



Jon Rahm

Press Conference

Tuesday, April 8, 2025

THE MODERATOR: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, and buenos días, damas y caballeros. We're pleased to be joined in the interview room by the 2023 Masters champion, Jon Rahm. Welcome back to Augusta National.

With Carla Bernat Escuder's win at the Augusta National Women's Amateur, there are now five Spanish champions at Augusta. What is it that you think inspires such incredible play by the Spanish players? Is it the course, the tournament? We'd love your thoughts.

JON RAHM: It's such a hard answer. I think the main inspiration for all of us is simply one man, and that's Seve. I think what he did early on winning here as a 23-year-old, being the first European to win and being able to do it multiple times, I think kind of set something special for Spanish players, and then Ollie quickly after followed that.

I think it all started with Seve.

At the same time, for the most part, Spanish players being known for being rather creative with good short games, I think that's usually a recipe that works really well at Augusta National, and there's no surprise that there's now five champions here.

Q. I hear you have a good foursome this afternoon, too, perhaps.

JON RAHM: Yeah, full Spanish four-ball with Ollie, Sergio, Josele -- that's the U.S. Am champ -- and myself. Quite special to be able to share the stage with two past champions, with Ollie, which I spent basically two and a half hours asking Ollie to tell us stories because he has a story for every tree that's been on property and shots that he's seen and things like that, same with Sergio.

And obviously try to make it something special for Josele, as well, which for him to win -- he might be the only man to ever win the European Am and the U.S. Am. Certainly to be the first Spanish player to win the U.S. Am is quite an incredible achievement. So I'm looking forward to sharing the stage with him today.

Q. How are you feeling this year compared to entering majors season last year?

JON RAHM: Feeling good. Feeling very good. Not my favorite major season last year, that's true. Didn't play great here, didn't play great at the PGA, and wasn't even able to tee it up at the U.S. Open. I was very happy to finish up there at The Open on a very challenging week. At least set the tone hopefully for this year, and feel like I'm playing much better golf coming into this week.

Playing at Doral last week was extremely challenging. It was definitely one of the hardest setups I've played. And besides one bad score on 17 on Sunday, which was actually one of the better swings of the week that led to a very bad number, I feel really good. I feel like I played better than obviously the score reflects, but at the end of the day, it's golf. Feeling really, really good about this year in general.

Q. There's only been one player who's been outside the top 10 after the opening round this century that's gone on to win, and it was Tiger twice, 2005 and in 2019. Do you have any idea why it's imperative to be fairly close, not after 36 holes, after just one day?

JON RAHM: Give me a second because I've never given that really any thought. I wouldn't have any well-thought-out theories just besides the fact that it's major championship golf and you have the best players in the world. So at least 10 or more of them are going to put in four really good days in a row.

So I think it's just the sheer amount of talent in the field and people playing well. It's just hard to catch up when somebody starts strong and can keep it going strong for the rest of the tournament.

Q. You're a student of golf history. How much time do you spend considering your own place in that history?

JON RAHM: Not at all yet. Hopefully later in my career I might think about that. But it doesn't really come to mind where I might be in that place now. I feel like it would be a little egotistical to be thinking about that this early in my career.

Hopefully I can accomplish a lot more and make an argument to put myself as somebody worth remembering, at least, even if it's just in Spanish golf, which I certainly have a case, but hopefully I can further that case.

Q. Do you set targets for yourself, though? Do you say I would like to get to this point by this age, that sort of thing?

JON RAHM: No, no. I don't put a time limit. I have long-term goals, and then I'm somebody that renews -- I do a yearly thing towards the end of the year, so November, December, whatever are the goals for the next year. I like keeping them fresh instead of just saying I want to win X amount of things by or in the next five years.

I don't know, I feel like I perform better and I go with a more clear mindset to face the year if I do that exercise of closing the page on the year before and start a new one for the following year.

Q. You're obviously friends with some other professional athletes. You see how much criticism they have to handle from the media or social media even. There's a narrative that golfers can be a little more sensitive when it comes to handling that stuff. I'm wondering if you think that's a fair or unfair assessment.

JON RAHM: It's different because a lot of times, mainly team sports, there are rivalries that are going to be created, and obviously opposite fan bases are going to be a lot tougher on certain players, especially the bigger ones.

In golf, it doesn't certainly ever feel like it's going to get too personal. I think you need to get to a place in the world of golf high enough to then earn the right for people to criticize you in that way. It takes a long time to get there and start seeing that criticism.

As a whole, I don't know if it would be more or less sensitive than other players. I would say that we probably see it less. Therefore it could be that we're a little less used to it. But I couldn't tell you.

Q. This is a pretty special week because of where we are and what you're playing for, but it's also the first time in eight or nine months that all the best players are together again. Does that add to what's important already, and is there any part of you that's concerned that a solution doesn't seem to be anywhere on the horizon?

JON RAHM: I don't think you need to do anything to make the Masters any more special than it already is. Coming here, there's no added anything to that. Majors have always been aside from every event in the world, and when you come to one of those, it doesn't feel any different to what it was before or anything like that.

There's no extra or added anything into the week as there was three, four, five years ago because they're so special in their own right.

Q. Any part of you that's concerned about no solution in sight in terms of getting all the best together more often?

JON RAHM: I mean, I think we all would like to see that. But as far as I can tell and you guys can tell, it's not happening anytime soon. I haven't spent a lot of time thinking about that, especially having a week like this one. I think all of our concerns should be on this week, and things outside of that we can let ourselves think about outside this week.

Q. Jon, you mentioned Seve's legacy. Obviously it's huge. How big was it that he not only won once but twice here?

JON RAHM: Very big. And how he did it, as well. His first win having such a massive lead and started hitting balls in the water because he could just afford to do so apparently, and his second win sharing the stage with Tom Watson and chipping in for par on 18.

Everything he did had a flair, and all the other great performances after that. I think, that I can remember, lost in a playoff once and had a chance to win -- obviously '86 being one of the painful years for Spanish golf but a great year for golf in general.

There's a reason why it's said I believe Spanish golfers have done so well here. I think he set that essence, and it can't be a coincidence that the last two Spanish players to win it both won it on what would have been Seve's birthday. There's definitely something here going on with him and with all of us, and I think it's something we can all feel.

Q. I asked Tiger Woods once what he saw on this course when he played it once when he was in the zone, did he notice all the colors and the beauty or what did he see, and he said basically in the zone he just saw targets. When you're in the zone playing here, what do you see?

JON RAHM: I would give you a pretty similar answer. It's a golf course that you need to think a lot about where you're putting the ball off the tee and on the green. What I believe he's referring to is exactly where on the fairway does he want to be to then attack that pin the best possible.

It's pretty much the same based on the weather conditions, the wind and the setup of the golf course. You're thinking about where to put the ball to give yourself the best chance to make a par, hopefully a birdie.

Definitely not caught up on the flowers or the beauty of the golf course or anything like that. It's just focus ahead, and hopefully you can enjoy the walk up 18.

But yeah, besides that, the time to think about all of that is today and tomorrow. That's when you're thinking, okay, look at the flowers, look at this, look at that, the atmosphere and everything, and you see how special this property truly is.

But in competition, not really.

Q. How do you handle the expectations and all the pressure? Is it a work in progress? Do you get better handling that with age?

JON RAHM: I feel like my expectations, the pressure I put on myself has always been pretty high. I would say my first few majors when I turned pro, I don't think I handled it at my best. I think wanting to win so bad to where I wanted to control everything a little bit too much, and it took me a few years to learn that I've just got to go out there and play and let it happen.

I think a lot of it changed once I was able to win my first major. There's definitely a before and after when you go to a major knowing you've done it already and you know what the formula is. Especially in my case having had COVID the weeks leading up to it and not being able to practice, and showing up to the U.S. Open having done nothing for the first 10 days prior to it and ended up winning. I think it put a lot of things in perspective in my mind, knowing that I don't need to overthink it, in that sense.

It's a balancing act, depending on where you are in your life, but I definitely think each year I get better at it.

Q. How noticeable are the loss of trees due to the hurricane from a year ago, and has that affected your sight line either off the tee or approaching the greens?

JON RAHM: I wish we would have been able to play yesterday because I would have been able to give you a much better answer. The only time I've seen a difference is down Magnolia Lane so far. I have heard a few things. I'm not going to say who. Somebody did tell me you can hit a high cut over the cabins on 10. I don't believe it. (Laughter).

I don't see there's a chance where so many trees fell where that's a possibility. And after I said this, I'm pretty sure there might be a tree right there next to the tee tomorrow morning. (Laughter.)

The one thing I have heard from members is if you've been there before, you can tell there's a difference. When you're looking down the property, you can see a little bit further down. It doesn't necessarily play significantly different, but visually there is a change.

Q. Just to follow up on that, in the lead-up to the Masters Tournament, how many times, if at all, do you come to Augusta National to practice and get some preparation in?

JON RAHM: So this is my ninth appearance. Out of those nine, seven I came early to practice, this being the second time that I haven't come early, and the other time was '23 where I ended up winning. It doesn't really say much, I would say. But I've enjoyed coming for a few days with a good friend of mine, a member, and just get to play the golf course a little bit.

I think a lot of it in my mind is if they made any changes to the golf course, they usually are minimal. But there's a few years when they changed 5, I think a lot of people wanted to come early to see it. There's always subtle changes on the greens that you can't tell on TV that we can. You can see in person. If you're not on the green, you can't tell.

There's little changes like that. But sometimes a lot of people want to come early to adjust to it, but I think it all depends on the flow and the schedule. I feel like this year with the third child and other things in the schedule for the year, I didn't have the time to come, at least when the weather was good enough. Coming here in January when it's 40 and raining might not be the best experience. I haven't been able to this year. But it's something that I try to do.

Q. Not a superstition thing?

JON RAHM: No, God no. It just worked out that way. No, if I win this year, then I definitely won't come again early.

Q. Getting back to the Spanish theme, have you played with Josele, and can you describe his game or any advice you've given him?

JON RAHM: I've played quite a bit with Josele at ASU, and he's really, really close with David Puig, who I spend a lot of time with, all three of us being ASU players.

Hard to describe his game anywhere but extremely powerful. You've got a player that has 190 ball speed when he rolls out of bed in the morning. With two parents that are Olympians, he's got all the athletic genes that he needs to succeed in the game and a lot of talent. He's a very, very good player.

At the end of the day, it becomes a game of can you mentally handle it and can you take advantage of the opportunity when you receive it. He's got plenty of game, plenty of talent and plenty of distance to be in this game for a very long time.

And I can't stress this enough: He's a wonderful man. He's extremely kind, very empathetic, which is really interesting to see for a 20-year-old in college. Definitely somebody that's really fun to be around. A very fun guy to play with.

Q. As somebody like yourself who's made a run up the rankings to the top, what is your appreciation for what Scottie has been doing and his sustainability and staying power?

JON RAHM: It's always a debate, right, is it harder to get there or stay there, and staying there is a lot harder than getting there, I would say. What we've seen Scottie do over the last three, four years is quite impressive. His ball-striking level is outstanding. Anytime you have a year where you're being compared to Tiger in his prime, I don't think I need to add anything else to that. Winning nine times, winning majors, winning FedExCups and just all-out being the best throughout the season is quite incredible.

That I can remember, the only three players that have won nine times in a calendar year in a very long time have been Scottie, Vijay and Tiger. That's a very short list.

Q. Last year was a year of change for you, and I imagine that means different kinds of questions your way, different kinds of attention. I'm curious, looking back on last year if there was a mental challenge of handling kind of all of that when you show up to majors each week?

JON RAHM: I mean, it's a change, yeah. There was a few times where there was a lot of questions that I didn't really have an answer to, and I tried to, and I just really didn't. Kind of like the one Doug asked earlier, the state of the game and what's happening. We don't know. No one knows. We all want a solution, and it's hard to give one.

When it comes to this week, last year for me was tough because it was the first major after joining LIV and I was also defending, so there was a lot going on that week, a lot of new things, new locker room, having the Champions Dinner. It was a lot to adjust to.

But yeah, and just a little bit of possible negative comments that you might hear throughout the year, a few more questions maybe trying to get me in a tough spot. But nothing different to what he mentioned earlier. Nothing different to what many other athletes deal with on a daily basis. If you ever see press conferences that LeBron James gives, it just feels like they're out to get him every single day. I don't envy him one bit in that regard.

But no, not that big a change in that part. I think a lot of it was more internal in my case than external.

Q. There's a lot of pressure on your time when you're at the Masters. How do you schedule your Tuesday, Wednesday to help yourself prepare as best you can for Thursday?

JON RAHM: Wednesday depends a lot on what time you can get a par-3 tee time and then what tee time you have on Thursday. I think a lot of us try to go earlier so we can enjoy that afternoon with the family and then be able to rest to start the tournament on Thursday. And then Monday and Tuesday depends on the weather and what time you get here, et cetera, et cetera.

It's not very difficult to schedule yourself. You only have -- I think it's around 90 players this year. There's not a full field like it would be in a U.S. Open or an Open where you have 150. It's a lot easier to get a tee time whenever you need to.

It really is on a need to know or a need to -- that wouldn't be the right way to say it -- kind of work around your media obligations and other possible obligations you may have. But as far as that goes this week, there's not a lot of them.

Q. You said earlier that you feel you're playing better this year, and you just alluded to the fact that you seem more at ease this year with some of the things that went on last year. Tell me a little bit about why you feel your game is in a better place this year and also if, from a mental standpoint, you feel more relaxed coming in.

JON RAHM: Talking about the state of my game, I think it's more a technical answer of swing aspect that I'm not going to get really into because we could be here for a while if I were to give you a detailed explanation.

I would just say last year I was able to score really well. Never really felt 100 percent comfortable with my game throughout, and that's possibly why on the bigger stages when it was difficult, like here or the PGA, I didn't play my best golf.

My mental state, I think a lot of it, 99 percent of it comes from how good my life is at home. We're very lucky to have three beautiful children and a perfectly healthy family. I have no reason to wake up in the morning and not smile. That goes a very long way when it comes to a week like this when I can share the house with them. That being another one; they hadn't traveled with me since the PGA last year due to some pregnancy complications Kelley had and having to be on bed rest.

So just having them with me again this week and last week is something that's going to make me smile throughout. Probably the main reason why I'm going to feel, obviously, a lot happier this week.

Q. I kind of know where you are in the Official World Golf Rankings, but where do you feel you rank in the world of golf right now?

JON RAHM: Where am I in the world rankings at this point? Am I out of the top 100 yet?

Q. I think you're still in the top 100.

JON RAHM: A couple weeks to go and I'll be gone. I mean, I'm not going to say exactly a number, but I would still undoubtedly consider myself a top-10 player in the world. But it's hard to tell nowadays.

Q. You've been in the top 10 in every LIV event. Can you put into terms what that really means?

JON RAHM: I don't know how to say anything else. Consistency is something that I've always prided myself on. I think last year the state of my game was being unfairly judged based on how I played here and at the PGA compared to how I really played throughout the whole year.

While I understand why, I don't think it was the most fair state of my game. It's something -- top 10 statistics is something I've always prided myself on. Right before joining LIV, I think I was still close to 50 percent worldwide in all my starts finishing top 10, which is something I pride myself on, and to keep it going that way is not easy.

Now, I would say I would definitely trade a few of those -- take a few of them away and hopefully add a couple more W's. That would be nice because not in all of them I had a chance to win, and at the end of the day, that's a goal.