

# The Memorial Tournament Presented By Workday

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Dublin, Ohio, USA

Muirfield Village

## Jon Rahm

### Press Conference

AMANDA HERRINGTON: We'll like to welcome world No. 2 Jon Rahm to the interview room here at the Memorial Tournament Presented by workday.

Jon making your 13th start of the PGA TOUR season with one win, five Top 10s. It has been an eventful last two years for you here at the Memorial Tournament, first with your win in 2020 and then the events of last year.

Coming back this year, what reaction do you have when you arrived on site?

JON RAHM: Not going to lie, it was nice to be able to walk into the clubhouse this time and enjoy the little area they have for, Champions Locker Room. So that was fun. You know, a few flashbacks here and there.

But besides that, it's all good vibes. It's a golf course that I enjoy. It's a golf course that I like and I'm comfortable on, so hopefully I can do it a third year and keep playing good golf and give myself a chance on Sunday.

**Q. You were on such a roll last year, I remember standing there and watching and thinking it was going to be a great Sunday. Coming back in this year, I've already picked you to win. I think you're going to come in and you're going to take care of it. Are you ready to pick up for lost time? Were you lost? Good feelings come back? Why this course do you play it so well, do you think?**

JON RAHM: Honestly I don't think there's any particular reason as to why I play good. You know, sometimes you're more comfortable on some places than others.

I can tell you the first time I played here in 2017, I believe, for some reason, I absolutely hated it. I didn't play good. I missed the cut. I think it was my first missed the cut as a pro, and I was just like, "I'm done. Never going back."

And Adam, my caddie, kept telling me, "Man, I'm telling you, this place is great for you. You just need to learn how



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to -- you know, certain holes and certain shots, and you'll be great for it." We came back and I won.

Yeah, feelings changed. It's definitely a golf course where you have to learn a bit of the strategy, and you have to think your way around it, right. The first time I played it, I hit a lot of drivers constantly. The next times, not as many, right. Being on the fairway in position is very, very important.

So I think I learned to play it, and it does favor obviously the better ball-striker, right. You need to be able to control the flight of your golf ball, to control the flight of your tee shots, spin rate, pretty much everything, right.

It's a challenge in every which way to get close to the pin. And I think it shows with the people that have had great success, right. I mean, Patrick Cantlay and Collin Morikawa are the other two guys that played great the last few years, are two guys that have a lot of control over the golf ball; what to say about Tiger, obviously. So I think it's a combination of things in that sense.

And then you add the fact that I like these type of greens. Bentgrass is something I grew up on and I'm comfortable on as well. So I think it's a combination of a lot of things. But it's just a good tournament. You know, I enjoy the challenge.

**Q. To go from here to then winning the U.S. Open a couple week after, have you thought in the year since just how, I guess, insane emotionally those two kind of highs and lows were for you?**

JON RAHM: I mean, it wasn't really a low, though. Yes, I walked off the course, I was told I couldn't play, and I was mad for about ten minutes, right. I allowed myself to be upset. But instantly my switched flipped and I called my wife and I made sure that she was okay and my son was okay.

Once I knew they were okay, I was in my little trailer, that little COVID hut we had, and me and my caddie were laughing. We ordered milkshakes and we were laughing at the funny part of everything, right. I mean, the fact that that happened; that I had a six-shot lead and it's gone, I can't



even play, right. I mean, it's just -- the irony of it all kind of made us laugh.

But at that moment, I chose to just remember how good I had played. I had played really good golf all year last season but it was the first time everything was clicking, and that was right before the thick of the season.

So I felt nothing but comfortable and confident for the summer. And really, I didn't let it slow me down and I played great golf the rest of the summer up to The Ryder Cup. I chose to just stay in the positive of things. And when I got home and I was dealing with COVID, I still stayed hopeful. All the hard work I've done the previous months since I switched to Callaway, it doesn't just go like that, right.

So I was confident when I stepped up at Torrey that I could get it done, and that's what I'm saying, it wasn't really a low. Besides the worrying part about the disease, obviously I consider myself extremely lucky of how everything came out. Nobody was severely ill. Nobody had anything to really deal with that was dramatic. I've heard stories of people that get in the ICUs and have effects afterwards and it takes them months to recover, and we didn't have to deal with any of that. So in that sense I was extremely lucky.

**Q. Those type of withdrawals now, that's not even possible now with the kind of updated policy of not mandatory testing, and everything is self-reported, right, symptoms and all that?**

JON RAHM: Yeah. Well, I mean, at that point we were getting tested every week. So if somebody around you tested positive --

**Q. Not now.**

JON RAHM: Well, not now, no. It's a little bit different. Now I feel like you can have symptoms and keep it to yourself and nobody will know.

**Q. You'll be there Sunday then?**

JON RAHM: I'm still going to do the right thing. You know, still a global disease, and even though, you know, a lot of us are vaccinated, you've still got to the right thing. Physical, personal well-being and health, it's always going to be more important than a golf tournament, and that's just a fact. It's just going to stay that way. So hopefully I don't have to think about it, but if it were to come, I think not only me, but I think everybody would do the right thing.

**Q. I know you say you were only mad for ten minutes,**

**but was a little part of you using that as motivation to come in this week and finish out on sun?**

JON RAHM: It's not like I get one more round. It's a whole new tournament. I can't be playing, let's say, mad at what happened last year. Is it motivation? Yes. But you know, it's not much more added to what I already had.

Unfortunately last year I think it would have been -- if I had won, I would have been the first one since Tiger to win back-to-back. So for that to happen, I'm going to have to win this year. So if I show up next year playing good again, I'm going to be able to do it.

So I'll focus on that. There was a lot of things that I was looking forward to last year. One of them was getting close to one of Tiger's scoring records at the course. But again, the good thing about golf is there's always a next week and a next year. Again, I have another chance this time.

**Q. You've had some, let's say, moments on the 16th hole and that hole has been renovated many times over. You talked about strategy earlier. What is your strategy and how difficult is that hole?**

JON RAHM: Well, so the new redo makes it a lot easier than it used to be. But it all depends on the firmness on the greens, right. I mean, when the greens were as firm as they were in 2020, there wasn't much you could do. You had to hit it as high as possible and hope for the best, and hope you got up-and-down from long, basically, if you didn't hit the green.

Now it's a little more doable. Last year I had a long birdie putt on Saturday. I had a hole-in-one on Saturday morning. It's a bit more accessible. Still a tough shot, right. Just got to be comfortable with the decision you make, right. I feel like you need to be decisive, choose the club, choose your shot and stick to it because it's not a big target. It's a small green, water and bunkers around it.

But unlike in the past, those up-and-downs are slightly easier than they have been. So it's not like it's a hole you're looking at to make birdie, but I'm pretty sure everybody in the field will take four pars and move on to 17.

**Q. A little goofy one here, you mentioned it earlier. Do you remember the first time you had a milkshake here, and how good are they, and how many do you go through a week?**

JON RAHM: I don't get that many. I know a lot of people are going to look like oh, he's definitely drinking two or three a day. I'm not. I would like to.



I think the first one was an Oreo milkshake, and then I remember, I forgot what year it was, I posted it on social media, like, oh, what milkshake should I get, and I posted the menu. And everybody was mentioning the Buckeye.

Now, being American, I had no clue what it was and it was such a thing in Ohio. So I remember when me and Tony did that Workday Charity thing on Wednesday, against Graeme McDowell and Ian Poulter, they brought us Buckeyes on 18 and that was the first time I've tried it and I don't think I've changed from the Buckeye since.

Now, I don't even get to one a day. I usually will do it today and tomorrow but not always during the tournament days. Sunday for sure. But yeah, I mean, if you see me walking out with a couple, which it could happen, remember my wife and pregnant, right. So it's not always for me. (Laughter).

**Q. How good are they?**

JON RAHM: Extremely good. I mean, they do a really good job, right. Obviously it's not like a chain, so they do a couple for the players that are asking and they can take their time and they are really, really good. I mean, some of the best out there.

**Q. So last year obviously your game was pretty elevated. When are you now? You just won in México pretty recently, and you'll be defending in a couple weeks here. Where is your game now as compared to next year or last year?**

JON RAHM: It's good. It's in good shape. I feel like I personally feel like the swing, everything feels better and the scores have been reflecting. I think that's just a bit of the game sometime. You're not always going to play at your highest level all the time, and I'm not at my highest by any means. But I'm comfortable and confident it could be getting better.

Like I said earlier last year, I think I had a lot of top 10s up until this point but I wasn't feeling my best. I was just scoring really well and kind of sneaking in Sundays and finishing in the top 10, and this week is where everything clicked.

So you know, any given day things can get going very, very fast and have a really, really good stretch. So I'm not worried. I wouldn't say I'm at a lower level than I was last year. I think I'm more comfortable than I was last year. It's just things haven't really happened yet but I'm playing good golf and I'm confident.

**Q. And The Country Club, have you had much experience out there? It seems like it would be a pretty different course than Torrey Pines?**

JON RAHM: Yeah, I'm assuming it's very different than Torrey Pines, aside from being on complete opposite sides of the country.

My caddie, Adam, was up there. Went with his kids to watch the Red Sox game. They are big baseball fans. He stopped around and told me it's a great track.

All I've heard is great things about it. I know of the history of The Country Club, but I haven't seen it personally. So I wouldn't be able to tell you.

**Q. Did you watch the broadcast last Sunday, a year ago last Sunday?**

JON RAHM: Oh, I said I would. I flew back home and I watched it at home, yeah.

**Q. After everything that's transpired between that Sunday and where you are today, what would you say to yourself if you had something to tell yourself that Sunday?**

JON RAHM: Nothing. Nothing, really. Well, I mean, I would probably -- I wouldn't want to jinx myself, but I would tell myself in a second I got a little frustrated, "Don't worry, you're going to win the U.S. Open."

But besides that, nothing really. I mean, I watched it with a lot of grace. I was having fun. I kind of tuned in looking to see how close they got to 18-under which is where I was at. Obviously Sunday was a windy day and it was a tough one.

But still, I wanted to watch. I'm a golf fan and I wanted to see who was going to win. Like I said, there was no guarantee that I was going to but I had a pretty good chance. The only thing I've said in the past don't give me the win, that's fine.

But I am very comfortable I was going to be top 10, so at least give me a Top-10 for the career stats, not a WD because I've never withdrawn of a tournament as a pro once I started, and I hate that. So at the least the PGA TOUR, if they are listening, just give me the Top-10, you now. I think I would have shot 85 that day.

AMANDA HERRINGTON: Thanks so much for your time. Best of luck this week.

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