

JP McManus Pro-Am

Tuesday, 5 July, 2022

Adare County, Limeric, Ireland

Adare Manor Golf Club

Jon Rahm

Press Conference



NEIL AHERN: It's been a long way here wait to bring the JP McManus Pro-Am to Adare Manor. How excited are you to be here, first of all, and how much of a good time are you having here?

JON RAHM: Yeah, must be 12 years, I don't know if 2010 was here or not. For me it's only been a couple years since I was told about the Pro-Am. But we were able to visit after the Irish Open in Lahinch in 2019 and I've been thinking about it since, along with The Ryder Cup.

I can't really say more or enough nice things about the venue, about JP, and about the event they have put together. The best way I can describe it is that it's special and unique. Only a unique venue and a unique individual and a unique family like the McManus family can bring so many top golfers together for a charity event like this and make us have such a good time. We feel it, the crowd out there feels it and it's what makes it so special.

A lot of us didn't know the magnitude. I had no idea there would be spectators. I had no idea there would be TV cameras. A lot of us thought it was a Pro-Am where if we were out of the hole we could just pick up the hole and go to the next. We didn't realise how serious it was until Saturday afternoon, at least my case.

So had to change a little bit of the mentality I had, but still here to have the best time we can and try to make it as enjoyable for the Amateur partners and for the spectators out there. So that was the goal yesterday, it was accomplished and hopefully I can do it again today.

NEIL AHERN: We know how much you love The Ryder Cup and this venue will host it in 2017. Can you talk about the golf course.

JON RAHM: Fazio has done an amazing redesign of the golf course. It's beautiful and this golf course can be made as easy as they want and as hard as they want, right. It's the beauty of a good challenge.

Now with that said, for a European possibly in that Ryder

Cup, they might need to spend a lot of time and resources on de-Americanising the golf course. Because right now, it would be pretty much what you would expect in a Ryder Cup in the US. Based on what I saw in Paris and what I've seen in other venues, Ryder Cup in Europe is a little different. They might spend some time and effort to do that obviously to suit our strength, right.

But we'll see. Otherwise we will have the Irish crowd, core of the crowd being Irish, supporting the European team, and we all know how the Irish can create a good after and a good time, and it will be really, really fun.

Q. If I can keep it on the Ryder Cup, given the crowds today and yesterday, can you imagine what this would be like for a Ryder Cup?

JON RAHM: Nope. All depends on how many people they are allowed to host. They can host as many as they want. They have the ability. Like I just said, I think from the times I've played the Irish Open, the Irish crowd is really, really unique. They understand the game of golf and they are thankful and their joy is infectious, you can see it here, you can see it at the Irish Open. They show up even if it's 40 degrees and blowing sideways and raining. I remember watching on TV an Irish Open in Portrush where the weather was awful and 100,000 people turned out for the week. Hopefully for The Ryder Cup where the weather is okay and you can expect a lot of people wanting to come and the atmosphere being quite electric.

Q. As applies to your game, the success you've had on links course, how much are you looking forward to these next two weeks, The Scottish Open and The Open Championship?

JON RAHM: I'm looking forward to it, right. Scottish Open being a fun event; it's a golf course that it is more towards the links side, but there's some holes that don't play like it, so you have to get used to it a little bit.

And then obviously the following week being 150th Open at St Andrews, right. I've said in numerous interviews, I don't think there's any higher honour in golf than to be able to win an Open Championship at St Andrews. No matter



what edition it is, I think it's going to be a very special one for all of us.

Q. At this stage, what challenges do you need to be making for Renaissance and the Old Course? This course isn't the ideal tune up for that,

JON RAHM: As far as links course comes, I don't know really know how you can truly get ready for St Andrews. It's so different to all of them, and it all depends on where the wind is blowing.

I think a lot of it is just getting to play the golf course enough that you've seen every possible conditions, right. So you can be lucky enough and if you tee off with the right time with the right tide and wind change, you can play every hole downwind, or you can play every hole into the wind or a mix of some nine and nine. It really depends, right. So you just have to be ready for the ever-changing environment and be ready for anything.

Obviously it's a golf course where there's plenty of pot bunkers are located. It's deceptively wide off the tee and a lot of blind tee shots, and so you just have to commit to a lot of those.

And like every links event you have to have control over the golf ball and trajectory and just keep it on the ground and be able to understand the nuances of the greens and the fairways.

I don't know if you can quite do it at the Renaissance because at least last year, it wasn't as firm, at fast and as most links are but you can get an idea around the greens and on the greens to get ready for next week.

Q. You mentioned obviously the evocative nature of St Andrews. When did you first discover the magic of the Home of Golf? When were you first aware of it?

JON RAHM: Oh, I can't really exactly remember. In person, I didn't get to play it until 2018, I believe. So it's a bit later in my career and I was very, very, very excited. And it was only when I got to play it to where I understood a lot of the videos I had seen and a lot of the comments I had heard, right. That's why you hear about the winds, and you don't truly understand until you truly see it.

But being aware of where you are, that first tee and what it is, and what it represents, I've been aware of it my whole life. Being able to experience it in person is very different and to be able to do it in an Open I bet is going to be a lot more impactful.

Q. Obviously this will be host for a Ryder Cup as you

said, and the next Ryder Cup Henrik Stenson will be the captain. What do you expect of him as a captain?

JON RAHM: Well, he's been a player and vice captain the last Ryder Cups I've been a part of, and he's done a great job both as a player and vice captain.

He actually walked with me and Sergio and with me and Tyrrell pretty much every match we played, he was with us. He's somebody that can give you, with his dry humour, he can give you just the moment the little laugh you may need to keep it going; at the same time being really intense about what we are doing.

I remember when me and Sergio lost 1, 2 and 3 to Brooks and Berger, I don't exactly remember what he said, but he was making some jokes and me and Sergio laughed and that was kind of the beginning of the comeback, right.

I expect a good captaincy from him. He's someone who takes things very serious, he's focused about it and I expect it to be a really wonderful experience.

Q. One of his vice captains, Thomas Björn, he was captain for your first Ryder Cup. What was it he was good at for you?

JON RAHM: It was my first experience so I didn't know what to expect, but asking other players, they said he's one of the best captains they have had.

I wouldn't know what to tell you, it was my first time, so a lot of it was trying to, you know, keep my excitement within me and try to not be, obviously, energetic when we are playing out on the golf course and out of myself, right. I spent a lot more time thinking of what I had to do especially when I found out Saturday afternoon I was playing Tiger, I don't think I remember talking to anybody after that.

So based on what I saw, he did a wonderful job. One of the best things is that Connor's impersonation press conference that he did for the team. We are all expecting a very motivational video, and here comes five minutes of pure jokes to kind of bring the intensity down and relax all of us a little bit, right. I think that was a genius move on his part.

Now there's a lot of things that a captain does for two years before we get to that week that are important and I think he did a lot of right choices that week, the whole two years to get the team as prepared as possible. With Thomas being a vice captain, Henrik is going to do a great job.

Q. You had a great win in the Irish Open in Portstewart and great win in Lahinch; you wanted to defend but



COVID got in the way. When are you going to come back and try and win it for the third time and match Seve and Faldo and Langer and Faldo and what date would suit you?

JON RAHM: Faldo won three? I didn't know. It's tough to say. Now the scheduling and family now is getting a bit more in the way. I want to come back. I definitely want to come back. I can't tell you, I mean, I don't know what I'm going to do after the Playoffs, really, let alone what I'm going to be doing next summer.

Q. But you're keen to come?

JON RAHM: Yeah, I love playing in Ireland. I will be back some day.

Q. The golf course superintendent here in Adare, Alan MacDonnell, has produced an incredible golf course in incredible conditions. How would you compare the playability of the greens here to the best courses you play on?

JON RAHM: The playability, or the condition?

Q. The playability of the greens.

JON RAHM: Well, I mean, the course is in fantastic shape. We don't really see golf courses like this throughout the year, truly impressive and for how much traffic they got yesterday, it still held up. It's not only beautiful to look at, it plays great. That's the beautiful as expect of it. The greens are tricky. There's a lot of run-offs but still fair, right.

So it's really, really enjoyable. They have done an amazing job and the superintendent should be happy because this is something that we don't see every day.

NEIL AHERN: Thank you very much, Jon, have a great day.

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