

PGA Championship

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Quail Hollow Club

Jon Rahm

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Jon Rahm is with us now at the 107th PGA Championship. Jon, welcome to Quail Hollow in what is your ninth PGA Championship. How are you feeling about your game coming into this week?

JON RAHM: I can't believe I'm almost at a decade in majors. It goes by fast, that's all I can say.

Feeling good. Feeling very good. I've been playing good all year. Maybe not as great as I would like. I feel like there's some avoidable mistakes out there. But if you keep knocking out top 10s not having your best, I think it's still pretty good.

I can see my game going towards those improvements, so very hopeful. Very happy to be here. This property is absolutely amazing. This golf course is amazing. Even though we've had some rain, the greens somehow stayed firm. I'm sure they'll get them lightning fast for the week.

Excited for it. It's a great test of golf and a really fun one as well.

Q. You mentioned it's been a decade of majors almost. What do you know now that you didn't know when you started out?

JON RAHM: Hard to just give you one thing. I feel like -- the main thing is I think you hear people say this somewhat often, but until you actually see it or experience it, it doesn't really make a lot of sense.

You always feel like, to win a major, you have to play perfect, which is not true. I remember the R&A did this 20-minute documentary with Open champions, and Padraig Harrington said -- I think it was in Muirfield in '02 when he played about as good as he could play and didn't win, and at that point he thought he had to get lucky to win a major championship.

I think that's a little part of it, but at the end of the day, a lot of it is keep playing golf, keep playing solid good golf, and take advantage of the good stretches you're going to have

throughout the week. But by any means you don't have to play perfect.

It's funny, a few times I've gone back and seen reruns of some my rounds on both Sundays. Especially the one at the U.S. Open, I thought I played so good. I didn't realize how many fairways I missed and how many shots that I considered that weren't good, but did all the things right to minimize the damage, right?

It's funny, nine, ten years ago I was thinking I had to play my absolute best in every aspect of the game, and I think if anything, you just have to have full faith in all aspects of your game and just learn how to manage the golf course that week.

Q. Obviously you've had a good year, as you said, a lot of top 10s, but you haven't won. Is that more towards something in regards to your swing, or is that more a mental issue?

JON RAHM: Both of them can be so combined in so many different scenarios, right? I think it's a bit of both. I think sometimes it's been bad swings, and I think sometimes could be bad process or maybe just bad decisions.

I can't say overall it's been one or the other. It's just mistakes that either way can be avoided because, at the end of the day, any bad swing essentially comes from possibly a bad mindset at the moment. So it's a hard question to answer definitively.

Q. Just to get into coming here then, if you were working on anything, what would it be that you're working on to try to be successful this week?

JON RAHM: I think a lot of it is so circumstantial, right? Based on the course, the shot, the conditions. If I had to say I'm working on something more, it's that I'm slightly trying to get some bad habits out of the swing.

But again, I'm seeing the progress on it and how much better it's feeling every day. If I had to put more thought on one right now, it would be more on the swing -- not that it's much, though. Dave always likes to say that he has to find

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about 40 different ways to tell me the same three things about my swing because it's usually fairly consistent. It's just sometimes a different way of hearing and feeling something to accomplish the same thing.

Q. Looking at the four major parts of the game - the drive, approach, around the green, putting - if you were forced to switch out one of those with any current player, what part would it be, and who's the player you would choose to switch out for?

JON RAHM: That would absolutely depend on the golf course and the conditions we're having.

Q. How about this week?

JON RAHM: Oh, my God. Based on the success he's had here, you almost have to go with some part of Rory's game. He's done incredible here, and it's because he's good at everything obviously.

I think the obvious answer for a lot of people probably would say his driving on this golf course, but I think, as a pretty good driver myself, I'm going to choose how well he's been able to putt on those greens.

I would also say if I had to go with somebody who was maybe statistically a better putter, it's hard to go with somebody other than Xander, especially in recent years. I mean, I can rifle off about 10 different players, Scottie's iron game or quite a few other guys about their wedge game.

If I have to go pick one, just because he's done so well here, I'm going to say how well Rory has done here, maybe on the greens and around the greens.

Q. If I could follow up and say what if that scenario was for your career? Even though it changes course to course, pick one and ride with it every tournament.

JON RAHM: My career?

Q. I'm saying if you had to answer that question for everything. You just have to take it everywhere.

JON RAHM: That's such a hard question. There's just too many players that come to mind.

At this point, obviously, you have to go with all-time greats. You've got to think of Jack, Ben Hogan, Tiger. For me, it's hard to go away from Tiger. If it's not someone like Phil or Seve's short game and shot creation, it would have to be -- not that Tiger's not good in the short game, but it would have to be Tiger's putting, especially clutch putting.

Q. You've only had a couple of looks at Quail Hollow, I think, in your career. Tyrrell finished T3 two years ago here. Just curious if you guys chatted at all about the course. Do you guys chat much about these kinds of things, especially in majors?

JON RAHM: No, not about this one, we haven't. I actually haven't talked a lot to a lot of people. I've watched some highlights.

The course has changed so much. If you go back a decade, it's a completely different golf course. They've also added some new tees the last few years. I heard there's a new tee on 9 as well, so that changes things a little bit.

It's always hard to get an idea, but no, I haven't spoken to Tyrrell about it. Plus, as difficult as they could set it up for the Wells Fargo Championship in the past, for majors it's a whole different story. I would suspect that it will be a more difficult setup this week.

Q. You mentioned the Padraig Harrington Open Championship video. Have you watched all of those?

JON RAHM: Yeah -- I think.

Q. Do you have a favorite one?

JON RAHM: I haven't recently, so I don't know. If they've added a few, I haven't.

I just think it's really cool to hear the stories from the older generations. A few of the more active ones, I've been able to speak to about it, like Phil. A lot of what he says on that video, I've actually spoken to him about it and I got direct from him.

I think it's really cool to watch Lee Trevino's. His story-telling ability is up there, so that makes it really entertaining.

Q. I was just curious if you have a favorite takeaway that you've taken from that kind of studying?

JON RAHM: What I mentioned about Padraig, you get an insight into this player's mind. It's not always going to be applicable to what you have in mind, but you get to see how they thought. There's always certain things they say in certain moments that's quite interesting.

I forget, I think it might have been the '05 Open in St Andrews where Tiger said, oh, whoever plays 7 through 12 the best is going to win the major. I thought it was quite



interesting to hear something like that, where you still have 13 through 18 where with the wrong wind are the harder holes. It was interesting to hear something like that.

One of the years, I forget the year, Lee speaks about getting ready for the Open in Texas. It was so windy and the dust and he was wearing goggles, and they get to the tournament site, and it was dead calm for four days. It's just things you can't really prepare for.

One of the best ones that's helped me was Jack when he won at Muirfield, how he says -- I think he was one back or -- I forget the actual details on that. But he says how he had three holes left, and he thought to himself, if I finish 4, 3, 4, which would have been birdie, par, par, you win the Open. He finishes 4, 3, 4 and wins the Open. I thought that was quite interesting.

I've thought about something like that in the past as well for myself. Going down the stretch or whatever it may be, if we get this, we win. I think I told Tyrrell -- I think I told Tyrrell that on the Ryder Cup. I think we were playing Xander and Patrick, and we were all square on 16. I told him 3, 3, 4, we don't lose. Luckily we went 3, 2, and we ended up winning.

I've definitely used that in the past, just kind of setting the target out there in your mind, and it's helped. It's not something that I thought anything of when I heard it, but then when I was on the course, it was a nice memory to have and to remember.

Q. Jon, can you explain to us why Spaniards so often seem to be the heartbeat of the European team -- Seve, Ollie, and so on, and you. Secondly, has Luke said to you you're in my team anyway?

JON RAHM: That's a question for Luke. It's his team. Hopefully I can qualify, and we don't have to question it.

I would like to think that personally I am, but it's not up to me. Now, when it comes to being the core of the team or the heartbeat of the team, it all starts with Seve. We all look to him. I think he was such a unique charisma in the world of golf and sports that I think he set that baseline to -- but then Sergio and all the others have followed.

I wouldn't know exactly why because we're all extremely different in character, but if I had to take a guess, it's possibly the passion we play this game with and the emotion that we bring into it. Not that we're the only ones, but again, I think it's just kind of we all get that from what Seve did.

Q. Can I just pick up on the first answer? You said

that's a question for Luke, but my question was to you.

JON RAHM: I know.

Q. Has he said to you, don't worry, you're in, in effect?

JON RAHM: You'd have to ask Luke that question. It's not up to me to say.

Q. You won't tell me whether he has?

JON RAHM: I'm not going to say anything about that, no. Again, that's a question for Luke, the captain.

Q. There's a lot of talk about Career Grand Slams with Rory having done it, Jordan's got a chance this week. In your 20s, you got halfway there. Is that something that you think about? Is that a goal that you have?

JON RAHM: Yeah, of course. What is it, six people now in history that have been able to do it? Yeah. I would love to do it. Obviously it's not easy.

I think obviously it would be a lot more on my mind if I were to win a third different one, kind of like Jordan has been able to do, but as in right now, if I ever had a thought, I'll focus more on quantity of majors rather than which ones obviously, in the sense of let's say I never achieve it, I'd rather have a situation like Sir Nick Faldo where he has six of two of them instead of having maybe three different ones, if that makes sense.

Now, if you get all four of them, and if you won each one once, I think it's so significant that you might take that over six. But as in right now, I'd rather just think more about number three, and if it happens to be The Open or the PGA, then I'll focus on a possible Grand Slam. But as of right now, I don't want to think about it too much.

But of course, I think it's a goal for all of us who play the game.

Q. You spent so much time around Rory on TOUR and in Ryder Cups; did you ever doubt that he was going to do it?

JON RAHM: No. To be honest, if that Masters in '11 had gone his way, I think he would have achieved so much more than he has already. I think it's been a very difficult hurdle to overcome, and you could see his emotion towards the end just because his real first chance to win a major, how it went down.

I understand he won the U.S. Open shortly after by a record margin, but every time he went to Augusta, that was



on his mind. It's funny to me, when you see Rory's game, every time I went down to Augusta National, I'm like, if there's ever a golf course that is perfect for this man who can hit a high draw on command better than anybody else, has great hands and great touch, it's him.

He's had so many chances. It's just, it's never easy. It's very difficult. I would not be one bit surprised if this lifted a weight off his shoulders that could get him going on another run, a bit like Xander did last year. Wins one, gets another one, gets in contention many times, like Scottie and many other players have done. A player of his caliber, you never know.

Q. Jon, given the high skill set you have in this game, this is the one major that you really haven't given yourself a good chance within the last like back nine. Is that just, do you think, coincidence? Secondly, does this major require or ask anything of you differently than the other three?

JON RAHM: I'm aware it's been probably the one I haven't been my best at. I think my best finish was Bellerive, I think. I think it's possibly because of the versatility and variability of this event.

When you go to Augusta, you know what you're getting. Same course every year too. The U.S. Open, nine out of ten times, you know what you're getting depending on weather. Same with The Open, right? It will be firmer or less, but you know what you're getting.

It's this championship that we change venues and drastically change the way we set it up, like the way a Southern Hills might play to the way this week might play to the way a Bethpage might play. They're all drastically different. So it's quite possibly the difference, which is more about, okay, your game needs to be a very high level as opposed to possibly the other three that you can adjust a little bit more knowing what's coming.

At that point, that's a bit of speculation. I think it's more coincidence that I haven't played good.

Q. So in a way, the fact that this major doesn't really have an identity is its identity?

JON RAHM: Yeah, you get different things every time you come. It's very difficult to say that two of them are the same. You can have somewhere you go into a playoff at 5-under and then last year where 21-under wins it. A Whistling Straits, what did he shoot, 19-, 18-under -- no, he got to 20. Yeah, he got to 20 because Jordan was 17.

Jason got to 20 at Whistling Straits, which even in a Ryder

Cup setup, I wouldn't in a million years think anyone would get to 20-under there. It's quite interesting. Then you have a Bethpage where you have single digits again.

U.S. Opens, for the most part, you know what you're getting and so on. It definitely has a character of having that different character each time you come.

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