here. So, glad it all shifted in my direction there.

**Q. When are you coming to L.A.?**

JUSTIN ROSE: Sunday. Yeah. So five, six days.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

JUSTIN ROSE: No. I am thrilled. Yeah. But, yeah. My wife's not thrilled.

THE MODERATOR: Justin, we couldn't be happier for you. Congratulations.

JUSTIN ROSE: Thanks, everyone.

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