

LIV Golf Indianapolis

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Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

The Club at Chatham Hills

Jon Rahm

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Let's welcome captain of Legion XIII, Jon Rahm. Jon, your T2 finish in Chicago last week closed the gap on Joaquín Niemann in the individual standings, setting up an exciting two-horse race for the title. How much of an impact did that result have on your approach heading into this week?

JON RAHM: Well, it certainly made things a little bit easier than if I was 20 to 30 points behind and having a small chance of possibly getting it done.

I think the objective, obviously, is still going to be the same. I still believe I need to win this week, being a 12-point gap. If I win, I think that basically takes care of things, unless he finishes solo second.

I also think for my personal gratification, right, getting that win would definitely close out the year very, very nicely, and in a weird way, I wouldn't like to leave much up to chance. Had I won last week, this week would be basically who finishes higher on the leaderboard.

Made the job a little bit easier for myself, and at the same time a little bit more difficult with close I was last week.

Q. We're here in Indianapolis this week, expecting a great turnout. You had a chance to visit the iconic Indianapolis Motor Speedway on Monday. Can you tell us what that experience was like, and if Legion XIII were to get the win this week would you be open to the traditional milk celebration?

JON RAHM: 100 percent. I already told them, too, that will happen, and before we head to Detroit, where if somebody wins individually or the team wins as a team, I think -- whoever does it, actually, should go to the actual Brickyard Crossing and take a famous picture of kissing the bricks because I think it's a cool tradition, and if you can get it done, then why not. I think it would be cool to do it.

I refused to do it that day because I don't want to jinx the team or myself. But the milk, I feel like it would be a very easy one to do, and to substitute champagne with milk I



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think would be really, really fun to do.

Q. Jon, the first round you played in LIV Golf was obviously at Mayakoba. The group ahead of you, Joaco was in that group and shot 59 that day. Then later in Jeddah, you guys played together. I think he shot 62, he shot 63. It's kind of been, like, this competition between the two of you ever since. How would you kind of sum up your competition with Joaco these past two years?

JON RAHM: I never really thought about it that way. He's a fantastic competitor, fantastic golfer, great person as well. It's a lot of fun to share the stage with him.

He's obviously been playing great golf, and even though I was able to get the best of him last year, he certainly made the job hard this year.

I guess I never thought about it this year, and I feel like in a weird way, it should be more one-sided with what he was able to do, with how many wins he's had this year. I guess consistency can pay off, but man, winning five times anywhere, anytime is incredible. My hat's off to him to what he's been able to do. Hopefully I can get the job done this week and pull off the upset.

But I would like him to continue doing what he's doing and hopefully I can elevate my game to be able to compete with him more often and maybe steal a few of those wins that keep that going.

Not that I would ever think it's a rivalry or anything like that, but he's certainly put himself there. Seven wins in two years is spectacular. It's somebody that's a lot of fun to play with. I think both of us being Spanish speakers, it's just a little level of comfort that we have, and just admire his game as well. It's just fun to watch him play golf.

Q. Is there anything that you've learned about him, whether it's about his game, maybe just about him personally that you didn't know before you got to LIV?

JON RAHM: Not that we are asking personal questions while we're playing, so it can be very superficial unless we have a bit of a delay for whatever reason. The only thing I've found out is his love for cars, which I share, so we've



been able to talk about that a little bit. Not that I'm asking about his personal life while we're playing, so not too much deeper than that.

Q. Anything about his game?

JON RAHM: I like to observe because mid-round or mid-tournament I don't think he's going to give me anything. I just like to watch and observe what he's doing and how he's doing things. It's very interesting.

He really has all the shots and the ability to pull off any shots, so he's somebody anybody can learn from. And the process, as well; what you're seeing in practice and how people prepare, there's some things you can learn from that. But not from straight-up asking, no. Not yet.

Q. Golf is obviously a game where it's really hard to be at your very best for an extended period of time, and you've obviously been at the very top and the best player in the world. How close are you right now to your A+ game?

JON RAHM: I think that can be difficult to answer because I think as golfers or as athletes or performance, there's an idea of where we'd like to be. In my mind that is so astronomically high that I would always feel myself far away from that in a way, just as a motivator to keep working every day.

There's been weeks where I've played really good, but I would say overall, I haven't hit my "A" game in quite a while. I think maybe B+ is the best we've seen in a better part of two years, starting in 2023, after the Masters. It was a bit of a struggle that year.

Ryder Cup was one of the weeks where I saw part of the "A" game. I think Chicago last year was close to that as well. Greenbrier, Chicago was close to an "A" game. But for overall, it's been around Bs.

I've been able to compete and post good scores, but if you can feel internally what I was feeling, you would understand how uncomfortable we've been in certain situations and how it's been.

I can also see the trending is changing, how I've been playing better in majors this year, how I've been playing a little bit better as of late. Valderrama was a great week. Played really, really good in Valderrama. Last week was also really, really good.

I can see the trend. But for the better part of two years, it hasn't been where I would like to be.

Q. Tell us what you're looking forward to playing this course here in Chatham Hills.

JON RAHM: So I've only gotten to see the back nine. I haven't seen the whole course yet. When you come to a new venue, it's a bit of we don't know what to expect. We knew the weather has been quite harsh with temperature changes and the rain, so I'm very pleased with the condition of the course overall. The greens are fantastic. The fairways are somehow firm with how much water they've had. Excited for that.

Back nine, overall, from what I've seen and what I've heard, also about the front nine, there's quite a bit of scoring opportunities. When the course is in good shape, it's not the longest, not the trickiest yet. I think if we keep coming, they're going to be able to make some changes to make this a much more competition course.

I would say this year, short of a crazy win coming which is not forecasted, I would expect the scores to be low, but I do know the fans like that, so it's going to be a week where you're going to see a lot of birdies happen, a lot of eagles.

My first time to Indianapolis, so so far it's been a great experience, really good week, really good few days. Was able to enjoy St. Elmo's steakhouse yesterday, got to see downtown a little bit. The only thing left to do is for me to play good golf.

Q. You talked about your last two years, and I remember in Rome, Rory at one point in the celebration saying, "I'm playing with the best guy in the world over here," in you. Because you are such a history guy and you love that stuff, I'm curious -- and you are so self-aware when you talk about your game, do you think about that stuff? Do you think about when you're going through a time where you're not quite where you want to be, where am I stacking up in history and with my peers?

JON RAHM: No. I try to compare with myself because the competition should be within myself and what I can do and what I can control. Obviously scores tell you how far you are from the next guys, but the way I evaluate it I just haven't been able to win as much as I would have liked to. I've definitely been in position and had chances, but I haven't been able to get it done. Comparing it to that.

Again, when I'm saying not playing my best, I may be being a little harsh. But it's from there to what I know I could be is what I'm comparing it to and what I'd like to be.

It's close, but it's just been a little bit difficult, and it all started with changes in 2023. I think I've said that, and

having to adjust some equipment and some bad behaviors in the swing that are harder to get rid of than one would like. It's very easy to create new bad habits, and it's very hard to get rid of them. So it's been a bit of that, but I can see the changes and improvement coming.

I'm extremely hopefully for whatever is coming in the future, as well. Looking forward to that.

Q. You were clearly so invigorated at the PGA this year and you said it was "the most fun I've had in a while." What do you do with that then the next few weeks? What do you do with that feeling and carry it forward?

JON RAHM: Well, it was bittersweet because it was great for 69 holes, and it was just a harsh ending, one of those things that I was working on didn't quite happen on 16 and 17. It's unfortunate, but that day, making the par saves that I needed to early on and playing good golf and hitting the shots, the crowd support, it was exciting to be a part of it again and actually hit the shots that I needed to. That 5-wood on 14, the drive on 15 and the 4-iron on 15 were incredible, and too bad I couldn't get birdies done.

But to be a part of that and execute those shots up until that moment was -- it was fun to be a part of that again. I had top 10s majors, but they were a little bit of a back-door top 10 that doesn't give you the same feeling; you're not in contention there.

It's almost like a little bit of a shining moment for, okay, what you're doing is working, especially working under pressure. Just got to tweak some things to make it last all the way. Got to learn from those moments.

But I take it as a sign of shining light and what I'm working on is working because sometimes it's frustrating where you were putting in all this effort and you don't always see the results happen the way you would want to, and when you get a moment where it's clear as day, okay, this was very comfortable, it's a very good thing.

Q. Curious, comparing your path last year to the path this year, would you agree that it's tougher to repeat?

JON RAHM: I think it's always equally tough. It's a bit of -- in golf, you work so hard so accomplish something, and the second you get it done, you find yourself at the base of the mountain again having to start all over. So I think it's always equally difficult. Especially when somebody plays really good, everybody else around is working just as hard to try to get to that level.

So I feel like you need to increase your level accordingly

for everything to happen again. I don't think it's harder the second time around. I just think it's always equally difficult.

Q. Caleb had a drive of 443 yards last week. I was wondering if he was bragging about it this week.

JON RAHM: No. No. I didn't even know. What hole was it on? Probably on 14? A lot of those -- with the fairways so firm -- he definitely hits it really far, but you need a combination of the right ball flight that lands in the right spot in the fairway, but there's certainly about seven guys that can hit it further than him and many that can hit it further than me. So my next question would almost be, what did you do on the hole, because if you tell me he hit a 440-yard drive and made par on the par-5, it doesn't have the same weight. If you birdied, good on you, well done, and need more of those coming.

Q. When you reflect on your career and all the weeks that you've won, is there a positive energy between you, your team and all involved versus weeks that you don't win?

JON RAHM: Yeah. I mean, the team win is always very, very special. But when one of us gets to win as well, it makes it even better. Being there when Tyrrell got his win, first win in a few years, was really, really fun to see, see him actually smiling, generally happy. It was great. And to add the team win to that -- it's too bad we couldn't celebrate properly because there was a thunderstorm coming in.

But it was fun, and then obviously in Chicago for me individually and having the team there as well, and all the other times we've won as a team, where maybe individually we didn't get it done, my case in Valderrama I would say, we still got the team win, which is to me something that's really, really fun to be a part of, to have the team out there and the team all compete and see the leaderboard up and down. It's what makes LIV Golf special. I think it's what's going to make this be as unique as it is.

For all of us involved to have that team experience, it's really, really fun. I would say if you go based on the images last week, Dean almost seemed happier to celebrate with the team than to win himself, and I think that says it all.

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