

# LIV Golf Riyadh

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Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Riyadh Golf Club

## Legion XIII

Jon Rahm

Tyrrell Hatton

Tom McKibbin

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Thank you for joining us for the first press conference of ROSHN Group LIV Golf Riyadh here at Riyadh golf club as we open the 2026 LIV Golf season. We're pleased to be joined by the defending Riyadh team champions, Legion XIII, with captain Jon Rahm alongside Tyrrell Hatton and Tom McKibbin.

Jon, Legion XIII return this week to Riyadh as the defending team champions. How does it feel to be returning here, and how important was your victory last year to set the tone early on in the season for you guys?

JON RAHM: Well, we've been able to win the first event of the year the last two years, so hoping to make it three in a row.

It's always hard to say what sort of tone is set first week of the year. It's great to start off with a great win, but it doesn't mean that it's going to be a great year.

Regardless, it's a great way to start, but it doesn't really change how you approach the rest of the year.

Very excited to be here. Very happy to be here. It's a week I look forward to. I had a lot of fun last year playing at night, and I'm hoping to do as well as I did last year again.

**Q. Tyrrell, there's been plenty of player movement across the league this off-season. We've had new signings, trades, several teams taking on new identities. Legion XIII remains unchanged this year in terms of the lineup. Does that continuity reflect the success that you've had last year, and how do you build on a great 2025?**

TYRRELL HATTON: Yeah, I mean, I think that we as a team are very strong across the four. Winning the Team

Championship last year sort of proved that. Nothing needed to change in our team. So obviously we've stayed the same, and hopefully we can win again this season.

**Q. Tom, you made your LIV Golf debut here this time last year. One year on, how would you reflect on your first full season in the league, and what do you think about some of the new talent that's joined this season? Do you see the standard of competition getting higher this year?**

TOM MCKIBBIN: Yeah, obviously last year was a very successful year, I think sort of individually and as a team. It couldn't get much better.

I think sort of going out through all last year and getting to know everybody a little bit more and play together was very good.

I think for this year and the new guys that have come, I obviously know some of them and don't know some of them, so yeah, I think definitely LIV Golf has had some good signings and definitely getting a little bit stronger.

**Q. What's the key to being successful in night golf, Tyrrell?**

TYRRELL HATTON: Hit and hope, like every other week. Well, we've got a couple of days to get adjusted to it. I think for the most part, everyone dealt with it pretty well last year. I know there was a few guys that had some issues with -- they use black irons, so that created an issue for them.

But I think for the majority of us, it wasn't too much of a problem. Yeah, it's just a case of getting used to the night golf, and we've got a couple of days to do that, and it'll be good fun.

**Q. Do you prep, play night golf somewhere else before coming here?**

TYRRELL HATTON: No. I guess I could turn the lights

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down in the studio at home. That would be the only chance I've got to do that. But I didn't do that last week.

**Q. Jon, same question.**

JON RAHM: I wouldn't say night golf is very accessible, but luckily we have a golf course in Phoenix that does it. There's a few night ranges. But Grass Clippings does have a lit-up par-3 course. We've play a league there, as well, and on Wednesdays they have a pretty fun skins game, so it's something that I've done in the past.

But it's hard because it doesn't really translate. You're not really hitting long irons. It's mainly short. Teeing it up with driver, with what he just said, usually most drivers it's a darker face. If the light pole is behind you or to the right, those shadows creep over the ball.

So there's little nuances that you get used to fairly quick, but the first time it's a little bit of a surprise because if there's shadows casting over the ball, it's a dark shadow.

The awareness of where the club face is related to the ball can be a little tricky, but once you get over that, it's actually quite fun.

**Q. How about reading putts?**

JON RAHM: I think the greens are the best lit part of the course. There's usually more than enough light around it.

I think just the shadows in itself, if you're somebody that naturally relies on seeing the shade on the greens and the shadows it's a little bit tricky because it's not a realistic look, but overall, based on the scores last year, I think we did all right. As a league we did pretty good.

Again, after a few days, you kind of start getting used to it.

**Q. Tom, as well mentioned a year ago, it went fast and furious for you at the start of the season. How much more relaxed do you feel going into this year?**

TOM McKIBBIN: Yeah, probably a little bit more relaxed. I think coming in my first event being at night, obviously there was a lot of things different. The warmup was so different. So I didn't really know how it was going to go. Obviously as the year progressed, I got more used to it, and it became sort of the new normal.

So I think this year I'm definitely a little bit more relaxed, albeit it's been a long time since we last played. But yeah, I'm looking forward to it.

**Q. Did you have to adjust your sleep patterns last**

**year?**

TOM McKIBBIN: Yeah, yeah, big time. It's weird getting up at 9:30, 10:00 in the morning and going to bed very, very late. Sleep patterns are weird. Eating dinner at midnight is weird. Everything is weird.

**Q. I did want to ask you, too, about you're still a young guy. We've got other young guys coming into the league. What piece of advice would you give, say, Michael La Sasso who's just turned pro? This is his first event. What kind of advice would you give him?**

TOM McKIBBIN: I don't know. I guess lean on some of the past people that -- obviously the captains. Phil is great. I think sort of knowing Jon and Tyrrell here, as well, for me definitely made that a lot easier. Any sort of questions or trying to feel a little bit more comfortable definitely made my life a little bit easier.

I don't really know what advice. Obviously it's very new. I had played a couple years of pro golf before, so I was a little bit more used to it. But yeah, I think sort of the experience is so different, and I think as a young person, it's quite enjoyable that it's different and maybe something that's more our age's sort of vibe or whatever. I'm sure he'll get used to it very quickly.

**Q. Did you try to pick Tyrrell's brain at all last year, or is that even possible?**

TOM McKIBBIN: I don't know, I feel like I spent a good bit of time with Tyrrell, and we played a little bit of golf over in England sort of before some of the events. It's easy to spend time -- he's so funny and a phenomenal golfer. I think it's hard because I think maybe stuff that I could ask him he wouldn't have a clue what he's doing or how to describe it.

I've probably learnt more from just watching him rather than asking him stuff.

**Q. Is that how most young people approach you?**

TYRRELL HATTON: Scared to ask me things? Yeah, I'm not very good at describing stuff. So if it's anything golf-related, yeah, I probably wouldn't be so good at that. Jon, on the other hand, would be a lot better.

**Q. Would you like to see more night golf across the schedule, or are you quite happy with it being a one-off?**

TYRRELL HATTON: For me personally, I'm happy it's a one-off. It's fun to experience it, and it creates something

different, but yeah, I'm happy that it's only once a season.

JON RAHM: You need to be in the right place to make night golf work properly. To be able to design a course and then have the lights in the right way, because all the cables need to be on the ground, it's not the easiest thing to do. I enjoy it, but I would start by saying if you were to have -- one example being Adelaide next week, then you start having quite a few fans on the golf course at night, not everything can be lit, and I think it could become a liability eventually. I don't know if you can really pull it off.

**Q. Jon and Tyrrell, as former PGA TOUR members, can I get your thoughts on Patrick Reed's decision to depart LIV and his imminent return to the PGA TOUR?**

JON RAHM: I think each one is going to do whatever he thinks is best for them. At this point, I just wish him nothing but the best of luck. Hopefully it all goes well.

We're free to choose where we want to play golf. At least that's how it should be. And he's made his choice, obviously. Nothing really against him. He's been playing fantastic golf, and if he wants to go back, he should have the chance to do so.

TYRRELL HATTON: I don't really have too much more to add on that, other than he was out of contract, and he had options and decided that for him to move forward that he wanted to go back and play on the PGA TOUR. That's his choice.

He's an amazing player. If he was playing on LIV still, he makes the league stronger, but he's chosen his path, and you can only wish him the best moving forward.

**Q. There's been reports over the weekend about the DP World Tour and agreements with players that there would be no fines issued from the 2026 season if releases were granted. Could I have your side of the story on that? It seems the players are negotiating directly with the Tour or talking with the Tour about the issue. Jon and Tyrrell, as Ryder Cup players it's particularly important for you, and Tom, as a player that wants to play in the Ryder Cup in the future, can you give your insight on where you see things with the DP World Tour for this season?**

JON RAHM: I personally would say I don't know too much about the matter. Obviously I think at first, managers are going to be taking care of that early on. I don't know what the negotiations look like. Obviously they're going to players individually to make different deals.

I don't know what it may be or what it's going to look like,

but I'm happy to see that looking for a path forward for LIV players to be able to play on both tours and not to get penalized.

I think the example of players like Tom or David Puig, who's now a winner on the European Tour, who just chose the best path possible as young players, shouldn't be penalized because of the politics of the game.

The fact that they're looking at a positive way to figure it out, I think it's only good for us, and I think it's good for the DP World Tour, as well.

TYRRELL HATTON: Again, not much more to add than what he's just said. It sounds positive, so if things are moving in the right direction, that's good for golf. Yeah, we'll let other people figure that out, and we'll just focus on playing golf this week.

TOM McKIBBIN: Same as the two guys. They both summed it up pretty perfectly.

**Q. If you could just speak about how you feel about the change of format to 72 holes this season, how that changes things for you or how you feel about it in general.**

JON RAHM: I'm happy about it. I would say I was one of the people that pushed for it. So obviously I'm happy about it.

I think the more golf we play, the better for stronger teams and stronger players, and I think it will benefit us four individuals and as a team, as well.

**Q. Talk about your experience last year here at LIV Golf Riyadh; how was the fan experience overall?**

TOM McKIBBIN: Yeah, it was obviously my first LIV event. I obviously didn't really know what to expect too much. Obviously it being at night, it made for a cool first experience, something that I really enjoy playing under the lights, something very different. It was a lot of fun, I think. Obviously it's very new. I don't think any other golf event had been played in the dark. It was pretty cool to be a part of, I think. Sort of just the whole different of what I was used to playing normal sort of golf. It made for a cool week, and yeah, definitely made me look forward to this event quicker.

So it was a fantastic week.

**Q. Talk about the main difference in your opinion about playing at night and playing in the morning.**

JON RAHM: I think we touched on it a little bit in English. There's an adjustment you need to do because we're playing in the daylight, the closer you get to the green, you rely on shadows and how obviously the light reflects on different slopes on the greens. I would say the main challenge is sometimes you get a little unlucky with where the light source or the main light is and where your body is positioned where the shadow is casting where usually you don't pay attention because it's not very dark, but obviously playing at night the shadow can be a little darker.

Then the longer clubs that have a black face, if you get in a situation like that, it's a little trickier to gauge where the club face is with respect to the ball.

Besides that, the rest is pretty much the same. It's just little nuances that you probably never think about until you try it.

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