

LIV Golf Andalucía

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Sotogrande, Spain

Real Club Valderrama

Legion XIII

Jon Rahm

Press Conference



Q. How do you process last week? It seemed like from the first round it wasn't going to happen, yet you were still able to grind out a top-20 finish.

JON RAHM: Yeah, I kind of did it in Spanish. I feel like I'm repeating myself.

It's really more -- I don't know why I couldn't get used to the way the greens reacted. I had a hard time with the grass, as well, the reaction of the grass and predicting how the ball was going to come out on some shots.

I think come Sunday, I finally somewhat figured it out, but if I had to go back the first few days, I just didn't hit enough fairways.

I definitely went in thinking seeing the course how short it was and how many scoring options we were going to have it was going to be somewhere around 20-under, and I think it was a shock to everybody how high the scores ended up being. That was precisely because of that.

It was very hard to hold the green with any club if you were off the fairway. Wedges weren't spinning back whatsoever for how soft they were. It was just a different kind of grass around the greens. In my case it look me a little bit more to figure out the place than I would have liked, and that ended up being a downfall.

Q. Is it nice to immediately be able to come to a course that's not only at home, but last time you saw it you shot a bogey-free 65?

JON RAHM: Yeah, that was last time. This golf course doesn't hand out those kinds of scores very often. You have to work for it. It was an incredible Sunday. I played really good golf.

It's always nice to come home. This is the highlight of the year for me and for the other guys. It's been very special. Sergio being one of the few players in history to actually have a presence winning a championship here. I think he's

won four different times, and it shows because this course is incredibly difficult. It's very tricky. You have to play incredibly good golf. It really plays to his strengths because he's an incredible ball striker and a master in the wind, but still, you have to come out and do it, and it's never easy to win at home.

For that matter, I always come a little extra motivated because it's such a special week.

Q. On a completely different topic, how do you think fatherhood will change Tyrrell? Will he become more mellow now?

JON RAHM: I have no idea. I don't know. I don't know how much of who we are changes once you become a parent.

In my case I've learned a few things because I see myself a lot in the kids, and seeing that reflection of yourself sometimes makes you reflect. But I don't know how it's going to change. I hope it doesn't change him. He's a fantastic player and a great friend, a great human being. If he can learn some things about himself, it would be fantastic, that would improve him not as a golfer as a person, it would be great. But I would not ask Tyrrell Hatton to change for anything. He's a great friend, and he's special the way he is. I wouldn't change anything.

Q. Bryson has taken a prominent role in trying to secure investment for LIV and he's attending business pitches with Scott, et cetera. What's your opinion on that and are you taking a similar role?

JON RAHM: I am not, no. I said it in Spanish; I don't know how to translate it to English. It would be more of a stay-in-your-lane type situation as it goes to me. I know nothing about business. I'm never going to claim to know anything about business, and if I was in a business pitch, I would not know the first thing to say. My job is to play golf, and I'll say it's hard enough as it is, especially this week.

But if any player who knows what they're doing is willing to

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do certain things like that, I think it can only help. To have insight from a player on a meeting like that can help, and I'm open for any suggestions possible, but I would also say I don't have the free time that Bryson has to be flying around the country to attend meetings with three little ones and one on the way. Even if I wanted to, I don't know if I could do it.

Q. There's talk that team golf could become an even bigger part of what LIV does moving forward and having events that aren't necessarily individual stroke play. Obviously you do that once a year at the moment, but would you welcome three, four, five solely team events where you guys are competing as one rather than playing your own ball for your own prize money?

JON RAHM: I mean, it's sort of similar to what we do now already as a team. It's an aspect and it helps. In my case last week, I wasn't really in chance competing for the win going on Sunday, but I still wanted to put a good score for the team, for the team to finish as high as possible.

As far as that, I don't think it will change my mindset or the way I approach a tournament at all. You still need to shoot or want to shoot the lowest possible, whether you're playing individually or as a team. Whether it happens or not, I don't think my approach would change whatsoever.

Q. Caleb Surratt has qualified for his first major championship. Obviously you brought him on board and brought him into LIV. Talk me through your feelings of seeing him reach that milestone. Also, Shinnecock Hills is quite the place to make your debut at a major championship. Are you going to be giving him any advice going into it, and how do you rate his prospects as a player as he develops?

JON RAHM: Let's be honest, your first ever major playing at Shinnecock Hills is going to be a rude awakening. I honestly don't think -- I can't even begin to make him understand what that week is going to be like. That week is so unique. I know he's going to go next week and see the golf course early, and from when he sees it on Tuesday and Wednesday and when he tees off on Thursday, it is going to change so much that I don't know if I can make him understand how difficult it's going to be. I don't think he's ever been a part of a tournament in which nobody ever has finished under par like last U.S. Open. That year was 9-over par.

And Thursday and Friday they technically could have set it up harder like they did on Saturday afterwards. I am going to try to make him understand.

In my case, when I was his age, I still didn't know how to process, and I'd played a few majors, I think, at that point. It takes a little bit. It's like when you're kids; you need to fall a few times before you learn how to walk, and it could be the case, as well. But he's a fantastic player.

He's grown so much in the three years he's been with us. Somebody who hadn't really traveled around the world, had only left the U.S. once to go to Scotland, so he had never been in a non-English speaking country in his life to now being around the planet, learning about new cultures, going through the hardship of travel, which unfortunately for two years he had the worst luck I've ever seen in my life when it came to travel. He had to grow up quick, and he's gotten there.

He's played the qualifier in Dallas a few times, and I think the last two years he's played good and just come up short.

I know he was devastated when he bogeyed his last hole and thought he was out and then he got in and ended up earning it in a playoff.

I don't think we've come close to seeing the best of Caleb Surratt. He showed us a little bit at JCB last year, but he is capable of so much more. I hope seeing that U.S. Open kind of unleashes a bit of what he can do because he's a great player.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

Translation of the statements given in Spanish

Q: Good morning, everyone. We welcome Jon Rahm, who hardly needs an introduction, but he is the captain of Legion XIII, completely Spanish as well. Jon, you currently lead the 2026 individual standings after eight events, and looking ahead to the rest of the season, how do you assess your performance this year and what do you think helped achieve this consistency that has brought you to this position?

Jon Rahm: It's hard to say what makes someone play well, or better or worse, every year, right? Honestly, there are many factors. Obviously, it's been a very good year, playing very well. Even last week, although the results weren't as good as I would have liked, I actually felt quite good. And yeah, that's about it, I wouldn't know how to pinpoint a single thing that has made this year different. I think that, compared to last year, I'm doing everything a little bit better, but the difference is never as big as it might seem.

Q: Speaking of last year, you finished in second place here and led Legion XIII to the podium, in first place, last year. How do you plan to maintain this and achieve the individual victory this time?

Jon Rahm: Valderrama is a very difficult course where I don't know if you can ever truly feel comfortable. I imagine we all get as comfortable as we possibly can. It's a course that challenges you on every single shot, and there is no rest. It's a puzzle you have to figure out every day. Every day the conditions change, the wind direction changes, the course conditions change. So, it's a course where you have to play very, very good golf and make many, very good decisions because where you place the ball from the tee, where you place the ball around the green can change the result significantly, and one can play well and still not end up with the final round they desire. That is what makes it so engaging, so fun, and such an iconic course. With so much history. It's not long, there are options, but you have to do it very, very well.

Q: Great. We are going to open the floor to questions in Spanish, and then we will continue with English. Any questions in Spanish on this side?

Q: You are a competitive person; every time you go to a course, I imagine you are already thinking about victory. But from the moment you enter through that roundabout and start seeing Valderrama—what Valderrama means to you, what it means to return to Spain, to play here, the challenge, as Liliana just said, of winning on this course—does that motivate you in a special way to finally win here?

Jon Rahm: I would love to, I would love to. It's a course where I've either done very well or very poorly! The truth is, I haven't had a middle ground. Once we land in Málaga, the desire to win kicks in. Every step I take on the course, I think about how much I would love to win. I've been lucky enough to win on two different courses in Spain, but joining the list of champions at Valderrama would be something very special. That's why last year was such a shame, right? Missing out by just one, and even in a playoff nothing is guaranteed and Taylor played incredibly, but it excites me a lot. And it's funny because yesterday I spent some time with Javier Reviriego, the course manager, and... every time he sees me, he tells me the same thing, right? They have photos of the champions in the cafeteria and he told me the same thing yesterday, that mine is missing, putting a bit of extra pressure on me—whether that helps or not, I don't know, but it certainly gives me motivation.

Q: I wanted to ask you about your feelings at the PGA Championship, which I assume improved compared to previous majors, and if that gives you a special boost

heading into everything that lies ahead.

Jon Rahm: Well, more than a boost, it gave me some confirmation that some of the things I've been working on worked well, but you have to keep doing it. It's very easy to relax once you play well and say, "Oh, that's it, I've got it." Those famous last words spoken on a golf course: "I've got it," and the next day it's gone again. So, you have to keep working. It was a very, very good week. Honestly, I played very good golf on a complicated course. They set it up very difficult, those pins were extremely tricky, and playing three days under par was very good. So, let's see if I can keep doing the things I did well that week for the rest of the year, including the majors, and hopefully finish with a win, obviously, to keep doing things right. Let's see if heading into Shinnecock I can do more of the same because I felt very comfortable that weekend.

Q: From your experience and your global vision of golf as a member of the European Tour, having been a player on the American Tour, and in recent years a LIV player, what do you think the impact of LIV has left on world golf? What has been LIV's contribution to world golf over these years? How has it changed it? And what things, good or not so good, do you think LIV's journey leaves behind for golf? Thank you.

Jon Rahm: Well, there are a couple of things, right? First, especially in certain countries, if they have a national team, the public is always going to follow a team. They are always going to have that team to follow. What we saw in Australia and South Africa, even a bit in England, was very beautiful. And, well, those are parts of the world where they want to have good golf, which they might not have had the luck to experience, and the fact of having good players and a team to follow has worked out very well for them and made that week very emotional for them and for everyone, and very beautiful. What I would highlight the most about the transition to LIV, in general, is the hunger there is for golf around the world. The European Tour does play all over the planet, but there is work that can be done there so that the best players in the world play all over the world, like Formula 1 has done, like tennis does. It's such a beautiful sport that I wish there were more bigger tournaments in Australia, South Africa, Hong Kong, China, Japan. I understand it's difficult to travel more, but it's part of the sport where spectators have a massive hunger to see good players, or the best players, or world-class players, which they might not have had until now. I do have to give some credit to Rory, because in recent years you do see him traveling to Australia, traveling to India, traveling to tournaments where he might not have played before or not in many years, and the presence of someone like him there can make a very good impact for the tournament and for the local golf scene in whichever

country he goes to.

Q: What I would like to know is what role you players are playing in this need to attract investors to the circuit now, right? I don't know if you've been asked to use your contacts, to lend a hand in that regard, and I don't know if you've considered at some point, if the case arose and the situation got very complicated, being the one to take a step forward and, perhaps, invest in or buy the franchise you captain today. Thank you very much.

Jon Rahm: Here I would tell you: cobbler, stick to your last. I have no idea how to attract investors, I have no idea how the business works, right? My job is to play golf, and you have to trust the people in charge. So, that's a question for Scott. If we reach a point where maybe drastic decisions have to be made, we'll see, but for now, I'll tell you I hadn't thought about it. Having this week now, the US Open in two weeks, don't think I'm thinking too much about the future other than the majors and this week which, obviously, is very special for me.

Q: What is the challenge this week? The wind? The heat? Valderrama? Or yourself?

Jon Rahm: Well, regarding the heat, I'll tell you that even though I'm from Bilbao, I've been in Arizona for 14 years now. This is more of a cold day than anything else compared to what we have out there in the desert, so temperature is not an issue. Honestly, it's very nice. It's the design of the course, right? Each hole dictates a bit where you have to put the ball. You can be very aggressive if you want, but that doesn't usually work very well at Valderrama, so it's about how to find those gaps from the tee. But, of course, then you add the wind to that, and that's where things get complicated. With the wind we have today, for example, on hole 8, that fairway that slopes heavily from left to right, you have to hit a very good shot just to put it on the fairway, even with a 4-iron. Those are details that someone who hasn't played Valderrama might not realize, which make this course so complicated. From the trees, it's a bit of praying to see if you can make a par and move on to the next hole, right? It's a course where low scores are rarely shot, putting aside Tiger's year, where he won by a margin, shooting -20, -19 here. Honestly, when I watched it from home, I couldn't believe it. You have to be so precise on every single shot, from tee to green, and even around the greens, that added to the wind, you have to do it very well. It's what I said before: the course gives you a little bit, and you have to take advantage of everything it gives you, but there is no hole where you can say, "Oh, okay, I can relax here and there's a birdie opportunity," because on every shot, danger is lurking, and when you let your guard down, the course catches you, and catches you good. It has happened to me many times, just like everyone else,

and, well, you learn from that.

Q: I wanted to ask you, and this is somewhat related to the previous question, about the change of date. It has been moved forward by a month. Remember what happened last year when the wind blew hard, the greens dried out, and play had to be stopped—something unprecedented on the global tour, so to speak. How do you think this one-month advancement will affect the temperature, the condition of the greens, and the course in general?

Jon Rahm: I think that Thursday was a bit of, quote-unquote, bad luck. I don't think they had forecasted so much wind. Yes, there was wind, but not that much, and the problem was the pins on 11 and 14. With 11 being more exposed, the green, which was already firm, became almost unplayable with the wind, right? So it was a bit of that—they didn't expect the wind that came. And the same on 14, which are the two holes that were causing issues. I think they stopped play on 11, and I was about to stop it on 14 after seeing Sergio's putt, which almost went in and ended up off the green. I don't know if playing a month earlier changes much because I've been told the course is incredible, the weather has been very good, and if you're not careful and they make the greens a bit too fast and firm, you can get a day like today with the wind, and with the wrong pin position, you can't play. So, there is a bit of luck involved with the wind you get, and also knowing the course, how Valderrama plays, and knowing which pins can be played or not, nothing more. I hope we don't have to stop play this year too, but I've been told the course is so good that if they aren't careful, they might have to stop it again, so I understand it. They want the course to play as difficult as possible and they try to make the greens fast and firm, but there is a certain limit here.

Q: Where do you place Valderrama in terms of difficulty among all the courses of the LIV season? And the second question would be if it is a good litmus test, or a good stress test, heading into the US Open.

Jon Rahm: It's good practice because you have to be very patient. In the end, the US Open is a much longer course, there are no trees, it plays differently, there is wind, but it plays very differently from Valderrama. However, there will be moments when you hit a good shot and end up in a bad spot. That's golf, especially in majors, and you have to have that patience and try not to let it affect you too much. In terms of difficulty, well, of what we've played this year and thinking about what's ahead, as a course itself, how it plays every year, I think it's the most difficult of the season. Few courses are as difficult without having too much length, so to speak. It reminds me a bit of a Harbour Town or Colonial, but even more difficult than those two. In both of those places there are trees, there is wind, but

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Valderrama seems to have a bit more trick to it, where if you get lucky some year and there is no wind and it's a bit soft, scores of -12 or -13 are shot, but if not—as has been seen many times—well, maybe there is someone who doesn't even break par, or someone shoots one, two, or three under. Few courses on a regular, non-major tournament can say that, even in majors. It's something that doesn't happen often, so for me, as a challenge, out of what we play all year, it is definitely the most difficult outside of the majors.

Q: Jon, you have us very well accustomed to success in LIV, right? Last week wasn't a good week. From a distance, I didn't quite know what happened; I imagine it was just an anecdote, right? Which you can tell us about. And I also wanted to ask you about the adjustment from US-Asia, Asia-Europe, how do you manage that?

Jon Rahm: Honestly, for me, the hardest jet lag is usually Asia, I don't know why. It's the one that costs me the most, but that's no excuse. I felt very good all week. It was a course that I think when we first arrived, we all saw how short it was and said, "Oh, -20," right? And the most unique thing about that week for me was that the greens had a very thick sand base. I had never in my life played a course where from the middle of the fairway, into the wind, if I hit a full 60-degree wedge, the ball doesn't spin back, it actually rolls forward. It was something I wasn't expecting, right? So it was something you had to get used to. If you missed the fairway, it was very difficult to hold the green. And I think that was the key. I think the first two days, even the third, I didn't hit enough fairways and it made it very difficult for me to be aggressive. For example, hole 10, which is a hole where if I put the ball on the fairway, even with a 4-iron it was a wedge—I hit driver, missed the fairway every day, and had a rough time all four days. On a very short hole that, on paper, has nothing to it. So, that's an example of the kind of tricks the course had. It's true that I think if it's a course we return to for more years, once we've learned it, we will shoot lower scores, but it got complicated for us. It took me a bit longer to adjust. Once Sunday came, I did better, but it took me a bit too long to get used to how the grass and the greens were reacting, and in the end, that's what cost me the week.