

# BMW PGA Championship

Tuesday, 6 September, 2022

Virginia Water, Surrey, England

Wentworth Golf Club

## Jon Rahm

### Press Conference

BRIONY CARLYON: Delighted to be joined by Jon Rahm. 2019 you were last at Wentworth but give us your thoughts on being back here this week and what you're looking forward to.

JON RAHM: Yeah, it was first and only time, and then COVID happened. I'm happy to be back. I've spoken many times about how much I like the history of the game and when it comes to the history of The European Tour, the DP World Tour, this event and this venue is very, very important. A lot of great champions. I was close the only time I came and I'm looking forward to hopefully giving myself a better chance.

But it's a golf course that I enjoy, a very nice area of the country and if we get luckier with the weather than we are right now it should be a very fun week.

**Q. How important is it for you to be taking this opportunity this week to in a sense be supporting the DP World Tour, given how much focus that's been on the PGA Tour and what's going on in the game right now, and for this European Tour getting back into the limelight?**

JON RAHM: Yeah, I definitely haven't played the last few years as much of the DP World Tour as I would like. Obviously there's been some changes going on in the PGA Tour that might make it a little more difficult but it's important that we have dates like this one because it makes a lot easier for us to come, and also, I play in Spain. To have one of those events be as big as it is not conflicting with any other big ones in the US makes it a lot easier.

Like I said, this venue really, really is something that I look forward to. I'm happy that I can be here for the first time this year. I did play The Scottish Open, but to be a full DP World event, I'm happy to be here and hoping that I can play a lot more times in the future.

**Q. Obviously there is the LIV backdrop at the moment, Rory McIlroy saying that he found it hard to stomach**



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**playing alongside LIV golfers this week. Do you share similar concerns? Do you feel the same way?**

JON RAHM: Somewhat. I do believe -- I do think there is a bit of a double standard between the relationship with LIV and PGA Tour, and LIV and European Tour.

I think the PGA Tour will and can honestly survive without some big players going. But The European Tour, there are many key players that have been key for European Tour golf and The Ryder Cup that have a lot of collective years on The European Tour; that them coming, I don't necessarily think it's a bad thing.

What I don't understand is some players that have never shown any interest in European Tour, have never shown any interest in playing this event, being given an opportunity just because they can get World Ranking points, and hopefully make majors next year. A perfect example, a good friend of mine is the first one out on the entry list right now, Alfredo, a good friend of mine from Spain. Because you have players that, you know, might need World Ranking points are given an opportunity that. I don't really agree with, it really, to an extent -- I don't know what the word is.

It doesn't hurt me but it does bug me that somebody who has played over -- I think I looked it up, it's 20 DP World events this year, cannot be given the opportunity to play a Flagship Event because some people that earned it, to an extent, are being given an opportunity when they couldn't care any less about the event.

They don't know. They don't care. They don't know the history of this event. They are only here because they are trying to get World Ranking points and trying to finish in the Top-50, and that's clear as day. So to me, there's a difference.

**Q. I didn't quite catch the name you said.**

JON RAHM: Alfredo. Alfredo Garcia-Heredia.

**Q. Following up on that, obviously for the likes of Alfredo and the other 17 players, Challenge Tour graduates --**

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JON RAHM: I only said that because he's a good friend of mine.

**Q. This could be a career-changing week for them.**

JON RAHM: Yes.

**Q. And that makes it more annoying.**

JON RAHM: Yeah, like I said, the likes of Sergio and Westy and Poulter have spent 20-plus years on The European Tour. I don't necessarily think that denying them the entry to some events is a bad thing, but there is some players, I'm not going to name any anybody, but there's some of them that have never shown any interest. Like I said they are here for a different motive than supporting European Tour -- sorry, DP World.

Yeah, I don't necessarily think it's 17 because those players have been coming here for many years and they usually come. It's still a larger number than it should be. Maybe I know according to the laws they earned it in some way, but I have a hard time. I know that if they were playing the PGA Tour, they wouldn't be here for a fact. So to me, it's hard to understand.

**Q. You're very passionate about the game. How would you sum up what's happened in the game this year in terms of where the game currently is?**

JON RAHM: Yeah, it's definitely an odd scenario because there's more animosity going on in the world of golf than we've ever had but it could be a change for the better, right. We can see the PGA Tour making changes to increase purse size and increase opportunities for all players, and I'm sure they are also going to do that here, right.

So to an extent, I can see it as a positive for change, or change that was maybe needed because things haven't changed in a very long time in the world of golf and something needs to be done.

As bad as things are right now, I think give it enough time, we might look at it as a positive for them. I'm hoping; I'm hoping good comes with it.

**Q. When you see these players, do they initiate a conversation with you about your views? Do you feel you have any duty to talk to them about it? It must be uncomfortable?**

JON RAHM: No, not really.

**Q. But people you've just spoken out against.**

JON RAHM: No. I've seen them and I don't speak to them. I don't say -- the only people asking about my opinion are mainly players that have been part of The Ryder Cup with me or people I'm close with or we're friends.

I've made my stance on things very clear. I don't know what else to say. I'm not going to hate anybody. I'm not going to -- to an extent, maybe right now I did, but judge too many people for the decisions they make. They are adults and they make their own decisions.

**Q. How would you feel if you went to play with them?**

JON RAHM: Well, I will have to, I mean, eventually. Somebody, there's 17 of them. One of them might play good and hopefully might be play good enough to play there on the weekend. I am here to play golf. If I play with them, so be it. It's not going to change my mindset whatsoever.

Now, before the tournament, I realise certain things, where I think I can reserve some judgment. But once we start on Thursday, there's nothing I can do about it. Even right now, there's nothing I can do about it.

**Q. You've been very consistent about your own position regarding LIV. Are you surprised at the calibre of players who have eventually gone? Because we all thought it was going to be players whose best years were behind them. And do you think that's going to force people to take a different perspective?**

JON RAHM: I'm not surprised. I'm not surprised. I was always in the position of understanding that many big players were going to leave. It is understandable. It's guaranteed a lot of money, right.

And it's a different format, less golf, less stress. As glamorous as it can be, the a professional golfer can be very stressful. You play a lot of golf and you don't always get the feedback you want. So it can be tough to travel worldwide and miss a cut and get nothing. That part can be tough.

I'm not surprised some big players have gone, and that's why I said I think that's why changes are being made, especially on the PGA Tour side to make sure that doesn't happen again.

Yeah, I think early on, a lot of the people that had an easier decision was people whose careers were towards the end, later years. But I think it would have been foolish to think no young player was ever going to go, because obviously

it's an opportunity, and I think a lot of them are going to think it's a good one, especially the ones who were amateurs who signed crazy big contracts and now have the opportunity to play with some of the best players in the world.

**Q. Has it caused you to have second thoughts about your decision?**

JON RAHM: No. Never.

**Q. Will the way that the PGA Tour is being reshaped impact on how often we see you over this side of the Atlantic, and are the rules going to have to change to enable you to play those?**

JON RAHM: So that's actually something I haven't talked to Keith Pelley about but I would love to. Hopefully I can catch him for five minutes.

I hope, maybe between some of the Europeans that play PGA Tour more full time, we can reach an agreement of maybe figuring out a schedule to where it makes it easier for us to come, right. An example for me, because of The Ryder Cup, I wanted to play Italian Open this year and I could have, but we had a young one a month ago, and I don't want to be gone for five out of six weeks of his life, right, early on.

For next year, I want to play to play The Italian Open. So reaching an agreement that maybe I can go to the -- be great for me. Obviously they can't change the tournament based on only one person. But for future years if we can somehow change the schedule with the changes the PGA Tour is having -- because eventually with all these big events, we are going to end up playing most of the same events. Rory and I will be playing very, very similar schedules except for two or three events.

So I think we can reach a point or a certain agreement where we can come here more often. I would love to have more time off in the fall. I said it on the other side; I'll say it here. I'd love to finish in August and have a chance to have quite a bit of time off and be a father and be a husband because from January to August it's all about golf. Now with my kids being young, I can already feel it. I can only imagine when they are older and taking them to school and picking them up and they have their sport duties and things like that.

I'm hoping eventually we can reach a schedule that allows me to come here enough.

**Q. At this point, obviously we don't know which way the legalities are going to call around Ryder Cup**

**selection, in particular. Given the depth of feeling we've heard obviously what Rory McIlroy has said very pointedly about the guys who have crossed over, is it in any way feasible to think that LIV golfers and those who have stayed with the traditional tours could apply on the same Ryder Cup Team, when you think about things like team camaraderie and how important that is?**

JON RAHM: I mean, there's only one problem in life that doesn't have a solution, and that's death. That's it. Everything else has a solution.

If European Tour really want them to play and as a team we want them to play, I think a solution can be reached. If every party is not happy about it, I don't know.

I also do think both PGA of America and European Tour need to make a decision together, because I don't think it would be fair for one side to allow them to play and one side not allow them to play.

I've said many times how important The Ryder Cup is to me. I talked to my dad the other day about, and if it wasn't for the Ryder Cup, I probably wouldn't be here because that's the reason why he started playing golf; therefore why I started playing golf.

So I believe The Ryder Cup is above all in my mind. It is the greatest marketing tool golf has, one. Of the biggest sporting events, period, right. So I wouldn't mind. Me and Sergio had a great, great experience in this last Ryder Cup, and I would love to repeat it above all no matter where he plays. But I can understand why it would be difficult.

If it was up to me I would love to reach a resolution to some of them being able to play because like I said earlier, how many Ryder Cups has Sergio played? Ten? Most points ever earned in The Ryder Cup. Westy has been a part of a lot of them as well and many others.

I don't know if it will be possible or not but I think if there's a way, I would like to see it.

**Q. Will you be attending the players' meeting this evening and if, so what are you hoping might come out of it?**

JON RAHM: I found out about the meeting this morning. So I will try; I think if the weather opens up I might try to play a few holes after this and go to the meeting.

I think you learn everything in life by listening, so that's what I'm going to do. I don't really have much to say. My



position on things has been clear, and unless I'm asked directly by somebody, I'm just going to listen.

Because one thing we haven't done outside media is really truly hear what the other side have to say. I do believe there needs to be a dialogue started instead of throwing just negative comments against each other. If you ever want to reach a solution, there needs to be a conversation.

BRIONY CARLYON: Thank you, Jon. On that note, good luck this week.

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