

LIV Golf Chicago

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Bolingbrook Golf Club

Legion XIII

Jon Rahm

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Okay, everybody, let's welcome the winner of LIV Golf Chicago 2024 and our season-long individual champion, the captain of Legion XIII, Jon Rahm. Welcome, Jon. Let's first talk about your round today. You fired off a 66. You won the tournament by three points, 11-under total for the week. You really came in clutch to take this home. Joaquín put in an effort to catch you, and the way it was, if he would have been ahead of you, you wouldn't have won the season-long championship.

Tell me about how important today was for you and how much of a grind it was over every shot to get here.

JON RAHM: It was definitely a stressful day, right, but that pressure is a privilege that only two of us had today. That's kind of why I said yesterday, I wanted to focus on winning the tournament, because I knew if I won the tournament, there would be no doubt I would be the individual champion, as well.

You kind of want to go out with a win. It would have been very nice to get the second win, and it feels amazing to get that second win in my first season. So I focused on that.

It's not easy when Joaco starts birdie-par-birdie. I kind of stretched for pars in the first two holes, not really being in position, either on the first shot or the second shot, but great drive on 3, made birdie, great par on 4, and kind of got my round going.

Felt really comfortable all day, and once it got windy, because towards the back nine the wind picked up, it got difficult, I thought it played to my advantage because that made birdies more difficult, and I was hitting it so well that I felt like I could make pars and even give myself birdie chances.

Little did I know that 11 through 13 was going to get a little iffy; a couple wind gusts, shots that I didn't feel like they were that bad and ended up in difficult situations. I made three great par saves, and off I went towards the end of the round.



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If I had to give myself anything towards -- any critique for the day, it was maybe not making that birdie putt on 14. I did the most difficult thing, which was hitting the green in two. Hitting that first putt and not making that five-footer definitely hurt, but luckily I made the birdie putt on 17, which felt a lot better than I think making the one on 14 would have.

Q. You told us yesterday you're a big leaderboard watcher. How much were you eyeing that leaderboard today?

JON RAHM: Oh, all day. All day. Usually you can hear cheers and you know what's going on, so when I wasn't hearing anything crazy, I knew that obviously I felt like nothing was happening, which helps.

If I'm ever not going to have him in my group, it was nice to not hear the good golf ahead and still be playing good golf myself. So yeah, it was very enjoyable. It was very enjoyable.

At one point I also had to worry about Tyrrell with the start he had, and Sergio was playing good golf. It could have been a very different day had a couple of putts for Sergio fallen. But it's just not an easy golf course out there. It's very difficult to hit it close and very difficult to make those putts.

Q. You finished the season first, second, first in order to secure the season-long individual championship. Do you think we can associate your name with the word "clutch"?

JON RAHM: Well, I wasn't clutch at Greenbrier, and I wasn't clutch a lot of other parts during the season, but I'm glad I was today.

There's a lot feeding into making this day very special for me, playing with Sergio and Brooks. Last time we played together was Sunday of Valderrama, Sergio won. Last time I played with Brooks, he beat me. It was definitely a pairing that motivated me a lot to hopefully have my best, and I'm glad I did.

I know Joaco obviously played great in front of us, and I



would say to have -- not only whoever finished first and second this week but the top three spots for the individual season standings being three Hispanic players, right, two from Spain, one from Chile. I think is also very important and the impact it can have culturally for Latin America and Spain.

I think that's another thought to have out there for all of us to be proud of.

Q. How unique is it that the first, second and third podium at Chicago also ended up being first, second, third for season-long standings?

JON RAHM: Yeah. I mean, you can't really script it that much better, right? I think it would have been very underwhelming if me and Joaco finished 21st and 22nd, so the fact that we both came out and we played good and you have that story to tell and it comes down to basically the last few holes, I think it's also more exciting for whoever wins, but it's a lot more exciting, I would say, for the viewers out there, too, to watch good golf because we're competing for the big championship.

Q. You have got that ring on. Tell us about the ring.

JON RAHM: It doesn't fit right now. It's too big for my pinky and too small for the other fingers. It's all good. I do have sausage fingers.

We were trying to do the QR Code thing that Ben told me about, but there's a little bit too much bling bothering the camera.

It's really special. I have had a ring before for winning Pac-12 Championships, and that was special. For some reason to think of the ring rather than a trophy, in a weird way it makes it a little bit more, maybe because I associate it to football and basketball and U.S. events. I feel like I'm that Americanized at this point. I don't know, it's special.

I feel like in a weird sense, you're part of a select group that get to have a championship ring, which is not a possibility in other sports.

In itself, I think it's just being able to wear what it represents. I think seeing it firsthand right away as soon as we finished what this means is very special.

Q. Just taking a moment to reflect now that you can exhale, you did it, you took it home, can you reflect on the season for us? Thinking all the way back to when I first met you in New York when we signed you and everything that's transpired since then, just take it all in for us and give us some reflections.

JON RAHM: It's been -- I wouldn't say bumpy road, but definitely windy. Made the decision to join LIV Golf, fully confident that I can make an impact, and you deal with the emotions of that decision, the impact of the media, good and bad, and then going out to the season trying to win, trying to get a team together, a message of the team across, and then get those winning moments and start the year off great. 17 tee at Mayakoba, tied for the lead, and absolutely ruined completely on the last two holes, and that was my start of the LIV Golf season.

But to keep fighting, keep putting myself in position, having chances to win, it was great, but there was a before and after between Singapore and Houston when I changed that driver shaft to something that worked a little bit better with my current swing speed and made me not compensate as much. Kind of felt better, a more natural swing, easier for myself to hit the fade, and that's when I saw the big difference.

From Nashville on, my level of golf was a little bit higher, more comfortable, where I didn't feel like I had to try so much. At that point it's when I felt the win was almost at that point just a matter of time and getting it done at JCB was incredible.

Amongst all that, the personal situation with Kelley's issues and the pregnancy, it's something that from pretty much April on wasn't easy at all. To be gone in Europe for a month while she was dealing with that and away from family wasn't easy, and to now come towards the end where we're almost -- can almost feel like what it's going to feel like to hold our baby girl and get the second win and the championship done, it almost feels like it's too good to be true after the year that we've had. Can't wait to go home in that sense and be able to give them a hug today.

Q. Now that you've had a year out on LIV Golf and had the full LIV Golf experience, just would love to get your perspective on this league and everything you've experienced this year out here.

JON RAHM: For anybody out there that's wondering, it is a little bit different experience than any other Tour out there, but it is closer experience to pretty much any other sport out there.

As a captain, I was curious to see how different the dynamics were going to be, of really not being in charge of three players but being who they maybe went to for advice -- maybe not so Tyrrell because he's a fantastic player but Kieran and Caleb being younger and less experienced, showing them the way and just how certain things in professional golf at the highest level works was something



I didn't know how I was going to handle. Turns out I like giving advice. Hopefully it was good advice.

When it comes to golf, I thoroughly enjoyed it. Being able to go to Adelaide, Hong Kong, Singapore, all those places in Asia and Australia was quite unique and so much fun. I hadn't played in that part of the world, and to see the crowd, the love they had for us and the support for the game was absolutely heartwarming just to be able to be a part of that.

Even in weeks like that, we're in the U.S., Nashville, Doral, they were all incredible.

I think this league has gotten a lot of -- quite a bit of a bad rap without people having experienced it. They've been too quick to judge. I think the vast majority of them would absolutely love spending a day out here.

Most people that don't like the music, the second they come, they get over it. It's part of the atmosphere like in many other sports, and as a player and as a family man, it's been a fantastic experience for myself and my family the times that they've been able to come.

Can't wait to get this season finished next week and start thinking about next year and seeing some different destinations.

Q. The work is not over yet. You can still take home the team championship next week in Dallas. Are you going to start shifting your mindset after enjoying this for a moment to see how you can dominate in Dallas?

JON RAHM: It's very nice that I'm able to have that bye date to go home. We don't play until Saturday so we can have the luxury of going home on Monday and flying Tuesday afternoon.

I think having that bit of a break, being able to take the kids to school tomorrow morning, pick them up and be with them is going to be a nice before and after between this one and next week, and maybe even get to celebrate a little bit with some friends and just enjoy what I've accomplished this week. It would be a nice way to shift the mind into what we need to accomplish next week.

Q. You've won majors, you've won tournaments all over the world, Ryder Cups. What does a season-long championship mean to you?

JON RAHM: It's a different accomplishment because it's not just one week. Can't really compare anything to majors in the sport that we live in, but being able to win the season-long race in two out of the three big leagues and

having almost done it on the PGA Tour, as well, it's a different feeling. Just being able to culminate all the good golf all season, and especially doing it by winning individually today I think is what makes it so much more special, knowing that I had to win and getting it done is something to really be proud of and something to reflect on.

When I get to a point like this, I always think about the amount of work that a lot of people have to put in for me to get to this position and how thankful I am for everybody around on my team. It all starts with my wife because without her support, it wouldn't be the same.

But from Jeff, our team manager, and my personal manager, swing coach Jeff, my trainer Spencer, my physio Harry, who's on the road, and then the one I see at home, Jimmy, friends like Sunil, mental coaches like Brett McCabe and Joseba that I see in Spain, it's a large team just to help me perform at the level I want.

Somebody that I haven't mentioned many times that I work with physically, Andy Galpin, talk to Andy Galpin, who I've seen a big change in how my body responds since I've started working with him. Andy, thank you. I don't even know if he'll see this.

But it makes me really happy to have such a good core group of people around me. It's very special to be able to have this moment and be able to share it with them in the future.

Q. The season-long title, two tournament wins, top 10s in every tournament you finished, would you say the season exceeded your expectations? Did it meet your expectations?

JON RAHM: I accomplished a goal, yeah. I wouldn't say it exceeded my expectations because I had a few other chances to win, with Greenbrier and Mayakoba being the two closest. But it definitely met what I expected.

I could say maybe it will exceed the expectations if we get the win done next Sunday.

Q. I did want to ask you about your play this week. You had one bogey in the first round and obviously went bogey free this weekend. Given the course, how impressive is that in your mind?

JON RAHM: Honestly, when we've played the practice rounds and knowing how firm it was going to be, I didn't think that would be nearly a possibility.

It's a nice little stat to have, and really personally admire

myself because very rarely am I praised for my short game, and I think my ball-striking can take away from that, and I can positively say that my short game definitely won me the tournament this week, some of the up-and-downs I made and even making some of those six-footers like the one on 12 and 11 kept the day going.

I think the short game this week definitely has shined through.

Q. I was going to ask you about the par saves. Do you feel like that was kind of the key point, or was it 17 that gave you a little bit of space?

JON RAHM: Well, there's a key change that -- 10, 11, 12 I think was where things could have gone wrong, and I saved it. It's almost impossible to play a final round flawlessly on a golf course like this, especially with the green on 12. You're either five feet for birdie or in a disaster zone hoping to make par.

It's tough, and with the wind picking up, it made it a little bit more difficult. That's where I feel like I maintained. Luckily nobody made birdies in all those holes and I could maybe get back to attacking on 13 through 15. Then I made a little bit of a mess of -- not a mess, but made it a lot more difficult on myself on 13. But that stretch right there, not dropping a shot on any of those, was fine.

Even the three-putt on 14, as much as it bothers me, is not a par-5 that a lot of people are probably birdieing today in just the conditions there were. I knew a 5 wouldn't kill me.

Q. You took driver at 15. In your mind was that a risk at all? They seemed to think so a little bit on TV.

JON RAHM: Never. Nah. With it being in off the left, I knew I could just be aggressive and hit a fade. If I over-fade it, I'm in the bunker or in the upslope in the rough, plenty of green to work with. If I hit a good one, I knew I could put it on the green or be just short where the chip was the easiest.

Then seeing Sergio's 3-wood, his 3-wood got nearly up there. If I hit a 3-wood and left myself downhill in the fairway, it's not the easiest pitch shot into a firm green, so I thought the closest, the better.

Hit a heck of a tee shot. If that ball goes a little bit higher like I intended, could have had a good chance of staying on the green, but just being short in the rough was a perfect spot, and gave myself a good look from eight feet up the hill, just wasn't able to convert it.

Q. I asked you this question earlier this week and you

said you wanted to wait until Sunday, but does this change your perception of the season, what you did today?

JON RAHM: It doesn't change the perception, but it just confirms a lot of what I thought and what I've been doing really well. I feel like every time I've been able to win, it's just a confirmation of the job well done. Again, like I keep saying, a lot to be really proud of personally.

Q. You already answered one of my questions about the drive on 15, but --

JON RAHM: Was that really a questionable thing?

Q. I mean, I'm not playing the course. I don't know how tight it is up there.

JON RAHM: I was thinking birdie.

Q. I want to talk about 17, as well. What did you hit off the tee there?

JON RAHM: 8-iron.

Q. At that point, how challenging is it to not shift into protection mode and still go after things and still play normal? Like you said, sometimes late in rounds this year it hasn't quite gone your way. Could you talk about the mental challenge there?

JON RAHM: Yeah. I mean, even that back nine, you can ask my caddie Adam, I hit the shots the way I wanted to, we just had a few gusts. Like on 11 and 12 we had wind gusts to end up as short as they did.

A weird wind situation on 13 where the ball fell right instead of left because it's hammering down off the right. Even on 16, we're going to that firm green and having very tight margins, it's almost like you need to be aggressive to conservative spots, and even on 16 I thought I nailed it and it was just short.

Going to 17 and seeing both of them not hit a good shot kind of -- not opened my eyes but made me realize what shot I had to hit which was clearly -- started further right than you think because that wind was whipping, and trust your number. We had to trust that the wind wasn't hurting, and if a certain shot with the 8-iron is 155 meters, hit it perfect, landed 153 and ended up in the perfect spot. If somebody told you where to place it on that green, 10 feet away, I think everybody would go exactly where my ball ended up, left-edge putt up the hill.

What felt best was hitting the best putt of the entire week



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on that hole. To feel that good a stroke under pressure and see that ball go in that center of the hole was about as satisfying as golf can get.

Q. I don't know if you've talked about the driver shaft thing, the change mid-season. Could you elaborate a little bit more about what you did there and how you feel about the driver since then?

JON RAHM: Well, I've drove it much better. Maybe stats-wise it doesn't show much of a difference, but there was a lot of weeks where I would make a good swing and the ball would start left and not cut. That was the issue. I thought it was my swing.

Finally I talked to somebody at Callaway, and Adam and my swing coach Dave, and they all thought maybe we should reconsider a new driver shaft.

Went to Easy-Peasy and Callaway in San Diego, their headquarters, tried a bunch, and the second I hit this one, it was instantly, okay, this is different, this is better. That's kind of where I got back to not manipulating the shot to make it fade and see the ball start on a certain line and trajectory.

While I was compensating my swing to try to hit fairways, it was bleeding into the rest of my game.

It was getting to a point where I was making other good swings and still feeling like they were good swings and they were going straight left, which is very unusual for me, and that slowly started to come back with that shaft, and that was -- Nashville I saw a big difference. Not perfect but a big difference, and that's when I thought towards the rest of the season, okay, this is more familiar territory, more to how I usually hit it. Almost not really thought it, but almost thought that it was basically a matter of time until I was going to give myself a good chance to win.

Q. The foot injury that kept you out of the U.S. Open, how long did it take you to come back from that and feel like you were 100 percent back out here on the Tour?

JON RAHM: Yeah, it was odd because we had a couple weeks off at home where I couldn't do much, and Houston, couldn't do much. U.S. Open week, I didn't do anything at all. It's a weird diagnosis, from what we thought it was to what it ended up being. That thing was Tuesday or Wednesday of the U.S. Open when they finally opened up the wound and showed me what it was. It was pretty clear.

A lot of work to make sure the infection was gone, and from then on to avoid what happened -- it really didn't take

me that long to get back into shape. In a weird way, it was kind of a nice reset from not having played that great maybe and up to my expectations earlier on in the year. Took it as a weird -- just rest time to be at home, to be with the family, to mentally reset and get ready for the end of the year, and that's what I did, and it ended up working really, really well.

Kind of the idea really -- it really felt like I was back in Valderrama because I played really good that week. Hit it fantastic. Maybe didn't make as many putts as I would have liked, but hit it really, really well and finished in a good top 10, and that's what made the rest of the year be what it is.

Q. You talked about the crowds you saw in other parts of the world. Based on the fan support you saw here, how much would you like to be back in Chicago at LIV Golf next year?

JON RAHM: I have a pretty good track record in Chicago, so I'm always going to be happy to come back. I've played Olympia Fields twice, won once; played at Medinah, I think I finished top 5; played at Conway Farms, definitely top 10, I don't know if it was top 5 or not; and came here and won. Yeah, I would encourage to come back to Chicago because I definitely like coming here and playing golf in this city.

Q. I'm sure you're trying to get on a plane soon so we can make it quick, but did you have champagne shot into your nose during the celebration?

JON RAHM: Yes.

Q. How does that feel?

JON RAHM: Not good. I told Tyrrell not to do it again, and he did it again on the podium. You've got to breathe, right, so it was at one point where I thought it was gone, and his bottle kept going, and I tried to breathe and it went right up my nose.

Q. Today and yesterday you mentioned enjoying giving advice to teammates of yours, and that is a part of the captaincy that you didn't necessarily know about yourself, that you enjoy giving advice. Is there a part of this season where that kind of hit you or some advice that you gave to someone that it kind of dawned on you?

JON RAHM: No, I think it's a reflection throughout the year. It's funny, when I finished my college career, the one regret I had is not speaking up more. So not sharing my thoughts when I thought somebody was doing something

wrong. It's definitely something that I've had in mind this year when I thought I needed to speak up to do so. Obviously tried to be constructive, tried to make them understand what I'm thinking, but definitely speak up when I thought somebody was doing something iffy.

I hope that I've done a good job. I don't know if my teammates agree or not. But it's not always easy to get something through the skull of a professional golfer because I know myself, I'm very hard-headed, and most of us in general -- because this sport drives you absolutely nuts, are like that, so you've got to pick your spots and get to know your teammates before you know how to relay that message.

But yeah, it's something that I don't know why I enjoy. It's just the feeling of helping somebody. It's just a nice feeling to have.

Q. Last thing is you finished the season top 10 in every event that you finish out here. To us, we see T6, 3, 1, 2 and they look a lot like just singular results. But when you accomplish that, does it feel different to you than it probably does when we look at it?

JON RAHM: It's very nice early on, but then as the weeks go by, it's almost a little bit of pressure that adds on to keep it going.

I remember in Valderrama on that third hole, I ran my 30-footer six feet by and I was fully aware that that putt was to stay in the top 10. Put myself a little bit under more pressure, and it's something that matters. Top 10 percentage in my mind absolutely matters. I want to finish as high as I can.

If at the end of my career they can say, oh, Jon finished top 10 X amount of times, X percentage of the time, it's incredible.

I pride myself that throughout most of my pro career I've had a top 10 percentage around 50 percent, and yeah, it's an honor to be able to say that, and it's something that I work for because it matters. I fight until the end of the every shot matters the most to me. I think that kind of shows that.

I definitely think about it throughout the year. It's something that it means a lot to be able to say that.

Q. Jon, I realize this is down the list of priorities at this point, but when you left here on Wednesday, the whole Ryder Cup thing seemed -- and Spanish Open seemed a little up in the air to us based on what you said. Obviously you guys decided to challenge the

penalties. Was that kind of hit or miss whether you were going to do that? Did you take that decision to the last minute, and when you left here, was there a chance that you were not going to appeal?

JON RAHM: I think when I left -- because I did my media, was it Wednesday?

Q. Correct, and they had to know by Thursday morning.

JON RAHM: Yeah, we sent the email I think it was at 5:00 Thursday morning. I think when I left here, I was about 99.8 percent sure that I was going to appeal. I think I had that decision almost made, but you're still waiting towards the end after hearing that there were certain meetings happening in New York that maybe things would change or not.

But it basically came down to first with the personal situation we have going on at home, I don't know if it would have been the best for Kelley and I and our family to have to go through the stress of not playing in Spain and possibly jeopardizing the Ryder Cup, and two, the fact that I've always loved being able to go play in Spain and give back to the country that's given me so much.

It would have just felt wrong to not be at the Spanish Open.

With the hopes that things are going to improve in the future, as well, it basically became pretty clear that I wanted to appeal, fulfill my requirements as a European Tour member, and hopefully be able to qualify or be considered for Ryder Cup next year.

Q. As exhilarating as this day is for you, you will be losing one of your team members, Kieran, for the next season. Can you just tell us what kind of -- I'm sure you've not had a word with him as yet, but what will you tell him, and will he find a friend in you for life to get better?

JON RAHM: I'll tell him that no matter what, he's got my phone number. If he wants or if he needs anything, any advice, all he needs to do is text me, and I'll respond. We've shared a lot this year, and whenever you compete as a team, that just doesn't go away.

Unfortunately he didn't play his best. He's extremely talented and capable of a lot more than he showed this year, which is the cruel reality of LIV Golf. But if I'm not mistaken he still has a chance.

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JON RAHM: Exactly, so he still has a chance of maybe making his way back. Still no easy task, but he did do it once, so he might be able to do it again.

Advice would be to get his head in the game because we've got one more week, and then maybe after that we can discuss future.

But he's got plenty of talent. He just got engaged. Things in his personal life are going well. He's a heck of a person. He's one of those people that's always happy, always smiling, always dancing, whistling. Kind of annoying sometimes to be honest, especially with me and Tyrrell in the group, who are usually the grumpy bunch. He's got a lot of potential. I hope he gets to succeed in the game of golf in the future.

Q. Again talking about that shot on the 15th --

JON RAHM: I did not think that tee shot was going to be the thing to talk about.

Q. Does that show your kind of Spanish "Toro" mentality that you never back down? Will there be ever a chance that you would think of hitting a 3-wood or an iron off that tee?

JON RAHM: No. The driver is the best club in my bag and I've been hitting it good all week. If you've seen my tee shots, great tee shot on 10, great tee shot on 11, great tee shot on 12 and on 14. There is no chance in hell I'm not hitting driver on that hole. Wind in off the left, aiming basically at the end of the bunker, if I hit a good shot it's in a good spot. If I over-release and it goes dead straight, it has a chance to go at the pin, which is what happened.

No, you can use the extra adrenaline to maybe get close, right, especially after seeing Sergio's 3-wood, how close he got, is when I realized if I hit this on line, I didn't even have to hit it good, we're going to have a good look at up-and-down for birdie, so I never thought of anything else, to be honest.

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