

LIV Golf Chicago

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Chicago, Illinois, USA

Bolingbrook Golf Club

Legion XIII

Jon Rahm

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Let's welcome Jon Rahm, captain of Legion XIII. Well played today, 4-under par round of 6. You are 7-under for the tournament, currently tied second. Talk us through your round and your week so far today.

JON RAHM: Score-wise it's almost a tale of two nines, but feeling wise felt great all day. Starting on 2, so my first 10 holes being 2-over par without really feeling like I was swinging bad or making mistakes. Just very strong winds. Felt like it was 20 miles an hour plus the entire day nonstop, and then very firm fairways, firm greens, and they're small. So maneuvering those bounces you need a little bit of luck sometimes.

I felt like I was -- I didn't hit it as close to the hole as I thought I was going to on some of the swings, and then the two mistakes I made on those 10 holes cost me two bogeys, but then everything kind of shifted.

I made an incredible swing on 12 on that second shot with a 4-iron. That was about as good as I can hit a golf shot, and making that eagle is what kind of propelled and changed the momentum the rest of the round and gave myself a really good chance on those final nine holes.

Happy to give myself another chance going into tomorrow.

Q. Looking towards the season standings, obviously a few things needed to happen this week between you and Joaquín. You're currently nine shots ahead of him. Will that play into your mind tomorrow or are you just focused on this week?

JON RAHM: All of that is a consequence of how I play on the course, so not really. The goal is to win, and by winning I'll get the most amount of points I can possibly get and then I need a little luck on my side that Joaquín doesn't have a good week. Just because he hasn't so far doesn't mean that tomorrow he can't shoot low and give himself some outside chance of earning some points. No matter what if I win, I'm going to have a real possibility of catching him and possibly passing him next week.

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The goal is up to what I can do this week and hopefully defend my title.

Q. Jon, obviously you won here last year. You're in contention again this year. Did you think right away this was a course that, yeah, this is a course that I'm really comfortable on?

JON RAHM: I don't know if it's something I ever think, to be honest. I think it helps that I played good last year. I think it helps that it's somewhat similar setup this year. Completely different wind but it's firm.

If anything, I would say the type of grass, right, this thick rough, it's similar to what I grew up in, undulating greens like this. It's similar to what I grew up in.

I feel like I've had a really good touch around the greens the last two days, and I did great last year as well.

But besides all that, you still need to play good, and that's the main thing. I've hit it really well off the tee last year and this year, and I've just been accurate for the most part and saved a lot of the pars. That usually is a recipe for anywhere.

I think a lot of this year is kind of riding in the confidence that I got here last year.

Q. Tomorrow you're playing with Ballester; obviously a young Spaniard. How much have you played with him during the last few years? Have you had a chance to practice with him at all?

JON RAHM: I spent some time with him in Arizona. Not as much as you would think for somebody that's been at ASU for four years like him, but I'm well aware of his abilities and his game.

I'm fully aware that tomorrow I'm probably going to be by far the shortest in the group, which doesn't happen often, but you have two guys that have 190 plus ball speed whenever they need to. Luckily I know what to expect, and I know that's just going to be what happens.

It's just in a weird way a good feeling, a good sense,

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because I played with Sergio on Sunday last year and was able to get the win, so hopefully it repeats itself where I play with another Spaniard and I get the win as well.

Besides all that, just happy that he's doing this well this early, and hoping nothing but the best for him tomorrow, and hopefully we all have a fun day and give a good show for the viewers.

Q. Last year and this year there have been two out of the three players in the final group Spaniards. Is there something about this course that makes a Spaniard comfortable here playing?

JON RAHM: I mean, besides what I said earlier about the grass, a little bit of the undulated greens and thick rough around the greens, nothing with how this golf course plays is remotely close to what I grew up on. So I don't know.

I think in general, if you're generalizing the way Spanish people play, there's a level of creativity and ability on the greens that all of us are usually known for, and I think obviously that's going to help a lot on a setup like this. We're all going to miss greens, we're all going to miss fairways. That's the nature of the difficulty, so being able to have the ability to give yourself the best chance in those situations, I think it feeds into that.

But I would just say it's more the fact that both of us happened to play really good this year and Sergio and I happened to play really good last year. I don't think there's anything that would correlate just because we're from Spain. I wish.

Q. You've gained strokes off the tee in 26, this will probably make 27 consecutive events. Does that surprise you, and how have you been able to stay consistent in that part of your game?

JON RAHM: Yes, because for the most part this year has felt pretty bad. Valderrama was good, and this week feels good again, but I would say I've been fighting my swing off the tee for the better part of a year. I'm very surprised, yeah.

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