

The Ryder Cup

Tuesday, 26 September, 2023

Rome, Italy

Marco Simone

Team Europe

Jon Rahm

Press Conference

STEVE TODD: Welcome back, everyone. I'm pleased to be joined by Jon Rahm from Team Europe.

The guys are all coming in and saying how much they've been enjoying the experience so far. What's it like being back in the team room and out on the golf course?

JON RAHM: It's incredible. When you've done it a couple times, you almost know what to expect, and in a way, the sense of anticipation for the Ryder Cup, it's emphasised a little bit more just because I know and we do know what's to come this week and how much fun it's going to be.

It's been definitely special the last few weeks being at home and letting yourself think about it a little bit. It's been fun.

The greatest thing of the Ryder Cup, apart from winning, obviously, is going in that team room and seeing all these great golfers come together and really be a team and be friends and have a really special, unique bond throughout the week. It truly changes the relationship towards the future, as well, from before and after Ryder Cup. Those memories you create are going to last a lifetime, and friendships and the bonds get even stronger.

It's a lot of fun to be a part of it.

Q. Back in the early days when they started the Ryder Cup, it was all experiences and learning to enjoy each other and stuff like that, but sometime in the late '90s that changed and there's money involved where players get money towards their foundations or charities or stuff like that. My question is would you play for free?

JON RAHM: I didn't even know we got any money. I'm sorry, I really had no idea, so yeah. Me, yeah, I don't have to get paid to come here and perform in front of people, to be honest.



MARCO SIMONE
ROME, ITALY

Q. Because it is so much fun, would you pay to play?

JON RAHM: Pay for what and how much?

Q. I think it's negotiable.

JON RAHM: I mean, if there was an entry fee to be a part of a team?

Q. Yeah.

JON RAHM: Probably, yes. This week is a lot of fun, so yeah, I think as long as it's manageable for everybody on the team, because we have one that was in college like two days ago. As long as everybody on the team can -- it's okay for everybody, yeah.

It means a lot to us, and I think it would be something that I would be willing to do.

Q. The World Rankings tell us that you're one of the three best players on the European Team. Does that bring an extra responsibility in your mind?

JON RAHM: No, I was World Number One going into the last Ryder Cup, and it really didn't mean anything. I'd like to think that whatever we have done before this week and whatever we may do after this week doesn't really matter. It shouldn't really impact how we prepare for this week.

At the end of the day, it's match play, and it's all about doing the best job you can to beat the person in front of you that session, that's really it. Whatever you've done before doesn't really -- it's a different atmosphere, a different environment, so that doesn't really matter.

Q. You're well known for being a bit of a history buff when it comes to the Ryder Cup. What would you say were two, three moments historically that you would take out as especially motivating or especially important for you personally?

JON RAHM: Well, for us, you'd have to say '87 because the first time Europe won on American soil. I don't really go based always on magnitude. But obviously the '06

Ryder Cup was quite special, and with the whole influence of Darren Clarke that week made it quite a bit more special.

Then if I had to pick one more, it was when Sergio won his singles match on Sunday against Rickie to become the all-time leader on the points list for Europe. That's just really off the top of my head. I probably could come up with a lot more examples that are just as important. But that I can think of right now, it would be those three.

Q. Jon, Paul McGinley was speaking recently about the leading players in this team, and particularly yourself and Rory and your win rates. He was saying Rory has got a 50 percent win rate, you've got 56, and he was comparing that to guys like Monty, Poulter, Luke Donald himself, up in the 60s and 70s, and said you guys really need to step up on the basis of bridging the 10 points at Whistling Straits. How do you feel about your Ryder Cup record? Do you sort of share that sentiment that there needs to be a sort of step up?

JON RAHM: I'm not quite sure how to answer that. I mean, do I -- I don't think I need to do anything different to what I've done in the past, but yeah, I think it's my role to go out there and try to win as much as I can, yeah. I really don't know how to -- that's sort of implying that I haven't stepped up, so I really don't know how to answer that.

But yeah, in a sense, yeah. It's usually the leaders of a team have to go out there and show a little bit more -- exactly that, leadership, and getting those points. Yeah, I really don't know how to answer that question, sorry.

Q. I don't think it was implied as a criticism as such, but as an individual, as one of the leading players on the team, do you have an idea in your head at the start of the week as a sort of points tally --

JON RAHM: Well, hopefully I can go 5-0 or 4-0 or 3-0, however many times I play. My intention is to go out there and win every single match.

Q. But is there a sort of standard in your own mind that represents a good week, or is it if the team wins it's a good week or is it personally I need 3 --

JON RAHM: I can go 0-5 and if the team wins I'll be really happy. As long as we win, I don't care. As long as we get to 14½ points, what I do doesn't really matter.

Q. Shane was in here earlier talking about the fact that you'd watched some motivational stuff on video the last couple days. I was wondering if you could tell us

what sort of stuff you've been watching and how it made you feel.

JON RAHM: I don't know how much of that they're going to post, so that's kind of personal for us. You've got, I think, very few people in those rooms -- because we have some individual videos and some collective videos. There's very few players not shedding a few tears yesterday afternoon. I can say that.

Q. Was it former winning teams or was it family stuff?

JON RAHM: It was a lot of family related and the reason why all of us are here. I don't want to say too much more than that. But I think even for people that are related, it's going to definitely -- if you guys were to watch it, it would make you feel a lot of the same emotions we felt.

Q. You joked about Ludvig being in college a few months ago, but that was you once. You didn't play in the Ryder Cup right away, but you had this fast start to your professional career. What was the toughest part of navigating those first few months?

JON RAHM: It's weird because I don't know how much of a time off he had, but because I had certain starts and I played the U.S. Open, there wasn't like any downtime. I think we went from nationals to going back home and get ready because we're playing a U.S. Open.

In a weird way, it just seemed like almost the same, and because I played a major before I went to my first PGA TOUR event, it almost felt like not a downsize but easier in that sense, and I performed well enough in both.

It's weird to say what to get used to. I think early on it's the travel and how much you do. In college golf, you travel Saturday, Sunday is practise round, you play Monday and Tuesday, Tuesday night you're at home. Some of those PGA TOUR events you get there Sunday night or Monday, and you're playing two practise rounds or one and the pro-am and four days of tournament.

It's sort of why -- the same reason as to why Kobe blamed those air balls against Utah early in his career. It's just not being conditioned for this many games in a row. You almost have to get used to playing that much golf. And that might not come into play for him a little bit later, but that was definitely something that I had to learn early on.

Q. How is he gelling with the team?

JON RAHM: He's good. He's quiet, like I think everybody is in the first Ryder Cup. I didn't say much either. In his case, he hasn't even been a pro for that long, so a lot of us



haven't had a chance to create that relationship with him. But it's pretty incredible what he's done right out of the gates, having a great Sunday in Crans and a really strong performance in Wentworth. Clearly he has the potential.

Q. The American players have been in this room today have been asked about the fact that the American team hasn't won a Ryder Cup in Europe since 1993 and whether that's a big motivating factor for them, which I imagine it is. How much of a motivating factor is it for you and the European team to keep the home run going to make it seven in a row at home?

JON RAHM: It's a big deal. You want to stretch the streak as much as possible. Hopefully we can get into the 30s of years of Europe being undefeated here at home.

Q. You've spoken about Sergio's influence a lot. I'm just wondering whether you have called him, has he called you in the run-up to this just for advice or a bit of motivation?

JON RAHM: I did. I did talk to him and ask for advice. He did show me a lot of what to do at Whistling and obviously in Paris, as well.

But I did have a little bit of a chat with him, and with Poulter, as well. Not that it's going to be easy to take on the role that those two had both on and off the golf course, but just to hear them talk about what they thought and what they felt is obviously invaluable information.

Q. Can you say when that was? Was that last week or after Wentworth --

JON RAHM: Oh, Poulter was a little bit longer than last week. Sergio as recently as yesterday.

Q. What kind of advice and wisdom can you share with the rookies?

JON RAHM: Well, that depends on the questions that they -- what they're asking me about. It really depends. I always tell them it's very easy to really be in your mind and your feelings because you don't really know how to process a week like this so ask as many questions as you can from anybody.

There's no such thing as a stupid question. Just that curiosity is going to get you somewhere.

At the same time, I understand that they're here wanting to prove why they're here and make their mark as rookies, but there's always something to learn from some of the great players.

I don't necessarily mean golf-wise, it's just how they process, how they deal with a week like this. I think that curiosity is very, very important.

Q. Are they asking you some of the questions that perhaps you asked Sergio?

JON RAHM: No, not me, but like I said, my first Ryder Cup I didn't ask one single question. I was about as quiet as one can be. I'm very shy and introverted by nature, so everything -- the whole week seemed a little daunting at first. And you're going into a locker room where people have been sharing for 15 to 20 years, so it's very hard to -- at least it was very hard for me to fit in right away like that. A lot easier the second time, though.

STEVE TODD: Jon, thanks for your time. We wish you all the best.

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