

The American Express

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La Quinta, California, USA

PGA WEST Pete Dye Stadium Course

Jon Rahm

Quick Quotes

Q. Great start, 64, 64, 65. Just a few comments about today.

JON RAHM: Nothing but positive. That's all I can say. Ball striking felt amazing. Hit a lot of great shots out there off the tee. Giving myself a lot of opportunities with the irons. Took advantage of quite a few of them.

So very confident going into tomorrow and knowing that I'm going to have to shoot another low score if I want to have a chance to win.

Q. In a way is it comparable to the vibe at Kapalua, even though you'll be closer to the lead, feeling you need to be aggressive and make a lot of birdies?

JON RAHM: Yeah, I'll be surprised if I'm teeing off tomorrow tied for the lead or with the lead. The way Davis is playing I'm pretty sure he's going to get a couple coming in and I'm maybe a couple back.

But again, that doesn't change the fact that I'm going to have to go out there -- and if we get this weather again I'm going to have to shoot most likely 66 or lower to have a good chance to win. But that's the challenge. It is what it is. The level of talent of this TOUR is only increasing. It's showing with this, with the scores we're shooting in those tournaments that for a long time we've shot low scores at but not this low.

Q. You touched on it, but what does it say about the depth that someone like Davis, he's a rookie and in one of his first 10 starts as a TOUR member being able to be in that spot?

JON RAHM: Yeah, listen, a lot of people have been able to do it and it's not easy to -- it's not easy to. If anything this is the place where it can be a little bit more feasible because for the most part you don't have crowds on the Nicklaus and La Quinta and you can enjoy a couple of those rounds without the attention.

But he's doing a phenomenal job and he's playing amazing

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golf and showing it. I always tell people when they ask me the difference between what you would think is the greatest players in the world and the rest skill-wise is not that big. It really isn't that big. It's a few moments here and there that make a difference. One-stroke difference on scoring average for the whole year, it truly doesn't boil down to that much. That's usually the difference.

Q. Have you met Davis at all?

JON RAHM: No.

Q. You'll meet him tomorrow obviously, I would imagine. Were conditions about the same today as they were yesterday or was it maybe a little more still today?

JON RAHM: I think today was the easiest day we've had. Felt quite a bit warmer. The ball was going a little bit further. This is the least amount of wind I've seen on the golf course I think ever. Yeah, I think it's as easy as this golf course is going to play.

Q. I've always maintained, coming out here on the I-10 if the wind turbines aren't moving, then there's going to be even more birdies than usual.

JON RAHM: Yeah, yeah, exactly. It's not like we usually have that much wind out here. You have a little bit. But I know -- I've heard some stories in the past that some of those golf courses can show some teeth if the wind's blowing 15 or 20. But I haven't seen it yet. If it does, I mean you still need to come out here and post a score because somebody always does.

Q. The putts on the back especially. Is it something you just kind of slough off and say, okay, got to deal with it?

JON RAHM: I feel like you guys always try to look for something that's just not there. 13 great roll. 14 great roll. 15 great roll. 16 misread. 17 misread. That's it. Very simple. All of them good strokes. I can tell you there were earlier putts that weren't as good as some of those and went in dead center. That's just golf. I mean, if that isn't a description of golf, I don't know what is. Felt really good on a lot of 'em. It is what it is.

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Listen, I've enjoyed two and a half days of making pretty much everything I looked at. I'm glad that if I'm going to have a cold stretch of putts it was today not tomorrow. Hopefully tomorrow I can just keep doing what I've been doing.

Q. I was going to say, I appreciate the explanation because a lot of times people see that and they think --

JON RAHM: Oh, on TV they love to say, Oh, he mishit it. He pulled it. He pushed it. It's not always that. Sometimes we misread the breaks and that's what happened to me.

Q. Some of us don't even get that close.

JON RAHM: (Laughing.) Listen, they're not always the easiest.

Q. You said you haven't met Davis, but do you feel like you have an advantage going up against a rookie in the final round?

JON RAHM: I think you can -- a lot of people could have said that the first time Jordan Spieth won, the first time I won, the first time a lot of people won. So do you have an advantage? I don't know.

I mean, I have the experience of being there, if it goes down to the wire. But he's no slouch, obviously. He's done what he's done. At the end of the day it's you against you. You can only control what you're doing.

Q. Unrelated. Steve Stricker shoots 12-under 16. 55 years old. Just a comment about him as a player that you know.

JON RAHM: Well, about as good a wedge game and short game you pretty much will ever see. About as simple as a technique as you'll ever see as well. Very composed player. Somebody who has achieved a lot. You said he's 55? To get that close to your age? Very impressive. Very, very impressive. Yeah, great man.

I know earlier in his career he had to do a bit of a swing change and that changed how he had to play, obviously, a little bit. Ended up with that notorious shorter, very straight takeaway.

And even in more recent memory, right after the Ryder Cup he got sick and he was in a pretty bad state. So that this quickly he is actually posting those scores it shows how much of a grinder and how much of a warrior he is. So I'm impressed.