

# BMW PGA Championship

Tuesday, 17 September, 2024

Virginia Water, Surrey, England

Wentworth Golf Club

## Justin Rose

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Welcome back. I'm pleased to be joined by Justin Rose. Justin, a tournament you obviously know very well. How pleased are you to come back here year on year?

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, obviously fantastic to be back at the BMW PGA Championship, especially when the sun is shining. Obviously it's getting to the back end of summer now and you're always just hoping it can last one extra week, that we can have a great week this week, and it's looking set to be perfect. Golf course is magnificent, beautifully green, and staged just perfectly for a big week.

Obviously a huge event on the DP World Tour, and bucket list event for me from a personal point of view, memories of watching all the greats come through here as a kid, and yeah, special to be a part of it and to see my name on sort of the occasional poster and things like that. It's definitely always a slightly surreal tournament for me from that point of view.

#### Q. What's the game looking like coming into this week?

JUSTIN ROSE: We'll see, kind of thing. I've worked hard this week. I took an intentional few weeks -- well, two weeks, really, away from touching a club, which was nice. Came back a little bit earlier than I had hoped for from the FedExCup Playoffs, which the only good thing about that was I got to catch the kids for the last couple weeks of their summer holidays, but from that point, I didn't touch much of a club around that period of time, and I've been gearing back up in the last sort of 10 days or so.

Felt like it was an important few weeks off and a few weeks away from the mental grind of tournament golf. I felt like as I reflected on the season in the States, I felt like I had been on the run for about 18 months. I didn't have much of an off-season in '23, so I felt like I was just coming to the end of like mental capacity there to keep grinding on the same things.

I think it was a good little reset. Assembled the team last



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week, and I've done some good work, so hopefully will show up quickly.

#### Q. As you mentioned the grind there of the season, how are the energy levels, and what are the goals for the rest of the calendar year?

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, I think it's important to keep my goals in a calendar year because you can start thinking about next year, but there's obviously a lot -- Ryder Cup points have now started. That's obviously a big focus going forward for me, to be a part of that team again. They don't get any easier to make, obviously.

But yeah, certainly that's memories of a lifetime from Rome, so you kind of always want to be a part of that team front and center and first and foremost, and I think that's where the majority of the remainder of this year -- gives me opportunities just to get going on that list.

I'm playing a few tournaments, obviously this week, French Open, Abu Dhabi, Dubai. Very excited about that run. Haven't been down to Dubai for the season ender in a few years now, so it's kind of an event I've been missing playing, so excited about that opportunity, and obviously it would be lovely to turn a winless year into a non-winless year. It would be great to hoist something before the end of the year. That would be my primary objective.

#### Q. How special would it be to make that win here?

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, if I was given a choice, obviously it's the DP World Tour championship, great tournament, but this one a little closer to home, means a lot. I've seen my caddie Foch when it was Billy Horschel, so it would be nice to win it with him, as well. 100 percent. It's definitely one of my majors, and then pretty much outside of the majors, I couldn't really think of an event I'd love to win more than this one.

**Q. Obviously last year there was a start of a new era with some Ryder Cup players in Ludvig and Nicolai, Bob, and now Rasmus has won in Ireland impressively. Talk about how important it's going to be for Luke to have seasoned campaigners alongside those youngsters and obvious rookies, et cetera.**



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JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, I think every great team is a blend, and I think we started to get that blend in Rome. Obviously we did lose a lot of our stalwarts in the last -- I think for Rome there were a few regulars that weren't around anymore, and maybe some of us regulars filled those shoes a little bit.

But what was the most exciting thing is the influx of talent coming through. I've got to be honest, when I watched Whistling Straits Ryder Cup, I looked at it with a bit of a bleak long-term view of how Europe might do in the Ryder Cup, and I think that the talents that you've just talked about and seeing them come through and be so comfortable in the States -- and actually all the European Tour lads that have graduated on to the PGA TOUR this year and how comfortable they've all looked playing in the States I think could serve the Ryder Cup team really, really well in the future, guys like Aaron Rai, Bob Mac, because obviously we're playing over there this next time around, so that transition of them being comfortable state-side I think is going to be really valuable and powerful for the team. So I'm a lot more buoyant in terms of the opportunity that the team has going forward.

**Q. What Bob achieved this year, and there's no doubt you helped him in Rome; how pleasing was that? You've talked about the week itself, but to see what he's gone and achieved must be satisfying for you, as well?**

JUSTIN ROSE: Well, listen, the Ryder Cup you make friends for life in a way. You get to know guys on a much deeper level. You walk through fire together. It bonds you way more than just going out for dinner, for example.

No matter how good someone's sense of humour is, when you share a powerful experience like that, you definitely feel like you know someone a lot better and you root for them and you pull for them. Yeah, absolutely.

I was so excited to see -- obviously he won two massive tournaments this year. Just winning in America -- Canada, but PGA TOUR, is just a huge step forward in anyone's career to do that for the first time, but then to do it with his old man on the bag was just brilliant. And Scottish Open, that would be his version of the BMW PGA for me. Winning at home is so important, as well.

Great year for him, and he kicked on perfectly from the Ryder Cup. I think he probably learned a lot just about himself that he can step up with the best in the most intense environment and put three -- well, whatever, two and a half points on the board unbeaten. Just an amazing Ryder Cup debut. That's definitely something you can grow from.

**Q. Mr. Poulter has given an interview today saying he'd still like to be Ryder Cup captain in the future. Can you see that happening ever, and do you think he's got a bit of buyer's remorse?**

JUSTIN ROSE: I mean, I think we need things to accelerate quickly. Obviously the lads who have gone off to LIV -- there was a period of time now where obviously we're seeing scenarios with Tyrrell and Jon having gone, as well, but they're still very much current in terms of form of playing in the Ryder Cup, and I know there's a few outstanding I's to be dotted and T's to be crossed for them to be eligible, but I think the sentiment in the team is we want the best players playing. I think if that's the sentiment, then of course the same would be extended into the captancy role, I'd imagine, or theoretically anyway.

But I think the world of golf does need to start resolving itself quickly because there is still a little bit of a divide, us, them, LIV. I think it's hard to make those admissions back into the fray unless we're all on the same path pretty quickly. I don't know if that answers the question at all.

I think for that to happen for Poults, I can definitely see that pathway, but I think the world of golf needs to make it happen, as well, for him. I think it's hard to just step straight in if everything else is a bit kind of targeted on the fringes. That would be my sense.

**Q. Pro-am tomorrow, lots of people going on. You're in the group ahead of Andy Murray, who's one of the guys out there. Will you be looking out for his swing, and anyone else out there you'll be looking at tomorrow just curious as a pro what they're going to be like out there?**

JUSTIN ROSE: I actually haven't seen the full list, but Andy is obviously a curious one, and he really seems to have taken to it. He's obviously put a couple bits on social media about his goals and becoming a scratch golfer and the like, and the swing he put up looked pretty good. I think he's on a good path.

But we all know -- we struggle; the range and the golf course, two totally different things. But yeah, I will definitely -- it might even be worth me getting to the tee on time. I'm normally always scrambling and I'm always late, but maybe I'll even get there ten minutes early tomorrow just to see him hit one.

**Q. Can you imagine what it's going to be like? He's obviously a great in one sport, going out in front of crowds, in front of another. Can you sort of -- what do you think he should be expecting out there?**

JUSTIN ROSE: Autographs. It's a busy day. I think the celebs obviously create more attention tomorrow than the pros do, so the day is very much about them. Hopefully it's a scenario where you can enjoy it. You do want to play well enough where you don't feel like you're kind of hitting into the crowd and endangering people. You want to be able to feel like you can play free and enjoy the day and keep it inside the ropes.

But yeah, I think also there's no expectation really on these guys that come out, guys and girls that come out and play. Everyone knows how hard the game is. If you're lighthearted with any bad shot, I think the crowd just laugh with you and it's all forgotten pretty quickly. I think just come out and enjoy it for what it is, and it's a bit of chaos out there, and just have a bit of fun with it.

**Q. Do you think there's any real possibility that the Ryder Cup team next year could not have Jon Rahm and Tyrrell Hatton?**

JUSTIN ROSE: Well, there's a possibility, yeah. But there's quite a simple pathway for them to be on the team. So I don't think -- it's going to come down to their own personal decisions, I think, but I think if they choose to cooperate or go with the structure that's in place, they'll absolutely be on the team. That's the way I see it, really, to be honest with you. Yeah.

**Q. If they obeyed the rules they would be on the team presumably, but my question with respect is can you conceive of a team without them on it?**

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, I can't speak for them. Obviously if they choose to not do whatever it takes to make the team, they've obviously got some very strong opinions on the structures that are in place, and I know how important the Ryder Cup would be to both Tyrrell and Jon, so I would be surprised if they didn't figure it out.

But like I said, I don't know quite where their heads are. But of course there is a scenario, absolutely, where conceivably they might choose not to be on the team.

That would be to Europe's detriment for sure. Great players. And obviously bonded, as well. They were great together in Rome. They're a pairing. Those types of connections are powerful. They're quite difficult to recreate. Obviously we hope that we find natural pairings in the next year or that turn up in Bethpage and emerge. But if you have working partnerships, that's also a really, really important and powerful part of the team.

We hope that they can be there for sure.

**Q. You mentioned earlier the grind, the long season and so on, so forth. There aren't many weeks off really in golf these days, whether it's PGA TOUR, DP World Tour, obviously got LIV on the schedule now. Is there too much tournament golf? Seems like a crazy question, but do we need people to miss it a little bit more so they buy in and watch it and beg for it like they used to?**

JUSTIN ROSE: I think that's why we're in the predicament that we're in, because historically, or even if you looked at PGA TOUR a while back, I don't know how many tournaments, I'm going to say 45, but there were a lot of tournaments, and obviously the top players have seemed to only want to play 20 to 25 it times a year tops, but 20 seems to be -- 22 probably seems to be the magic number. Majors plus 18.

I think that's why there was an opportunity for someone, a tour, a league, a something to kind of have the concept, at least hypothetically, that the top players want to play X amount of times together, and that's why we are where we are. That's been a very hard thing to figure out, obviously, because we have different nationalities, different tours, how do you all kind of get into that position. That's why I find it -- I can't quite see what the future is in terms of us coming back together because I think you're still limited to the fact that there's only a certain amount of weeks that the top players want to play, that's going to fit their schedule. So you can create this league, that league, this tour, supplement with this, but if it accumulates to 30 tournaments, you're still going to get players choosing, no matter how much money you put up, not to play. Because ultimately you're going to look at the four majors and go, okay, I need to be fresh, ready for these; this is my preparation; you have a family component to your life. All the other factors that come into play.

That is the million -- however-many-million-dollar question that we're all trying to figure out, like what is the product and what is the best way of the top players playing together in an attractive, condensed, manageable way, not just for us but for the product itself and for the fans' attention and all of that.

But obviously outside of -- there's many facets to golf that are interesting, for sure, and men's, ladies', whatever it might be, the 52 weeks of the calendar should be used in a smart way. There should be golf going on all the time, but there's different times when the focus can be on different parts of the game.

**Q. Given all the talk of money in the game and the amount it increases year on year, if any of the four**

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**majors didn't offer prize money, do you believe that every top player would still show up and take their place in the field if eligible?**

JUSTIN ROSE: I would go, for sure. I can't speak for everybody else. If we're going to talk about 50 players, I think you'd have 48 turn up at least. That would be my sense. Like someone is going to make a weird decision or have a different view on things or whatever, or make a stand or a stance, but yeah, absolutely. I totally believe that.

**Q. The LIV Tour made overtures to the DP World Tour recently to say that they would pay all the fines of players to eliminate that part of the equation, and the European Tour was unwilling to take that on. Which means they could have eliminated the problem that you just talked about, which is basically what would be detrimental to the team. Are you aware of that, and are you in support of that?**

JUSTIN ROSE: I wasn't aware of it being so clear-cut that that was the case, honestly.

I feel like it's splitting hairs when they pay out of the money that they've already been paid or if they're going to be -- if LIV are going to pay it anyway. I feel like for me it's a cost of doing business. If you've been paid, take a portion, pay it, if that's still your objective is to play. Seems like a fairly straightforward equation to me.

Yeah, sure, it's kind of one and the same to me for the most part. That's the first I've really kind of heard that that is how it played out, so it's hard to digest it in the moment. But obviously one scenario makes it very easy for the players. There's no sacrifice for them. Maybe that's what people want is for the player to go, okay, it's on me, I understand that the rules and regulations are there to -- that's what the rules and regulations are there for. They're there to prevent everybody doing that, which is what the Tour has to do. They have to protect their interests, as well.

If it's too easy just to flit about and make decisions, go here and there, then I think that would be to the detriment of the DP World Tour. To find a common ground and a happy -- well, there's no happy medium, I suppose, but to give everybody an opportunity to support the Tour if they can and be able to clearly make the decisions that they've made to go and play golf where they want to play for huge amounts of money.

There's still a pathway to be part of the DP World Tour, and I think that that's more than fair. It's not like the PGA TOUR where you are absolutely written off. So for me, it's

a very fair stance to take.

**Q. The other thing is this time around going to Bethpage, the European team, whatever it's going to be, the focus may be a little different. The procedures may be a little different. Operationally, as well, because they've determined that what they do here is not exactly working over there. So they're going to approach it a little differently. What is the biggest hurdle, in your mind, of playing in the U.S. versus playing in Europe?**

JUSTIN ROSE: Well, I think it's the same for them, playing in Europe versus playing -- it's just home course advantage being the ultimate driver for success. In recent years, I think, really since 2008, every Ryder Cup has gone with home-course advantage except Medinah, which was a real outlier, that big comeback. For me, it's been quite -- the advantage is home course, and I think that's mainly fans, mainly crowd, mainly support and energy that's created from the crowd. I think that you can't recreate that. That's just such a powerful feeling.

Then also there's the nuance around course setup. If we look at statistically, if you look at your own stats and you look at your season, if you can make up .1, .2, .3 jump in your approach play or your driving accuracy, whatever it might be, that can actually make big difference in terms of your year. So if you can look at collectively a team and say, maybe we can tailor the course to our strengths, advantages, whatever it might be, that's kind of the detail that we're dealing with that can separate two teams.

But those are the only two factors I can think of, and I don't know how we do things radically different, to go and flip that. But all I know is that the European team -- I think Rory said it a couple -- whenever he said it, but that could be one of the biggest achievements is to go and win an away Ryder Cup, and that's obviously going to be the objective for the European team, and I think it's great that we have that opportunity first. If the Americans were coming here, that would be their objective. So it's quite nice for us to have that as an opportunity. Nothing to lose.

**Q. Justin, you and Kate have spent a lot of family time and money supporting the women's game. Can you give us a little bit of background about why you're doing that, and what your plans are for the future?**

JUSTIN ROSE: Yeah, so I think really -- I guess sort of hit me a little harder than I realised coming out of COVID. PGA TOUR got themselves up and running relatively quickly. I was back to work within three, four months, prize funds all in place, tournaments all in place, okay, no crowds, but business as usual.

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Then just took a little glance around and could see that that opportunity wasn't the same across the board. If you were to highlight anywhere, I think the Ladies European Tour was one of the schedules that was decimated, really, as sponsors had the opportunity -- they weren't sure about their own business going forward, they took the opportunity to walk or to bail out.

As a professional athlete, and obviously as a parent with a boy and a girl, you can only hope to give your child equal opportunity, and whatever their dreams are, give them the opportunity to follow their dreams. For me to have two professional athletes that work equally as hard but one has a pathway and one doesn't, it kind of just felt like that was worth supporting. I remember the term get "back to work;" we've got to get everybody back to work. It's not like you turn on the laptop and you crack on with your emails and you're back to work. As a professional athlete, I'd say especially golfer, that skill set needs nurturing daily, so to have a reason to put a scorecard in your hand, a reason to practise, that was the whole notion of the Rose Ladies Series was just to create a series of events that would help the ladies be able to have something to practise for and to put a scorecard in their hands, so hopefully when things got back up and running for real, they were going to be ready to get back to work.

Yeah, our support has kind of gone on longer than I envisioned it because I give credit to the ladies, they've really taken the support and been grateful for it, and the whole series and everything we've done has been a success because of them and the passion for their careers and taking that opportunity and keep showing up. There's been many events that are put on and created and eventually the players don't show up and the event disappears.

The credit goes to them, really, for taking the opportunity that we've tried to create, and they're still running with it. By no means are we competing with any tour or by no means is anybody going to retire on the Rose Ladies Series, but that's not the objective, but also the objective is to make sure we're going to good venues and we're kind of creating the narrative and the storytelling around the Rose Ladies Series that you start to see talent emerging.

I've become a fan of so many of the girls that are playing because I see their talent, I know their stories, so therefore I'm interested in their career, and I think that's the point. As soon as we know and can identify with an athlete, we go, wow, I didn't realise that, that's cool. Wow, they hit the ball unbelievable; this is their story or this is where they've come from, and then you go, I'm going to keep my eye out for them. The more of us that can do that, the more

interest and support we're going to give the ladies' game, I think.

There's a ton of talent out there. The Curtis Cup was unbelievable. I think that was a great showcase for the skill level out there, especially when you see them play a golf course you know so well like Sunningdale Old. There's a ton of talent, and it's fun to watch.

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