

# LIV Golf Mayakoba

Wednesday, 31 January, 2024

Mayakoba, Mexico

El Camaleón Golf Course

## Legion XIII

**Jon Rahm**

**Tyrrell Hatton**

**Caleb Surratt**

**Kieran Vincent**

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Welcoming our new expansion team, Legion XIII, to their very first LIV Golf press conference. We are joined today by Caleb Surratt, Tyrrell Hatton, Jon Rahm, our captain of Legion XIII, and Kieran Vincent. Welcome, guys.

Jon, how does it feel to be the captain of a team, and tell us a little bit about how you picked this amazing team.

JON RAHM: It's definitely a different feel to what I'm used to, golf being quite an individual sport. To actually be thinking about part of management of any kind, it's somewhat unusual for me.

But the process was a little bit harder than what we would have liked to acquire all the players. Obviously Kieran being one of the qualifiers, I was up watching the back nine and saw his performance, and I was quite impressed. Too bad for him that he had to hit 5-wood on the par-5 off the tee. It probably would have been a lot easier in that playoff.

Caleb, obviously for people that follow amateur golf, he's a very accomplished amateur golfer. We played a practice round together last year, actually, on Wednesday of the American Express, so I knew of him enough to know how good it was and what he was capable of. Then that year he went on to win SEC Championships, one of the top ranked amateurs in the world, Walker Cup player, performed great in the Walker Cup. His amateur resume speaks for its own.

He seemed ready to turn pro, so when he approached us with it, I'm not going to shy away from somebody who's ready to make that transition. I'm very happy to have him



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on the team.

Then Tyrrell, Tyrrell is somebody I respect a lot. He's a really good friend of mine. We've shared the stage in some of the biggest events in the world and more recently in the Ryder Cup. Proud to say we're undefeated together. It's somebody that's always been very high on my list. I think it's somebody who can perform under any circumstances.

I think the two of us understand each other very well for some various obvious reasons we're probably not going to get into, but I see a lot of myself in him, as well, so that's probably why I feel such a good connection with him on the team.

I'm very happy he accepted the offer and is now a part of it.

**Q. Caleb, you're 19 years old, turning pro here for the first time. Are you feeling a mix of excitement, nerves? What's going on over there?**

CALEB SURRATT: I think I'm feeling a little bit of everything. I'm definitely feeling the overwhelm, and I'm definitely feeling the excitement. Just being out here with a lot of the best players in the world, it's really motivating, and it's something I've worked my whole life for, and I could not be more excited to tee it up on Friday with all these players.

**Q. Tyrrell, obviously today is your very first day at LIV Golf, so welcome. I imagine it's been a bit of a whirlwind for you. How are you feeling?**

TYRRELL HATTON: Yeah, it has that feel of like first day at school. Kind of feel like I'm finding my feet a little bit. That'll take a bit of time. But excited to be here and looking forward to getting started on Friday.

**Q. Jon, just curious what your approach to being a captain will be like. Obviously there's a bunch of different approaches out here. Do you have something in mind right now, or is it going to be kind of learn-on-the-go type process?**

JON RAHM: I think a good captain can adapt to each player. I don't think there's one single formula that will



work for everybody. I know what might work to get the best out of me might not work for Kieran or Tyrrell or Caleb. I'm going to have to get to know everybody a little bit better to be able to know what buttons to push definitely at what times.

I'm pretty confident I know how to do that with Tyrrell already. We've spent a lot of time together. I already know.

But with Caleb and Kieran, I'm going to have to learn a little bit on how they are in general, how to manage that.

To answer that, no, I don't really know exactly what I'm going to be doing, but again, like I said earlier, I'm really looking forward to learning.

**Q. Jon, can you describe what the last couple of months have been like? Obviously it was quite the big move that you've made. It got a lot of attention back in early December. And just the time since, whatever feedback you've gotten in making this move.**

JON RAHM: Well, the weeks leading up to the announcement weren't the easiest. I had to weigh a lot, basically get enough info to then make an informed decision. Even through the process of negotiations, it was just very, very deep waters compared to what I'm used to. I had to be more involved than I thought I was going to have to be. But once the announcement was made, I think everything became a lot easier.

Having to keep the secrecy and not being able to talk to anybody about it was difficult. Again, once it became public, the reaction was pretty much what I expected. The ones that are close friends that maybe had an idea or not have supported me, and obviously there's some people that are going to disagree with any decision we make in life. Pretty much in line with what I expected, but it was nice to have some time after that before my first competition round in LIV Golf to process and then actually kind of refocus and get to work.

**Q. Where is your game right now? How do you feel about it for the first event of the year?**

JON RAHM: I feel good. I feel good. It's one of the odd parts. At this point I would have maybe already played three, four events, so it's getting used to that. I'm very used to having to grind a little bit more during Christmas and early in the year to start competing. I feel confident. I'm always -- every time I tee it up, my goal is to win.

No matter what shape my game is in, that's pretty much the goal. There's been times where on a Tuesday maybe it

felt pretty bad and ended up performing great, so it really doesn't matter what it feels like today.

**Q. For Tyrrell, you had a pretty funny media exchange at the Ryder Cup about your proclivity for swearing and how much you embrace it. I wondered, out here, I don't know that they fine for that. Could this possibly mean that there might be more?**

JON RAHM: Hold on, do they, because we're both in trouble.

THE MODERATOR: We do not fine for that.

TYRRELL HATTON: Yeah, I think me and Jon could have been in trouble, but I think we'll be okay.

JON RAHM: We would have definitely been in trouble before. At least I have.

TYRRELL HATTON: It's fine.

**Q. Jon and Tyrrell, I'm curious if you guys were able to -- you heard what Rory McIlroy had to say about players being involved in the Ryder Cup and yesterday when he said they should be able to come back and play on the Tour without any issues if they have membership. I'm curious what your reaction to that is.**

TYRRELL HATTON: Well, I've spoken to Rory a bit in the past week and back in December. That's kind of along the lines of what he said to me. It's not a surprise to hear him say that in the media.

Ultimately, I would like to still be able to play events on the other two tours. But we'll see how all that works out.

JON RAHM: I would pretty much say the same along the lines of what Tyrrell said. I haven't spoken to him a lot recently. But he might have had a change in thought process, as in maybe with some of the things he said in the past. I think he might be seeing that the landscape of golf is changing and at some point you need to evolve. So I think he might be seeing that, and everybody is entitled to their opinion, but it's nice to have the support from a player the caliber of Rory, especially those Ryder Cup remarks he made early on. I think that's an important statement for change to be said.

**Q. The early news of the day was the PGA Tour and the Strategic Sports Group coming together and creating the PGA TOUR Tour enterprises, the deal coming closer. They said the conversations with the PIF are still ongoing, as well. I'm curious what your confidence level is like that a deal is going to get done,**

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

**and have you thought a lot about that over the last few weeks?**

JON RAHM: We've had enough to think about. I was worried about maybe not having Tyrrell here this week. Yeah, that was really in the back of my mind, like really far back in my mind.

There's a lot bigger people that are a lot smarter than me that are going to be worrying about that that actually have a say in it, and they should be thinking about it. I think we're here to play golf, perform, and whatever comes comes.

**Q. Caleb, the last few weeks have to be pretty crazy for you. I'm curious what those have been like and what went into your decision to come out and join LIV?**

CALEB SURRATT: Yeah, it's obviously been a whirlwind of events. You go from -- I went from playing my final Jones Cup, which was my last amateur event, to then spending time with my girlfriend in Florida to then receiving the call that afternoon saying it was official and then driving back to Knoxville, Tennessee, to move out of my dorm room. This was three weeks ago time.

You go from moving out of your dorm room to competing with the best players in the world, and having two of them truly being your daily mentors on the golf course, it seemed like a big opportunity for me and my golf game, and of course everybody is going to be entitled to their opinion, but I have no doubt that this is what was best for me and my golf game and the future of my professional career.

**Q. What were the conversations like with your coaches and teammates?**

CALEB SURRATT: The conversations were a bit difficult. I would say it was kind of tough to break the news because it's a big change. I'm on a very highly competitive college golf team that I was the leader of, and to kind of have to step up and leave, it's tough.

One thing that I made very well a point was to not just break the news to them and say I'm leaving. It was more of including everybody that was close to me and on my team in my decision. It was a team decision. It was a group decision. It was not just Caleb Surratt saying what Caleb Surratt wants.

I had all the support in the world from my teammates. I had all the support in the world from my coaches, and I think everybody sees how great of an opportunity this is, and myself more than anybody, just couldn't be more excited for it.

**Q. Wondering if you guys have had an opportunity the last couple days since you've been out here to take a look at the other teams and who you think is the team to beat out here this year.**

CALEB SURRATT: I think we're all very like-minded as far as it goes within -- we're just going to all do the stuff we've been doing our whole lives, and we're just going to let it add up as a team.

Me driving the ball great throughout my round doesn't make Jon drive the ball great throughout his round. I think we have to go play our own games and just let it stack up, and my guess is that we're going to stack up pretty well. Obviously you have your powerhouse teams, but I think that they're trying to do the same thing that I just said. That's kind of my take on it.

I think if we do that, then we're going to be a great squad.

TYRRELL HATTON: I'm not actually up to speed yet for all the guys on all the teams, but ultimately we're just be going out there, trying our best like we do every other week, and I mean, with it being the first week back for a lot of guys, there's potentially going to be a little bit of rust there. Having said that, if I go out and play a bad round of golf on Friday, I don't really have much excuse.

Either way, we'll be trying our best, and hopefully we'll be one of the teams at the top.

**Q. As a Ryder Cup legend, is the team aspect of this one of the reasons why you decided to come join LIV?**

TYRRELL HATTON: Yeah, definitely. I love the Ryder Cup. I follow other sports outside of golf that are team sports. You're kind of envious of those guys having that team spirit week in, week out, and that was something that was very appealing for me to come and join LIV.

I'm looking forward to getting to know the guys. Obviously we only really met this morning. Obviously I know Jon. But yeah, it's going to be a fun year, and looking forward to getting started.

**Q. Kieran, you have a bit of an upper hand because you have played out on LIV Golf before and your brother has been playing here so you have some experience. Who do you think is the team to beat, knowing what you know?**

KIERAN VINCENT: I'm just thankful to answer a question. I appreciate it. I was getting nervous I was going to go the whole interview without answering a question. I've got to

get thinking now.

Yeah, obviously super grateful to be able to be a part of last year's LIV and just kind of see how it's expanded this year. I think we've got a pretty good team ourselves right here in this building right now. Obviously there's a lot of teams, got a lot of factors, but I'd say this one is pretty good. Going to be hard to beat.

We're just going to go out there, do our thing, and hopefully come Sunday, champagne showers.

JON RAHM: Oh, my God, none of you is going to mention a single team really? You're going to leave it up to me?

**Q. Come on, Cap.**

KIERAN VINCENT: I did say this team, so...

JON RAHM: Yeah, obviously we'd all like to think that we have the team to beat. Based on past performances -- there's been trades, so a lot of times it's hard to see. Anybody has a chance any give week, but obviously defending champions, Crushers, both the League and here. 4Aces are always a strong team. With Talor Gooch now on the team, Smash is always going to be -- two great players with him and Brooks, definitely a chance; Torque, great last year, as well.

I'd say those four teams so far are the quickest ones that come to me that obviously have been playing really good golf.

Fireballs, as well, now with Pooch in it, played quite a bit of golf back home with him since we both live in Arizona, and he can easily take it deep on the golf course. They definitely have the firepower, as well. I could name every single team.

**Q. You're going to start a rivalry between Legion and somebody?**

JON RAHM: I'll leave it up to you guys. Everybody here writing are good at creating those rivalries. We're going to leave it up to them.

**Q. Kieran, you won the Promotions event, but then you had no idea what team you'd be going to, who you'd be playing with. Can you walk us through the moment when you found out that you were going to be joining Jon Rahm's team? Must have been pretty exciting.**

KIERAN VINCENT: Yeah. Obviously it was kind of an interesting couple of -- I guess it was a month, just over a

month of not really knowing, but knowing it's going to be sweet no matter what situation you find yourself in.

I wouldn't really say one is better than the other, but again, this is pretty sweet to be out here. I think the three guys that we have or the four guys that we have on this team is just super cool. Obviously adding Tyrrell at the last minute, I think that's a great addition to the team. This team is just going to -- as we gel together and get to know each other, I think it's just going to grow from strength to strength. Pretty sweet.

**Q. We haven't really talked about the brand we unveiled, the Legion XIII brand yesterday. Do you want to talk a little bit about how you came to the name and the logo and how the other guys feel about wearing the lion patch.**

JON RAHM: Yeah, they really haven't told me yet, so I don't know. It's a bit of a long story how we came up with it.

I'll try to sum it up a little bit.

TYRRELL HATTON: You can shorten it.

JON RAHM: I don't want to leave anything out. Basically, especially after the Ryder Cup and being in Rome, the whole gladiator theme was really appealing to me. Gladiator, warrior spirit was something that meant fight, kind of a team fighting together, and a couple names came up, and at some point somebody said Legion XIII, that we were going to be the 13th team, and me and my wife and a couple other people kind of looked at each other like, it has a better ring than other things.

Then when you get into the legion and what it means in itself, I thought it was an empowering name, and then basically two things as to why I found it so good. There's a comic book I grew up reading as a kid. Surprising, right? It's named Asterix and Obelisk. I don't know if anybody knows what it is. But it's a town somewhere in Europe that the Romans couldn't conquer because they had a wizard that had a magic potion, and the legion in charge of trying to conquer that town over and over again is Legion XIII, which was also a real legion that was always faithful to Julius Caesar, both when he was, I believe, the consul for the republic and then as an emperor, as well, kind of helped him get back to Rome and not take over, but yeah, kind of take over. There was a lot of storylines throughout it, and that's why we liked it so much.

**Q. And the lion?**

JON RAHM: Was that short enough?



TYRRELL HATTON: Almost. But my Diet Coke is getting warm.

KIERAN VINCENT: It's been warm, Tyrrell. It's been warm.

JON RAHM: Being an Athletic Bilbao fan, they're called the Lions. It's an unofficial -- there's not a logo, but it's the unofficial team name. I wanted to go down that route.

Then this style of the lion and then the lettering is basically where I try to use my ancestry and my ties to the Basque country where I'm from, and they use a lot of the writing that you would see there to create the actual logo.

So yeah, they did a really good job. I'm happy with how it turned out. We have a lot of options with 13 and lions and different things, but I'm happy with what we ended up with.

**Q. Are you guys all proud to be wearing the lion patch?**

TYRRELL HATTON: You're not going to say no after hearing that, are you.

JON RAHM: I hope not. Feel free to be honest.

**Q. How are we all enjoying wearing shorts?**

JON RAHM: I thought I was going to be wearing pants more often, and it was very quickly apparent to me that as soon as I get here, I'm going to be wearing shorts.

TYRRELL HATTON: I still think I'm going to be wearing trousers, to be honest. The tournament days, yeah, I think I'll probably be sticking with that. Maybe Singapore I might have to wear shorts.

JON RAHM: Sunday here is going to be hot.

**Q. Caleb, are you going to grow a beard to match your teammates?**

JON RAHM: Can you grow a beard?

CALEB SURRATT: If I can. I don't know. If we were to win the event, I don't even know if I could take part in the champagne thing.

JON RAHM: We'll get there one day. I mean, you can; you're in Mexico, so it's 18. Sorry to U.S. audiences, but technically it would be legal. Nobody is going to force you, though.