

# LIV Golf Chicago

Saturday, 14 September, 2024

Chicago, Illinois, USA

Bolingbrook Golf Club

## Jon Rahm

Legion XIII

## Ian Poulter

Majesticks GC

Press Conference

JON RAHM: It's funny, earlier this week I was asked what was my best round of the year, and I said I think my starting round at JCB. And today is probably, if not tied for first it's a close second.

On paper this golf course should be fairly easy, but with the firmness of the fairways, the firmness of the greens and the wind, it can show a lot of teeth and things can go sideways very quick. To shoot a bogey-free 6-under where the longest par putt I had was maybe four or five feet, it was an extremely good round of golf.

Played very, very well. Hit it very long off the tee, and that's what facilitated me having so many chances, and then took advantage of some of the ones that I had, probably highlighted by the long putt on 17. That was turning a good par hopefully into a great birdie.

**Q. I asked Sergio the same question, he also had a bogey-free round. Can you explain how difficult it is to shoot a bogey-free round out here?**

JON RAHM: Well, hitting the fairway aside, which is no easy task on a lot of holes, you have small undulated greens where it's very easy to run off the green by just a little bit, and you go from fairway to small semi-rough to thick rough, and those lies, those chips sometimes, that can be side slopes or even downhill from maybe five yards off the pin are very, very tricky, because you need to be aggressive and get a good strike to get through the ball, but the ball can't run out. The lies aren't easy.

It's what makes it so complicated.

Now, if you miss the fairway, hitting the green is a very tough task, so you're already on the defensive.

Again, it's a lot harder than it probably would look on paper. I didn't foresee scores being as high as they have been so



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far, but it was quite soft Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday. Seeing the firmness, it's a tough test.

**Q. Ian, you shot two rounds of 2-under par, puts you at 4-under par, you're currently T4. Tell us about the last two days and how you've been --**

IAN POULTER: You sound really surprised.

**Q. I told people that the last conversation I had with you was about manifesting a win and then here you are.**

IAN POULTER: It's really nice to be up here with a lovely backdrop and sitting next to Jon. It feels quite good.

I've played good. It was a funny day yesterday. 10 minutes before teeing off, my driver broke on the range. Sent James back in to find my backup driver. And brand new putter in the bag this week, worked really hard over the last three weeks in Orlando. I'm actually seeing a little bit of results, which is really nice.

Not to say I haven't been working really hard in all the other three years, but it's nice.

This is a tricky golf course, and Jon alluded to it. It's not easy to hit the greens sometimes, especially if you're out of position, and when you miss a couple of these greens by a foot or two feet or three feet, you're left there kind of scratching your head trying to work out how you want to play the shot, what's the right technique to play. The grass is laying down, it's laying against you. It's pretty stressful.

But it's nice to roll a few putts in. It's nice to finally have a look at a leaderboard and seeing yourself up this end, which is refreshing?

**Q. Do you think this course suits your game?**

IAN POULTER: Look, there's a lot of golf courses that we play that really do suit my game. Valderrama, Hong Kong, Singapore, I've won on all those courses, so that should suit my game.

But we haven't had the results.



Look, I'm happy where I'm at. I'm happy I'm swinging it, I feel like I'm swinging it probably the best I've swung it in a very long time. The putter feels good, and that's a great feeling, to hole putts week in, week out. It doesn't always happen. But it's nice this week they're going in?

**Q. You're going to be chasing down Jon, Brooks and then Sergio, who obviously has been in incredible form tomorrow --**

IAN POULTER: Awesome, let's go. The old man has still got some life left. Let's see what we can do.

It's not going to be easy. These boys are good. But we've got a chance. Majesticks GC are in position. Again, we're higher up the order than what we have been for a while, so I think it's exciting for all of us.

This golf course will show its teeth tomorrow. I think with four scores to count tomorrow, it's going to be hard.

You're going to get guys that can move all the way forward, and we're right there in position, so hopefully the four of us can put some heat on these boys.

**Q. Are you going to live up to your nickname, the Postman, tomorrow? Are you going to deliver?**

IAN POULTER: Look, I feel good about my game. I feel good the work I've done. It's just nice to be up this end of the leaderboard. It's nice to compete and have the adrenaline going, and tomorrow will be another one of those great days?

**Q. Jon, obviously tomorrow is a huge day for you. You're fighting for that first position in the individual championship. Joaquín had a good day. He's right on your tail. How much nerves are there for you and are you thinking about it as you're standing over every putt?**

JON RAHM: Listen, it's something -- one, it's aware of. As much as you try, it's not really going to skip your mind because there's constant reminders from pretty much everywhere what the situation is.

The overall standing is a complete correlation to what you do on the golf course. It's a straight consequence of how you perform. That's what I've got to remind myself and keep remembering, we're here to win a championship.

I want to get my second individual win of the year, and if I play well and accomplish that, I'll leave no room for error in that sense.

My goal is to win tomorrow and play the best I can.

Obviously the scenarios, if we go down 18 and I can't win the tournament for whatever reason but I'm still in a fight with Joaco, great. But what's going to be the best way for me to enjoy the last few holes is if I have a really good Sunday and take a comfortable lead hopefully going into the last few holes so I can smile on that stretch through it.

But otherwise it's going to be a really fun day no matter what. Looking forward to it because that's what we work for all year.

**Q. That razor's edge between you and Joaquín, does that put more on the line and make you fight harder?**

JON RAHM: It's more exciting for everyone else. Yeah, I mean, it's a championship within a championship. It's a weird combination, but yeah, you're definitely aware of it every step of the way, especially having played with him the first two rounds.

The leaderboards are very large, and in the large majority of them you can see my info, Joaquín's info and then the leaderboard.

It's something that definitely stays in mind and definitely makes it exciting.

I think we've both had a lot of fun. Probably I had a little bit more fun today than he did, but he's a fantastic player, and tomorrow should be a really fun day.

**Q. Did you get to see a replay of Tyrrell's hole-in-one yet?**

JON RAHM: He made a hole-in-one? 17?

**Q. No, 6, the island green.**

JON RAHM: Oh, of course. No, I hadn't seen it, and I haven't seen him yet, so hopefully he's smiling.

**Q. At one point there was a pretty healthy separation between you and Joaco. You had to figure he wasn't going to go away easy.**

JON RAHM: I figured that even if he didn't finish as strong as he did today, let's say he finishes at even par, I knew he would come out and probably have a good day. Almost have to play the long game, and it's kind of what I've been saying, that I try to keep reminding myself to stay within the tournament, because if I do well in the tournament, everything else takes care of itself.

So yeah, the goal is still to win tomorrow, and if I win, I'll leave here with two wins tomorrow, and that's the goal.

**Q. Obviously you guys played together the first two rounds, but I don't think you'll be playing together tomorrow. How much did you enjoy the first two rounds, and does it make an impact that you're not playing together tomorrow?**

JON RAHM: I could give you many reasons as to why one way or the other is different. I think it would have been nice to be with him just so you see what's going on, but at the end of the day, I'm still trying to win the tournament.

So it really doesn't matter who's playing with who. The score is going to be the score.

**Q. Ian, obviously it's been a struggle for results this season, both for the team and you guys. Has it been a challenge to stay positive or because you guys have three experienced players as co-captains that it's been pretty easy to maintain positivity?**

IAN POULTER: It's been an interesting year because I think as old as we are and as experienced as we are, I think we've been pretty frustrated, each and every one of us, that we haven't performed quite as well as we want to perform.

For us, we're staying pretty confident. We know we're good enough, and we just haven't been able to do it.

It's refreshing. It's nice. It's a confidence boost, I think, for the team to come out on a course especially as difficult as this one is and kind of be in position.

It's good.

In amongst a year where we've been kind of propping up the rear end of that league, it's great to see us up at the front. It really is.

I think everyone should be pretty proud of where we are right now. And we can still win. That's the biggest opportunity for us today going into tomorrow. We're only a few shots away. We can certainly do ourselves some big favors tomorrow afternoon.

**Q. Jon, you talked a lot about this individual situation with Joaquín, but growing up you don't have access to all this information on the golf course, then you come out to big tours and the scoreboard is showing every change in your status. How have you gone about as a competitor handling all that, embracing it, dealing with just having all that outside noise as you compete?**

JON RAHM: It's really in my nature, and even from when I was a young kid, to want to know where I stand on the golf course. Even as when we were young and maybe we didn't have all the info, I would try to ask the people that knew, either to draw inspiration from maybe being behind or to just have clarity of where things stand.

I've never minded having the information out there.

It's just the truth as it is. Wherever you stand, it's just what you do with it. I've always used it as a source to draw inspiration from.

**Q. For Ian, I had a similar question for Sergio, but how have you tackled the challenge of competing against guys 10, 20 years younger than you as you've moved into your 40s.**

IAN POULTER: This is a mindset. I don't look that much older than Jon, do I?

JON RAHM: I do look over my age, so...

IAN POULTER: It's not easy, right? Mentally you're playing against the best players in the world, and your body clock is ticking. That's never easy. It's actually making me work harder is what it has done. Physically working harder in the gym, working harder on the range, finally getting some results.

Listen, it's not easy. These guys are great. It's always good to compete against the best players in the world. When I play great, I can hang right with them.

**Q. Jon, I noticed that during warm-ups you were at the back of the range warming up for the rounds. Was that a logistical thing with short game being back there?**

JON RAHM: Yeah. It's not the shortest ride to go back there. To be honest, it's also the turf on the range. It's a little softer. If you're trying to get some numbers of any distance control, the second you hit a shot, you need to clean the club face again. It just gets a little bit annoying to have to clean it constantly and out of your routine. It's just a little bit easier to do it from back there.

IAN POULTER: You have someone to clean it for you.

JON RAHM: Yeah, but it's just the timing.

**Q. Ian, this week it was announced that captains are possibly up for relegation and you being down near the bottom of the standings, I wonder if that caused a sense of urgency on your part and that's what we can**

**attribute to this week playing so well?**

IAN POULTER: No, I just want to play well every week. It doesn't matter where I am in kind of that order of merit position. It's not nice to be down there. I'm going to be moving my way back up, and hopefully I'm not in that position next year, either.

There's no sense of urgency from my side. It's just I want to try and win every week, and it just hasn't happened so far.

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