

The Northern Trust

Tuesday, August 17, 2021

Jersey City, New Jersey, USA

Liberty National Golf Club

Jon Rahm

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Hi, Jon. Welcome to the virtual interview room and welcome back to the FedExCup Playoffs. You've had an impressive season. We'd love to hear your thoughts about the season ending last week and heading into the playoffs and your impressive season that you've collected this year.

JON RAHM: Yeah, it's been a great year, an unusual one with six majors counting towards the FedExCup points, a lot of big events out here, and a little bit more competitive in that sense, more to play for, but it's been fun. I'm going to miss having so many majors counted.

It was weird, just the other day I was thinking, man, I just realized the Masters is extremely far away. So in that sense, it's a little different. We're going to miss it, like when we have THE PLAYERS right before, so a big event right before that. In my case, play great golf. I feel like I've been pretty consistent throughout my career, but playing really good golf this year, and to top it off with a first major win has been great. So hopefully I can add in the next three weeks and become a FedExCup champion as well.

THE MODERATOR: You played great golf this week. You're obviously No. 5 in the FedExCup standings going into the next three weeks. Can you talk about your excitement to kick things off at Liberty National, your thoughts about the golf course and what it would mean to be the last one standing after the TOUR Championship.

JON RAHM: Very excited. I have good memories from here. Last time I played really good golf, I believe I finished third and had a chance to finish as well. It's a great golf course. It's in impeccable shape. It's going to be a fun one. Hopefully, the weather doesn't get too bad, like it can in the Northeast. Hopefully we get a bit of a break and we can enjoy a perfect shape golf course.

The next two weeks, obviously the goal is to win, but the main goal is to get to the last event, to get to East Lake to the TOUR Championship in as high rank as possible. So got to keep the good play going, and like I said, I'll take it week to week hopefully. I want to hopefully win those



events as well, but the important one is the last one, so it's a bit of kind of like a qualifying few rounds where you're just trying to get ready and get positioned for the TOUR Championship.

THE MODERATOR: Absolutely. We'll go ahead and open up to questions.

Q. Good morning, Jon. It's obviously been a great summer for you success-wise, but kind of an odd one too with all that's going on off the course. I'm just curious, we haven't talk to you since the Olympics. Can you tell us what happened? And can you tell us what they told you? Because that situation was just so unusual.

JON RAHM: Well, the one thing I can say -- this was a little harder to digest than Memorial because I've done everything the system tells me to do. I got all my negatives. First one on Thursday negative, Friday negative, Saturday I get my first positive. And then they tested me again that same day, and I apparently was positive again. Then I got tested the next two days. One was the saliva test, one was PCR, both negative. Got an antibody test done, so blood test, and I had the antibodies.

So I can't really explain what in the world happened. I don't know if it's false positives or just what I had leftover from when I had COVID, just dead cells that were in there that we all know can happen. There's a reason why the PGA TOUR won't test you for a while after you've had COVID.

So it's unfortunate, and I understand it's a weird case because I tested negative so quickly and tested negative and tested negative all throughout the UK, and I get here and the test is positive. It really is unfortunate. It sucked because I wanted to represent Spain. I wanted to play that one. I wanted to hopefully give Spain a medal. I was wishing for a gold medal, but just being part of that medal count for the country would have been huge. It was more devastating in that sense. I was more in the mindset of playing for them more than me.

Still makes me a little sad, I'm not going to lie. I'm going to have to wait three more years hopefully to qualify for the Olympics, but I was really ready for this one.



Q. I take it you didn't feel ill after this one? And also, you kind of touched on it there, but you handled this pretty well, but obviously it's got to be incredibly frustrating.

JON RAHM: Well, I wasn't ill. I can guarantee you I didn't have COVID this time, not at all. I had five tests done, four of them were negative, one was positive. That first time I did have COVID, barely any symptoms, but I had it. This time I had nothing.

Listen, it is what it is. That's the only thing I can say. It is really unfortunate. It's too bad it was so late for us to watch it because we were playing at 2:00, 3:00 in the morning. So I'm not going to lie, I didn't stay up and watch the whole thing. You know, again, it is frustrating. I can't really explain it because, like I said, it's the unfortunate part of the times we're living. I did everything I was supposed to do, and I still didn't get the chance to go.

Hopefully, I don't have to deal with any of that ever again hopefully, COVID related, and I can just keep playing golf and doing what I love and contend for tournaments. But at the same time, like I've said, it's a reminder of the times we live in. It is a serious disease. The consequences can be big, and I know -- not firsthand, but I know people who have been close to me to suffer them. That's why I don't take it lightly, and that's why every day I'm still thankful that, even then when I had it, everyone around me in my family was okay and didn't get it. So that's a positive side out of it.

Q. Kind of along the same lines, because you had to take another extended break that you probably wouldn't have taken otherwise, did that give you extra focus for the playoffs for maybe being a little bit more refreshed for the playoffs?

JON RAHM: Well, it gave me that week, I guess I could have tried to play Memphis, but I was already in the mindset of not playing it, so I stayed home. Like you said, there's always a positive. I don't think I'll ever get a chance to have four weeks off in the middle of the summer and have some time to enjoy with my family. So I'm not going to lie, I did the first two weeks, I spent a lot of time with Kepa because, with what we do, we're gone so often that I know I'm going to miss a lot of things, and I'm going to take advantage of times I get to be home, and that's what I did.

I was with my family. I was with my wife and our son and had a great time, also trained hard and practiced hard. Yeah, I feel like I'm a little -- I'm probably going to be a little bit more rested than most people, but at the same time, I haven't played competitively in four weeks. So there might be a slight bit of rust, but I'm pretty sure that's going to go

quickly just because of how happy and how excited I am to be back and be competing.

Q. And just a quick followup. This is kind of unrelated, but you look at the top players, even the top five or top six in the FedExCup points list, it seems to me that there's so much parity right now. Do you have a thought on who you think would be player of the year right now, or do you need to see the next three weeks to make that decision?

JON RAHM: To be honest, I haven't given that any thought. I have no idea. Couldn't tell you honestly. We'll see. Hopefully, I can have a good playoffs and state my case. We'll see. But I really haven't thought about it at all. Off the top of my head, I can't think of everybody's accomplishments at once. I couldn't really give you an answer.

Q. I wanted to ask you, the first time you came back from COVID after the Memorial, obviously, you won the U.S. Open. Any secret to your success at that point, coming back from that, maybe more motivation or something internally, and can any of that translate this time as well in your first event back from the second time?

JON RAHM: It's a little different situation. It's a little different. Leaving Memorial when I had -- not that the tournament was over, but I gave myself a really good chance on Sunday to win my second straight Memorial championship. It's a quick turnaround too, right? It was a week off, and then it was a U.S. Open.

There's no trick to it. Nothing special I can tell you. No secret ingredient that made me win that week. I spoke extensively over it just because, like I said, being positive, the power of thinking positively, and that's what I always did. I told the people around me right after what happened at Memorial happened that something good was coming my way. I didn't know what, and I didn't know when, but something good was coming. I'm a good person, I know I am, and good things happen to good people. And I'm definitely a believer in karma to an extent, so that's what I was thinking.

Like I've said before, when I stood on that tee on Sunday and I made that first swing, I knew that day was that day, that day was coming. I played with a bit of -- obviously, still intensely and wanting to win, but I played with a certain freedom knowing that something good was coming. It's not the same thing this time because I wasn't there, I wasn't playing, and everything happened before, before I could get to Japan. You can't really compare each one, like I said. This one was a little bit more frustrating because I

did everything by the book and I'm convinced I didn't have the virus this time.

As unfortunate as it was, it gave me some time to rest. So I think, maybe not this week but looking into the next few weeks, probably physically, mentally, I've been more rested than everybody else. So that could be my advantage.

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