

THE PLAYERS Championship

Friday, March 12, 2021

Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, USA

TPC Sawgrass

Jon Rahm

Quick Quotes

Q. What was the ruling you needed on 7 and what was the shot that followed?

JON RAHM: Oh, yeah, my ball was resting against one of the lunch bags they give the volunteers. They have one of those plastic bags, it was resting against it. I mean, I just wanted to make sure, because it looked like it was going to move, marked it, didn't move. Overall pretty good lie to be honest. It was such a bad drive. I ended up in a decent spot, ball below my feet, 165 meters in the rough, with that wind I just aimed left edge of the green, opened the face a little bit with a 7-iron and swung about as hard as I could. I knew with the lie there was zero chance of that ball going over the green, so I had to give it a good go to maybe have a chance. I mean, I caught it just perfect, just thin enough, didn't get caught in the rough, came out just like if it was in the fairway, and with the softness of the greens, it stopped pretty quick.

Q. Any idea what the volunteers had for lunch today?

JON RAHM: No idea. No, I think it's a bag they gave them sweaters and things like that.

Q. As far as mood going into the weekend, how big was that putt you made on 9?

JON RAHM: Big. I hit a great tee shot and I ended up with somewhat of an in-between distance. I had to fade a 5-wood, ball below my feet, and it's just not the easiest shot, barely come out of it, leave myself 35 yards short-sided. Par-5s you can get in trouble very easily and it's not easy birdies, but I just took my medicine, even though I was in the fairway, I knew anything inside 10 feet was going to be amazing, hit it to about 12, 15 feet and was pretty confident over the putt. I felt pretty good on the greens today, especially as the round went on, and had a couple long ones that had a pretty decent chance of going in. I just put a free stroke on it. It was a pretty stressful round. I was barely in the fairway, fought all day, and I just thought it was a free birdie look, and took advantage of it.

Q. You've been playing Callaway for three months



now. We've seen guys when they switch have some dip, but you've been playing really well. What's your comfort level now with the new sticks?

JON RAHM: I'm confident. I learn more each day. The club quality is incredibly high, and the golf ball is really good, as well. It's just a little bit different to what I play. So there's still certain instances where the distance is off and the way it reacts in the wind is a little bit different, but for just playing it three months, like you said, I think I've done pretty well.

Q. Is that something you can adjust on the range or do you have to play?

JON RAHM: You've got to play. Once you get on the range, if you keep hitting the same shot over and over, at the end of the day you're just going to manipulate your swing or just adjust the way you're seeing it. On the golf course is when you have to get used to it, especially seeing it in different conditions. Practicing in Arizona you're at a certain altitude, the ball tends to go pretty straight, not much wind. So I've got to see the situations, like this one, Torrey, LA, sea-level stuff where the wind is a little thicker and it might move a little bit more. Again, it's been working pretty well. My ball-striking has been good so far all year, and hopefully just keeps feeling good.

Q. Jordan said he treats this golf course like a U.S. Open test, in terms of he can't really attack unless it's a perfect number and knows he has to take advantage of the par-5s. What's your game plan or strategy?

JON RAHM: He's kind of right. We were talking about it yesterday, and it's hard to be defensive with a wedge in your hand and you have to be a lot of times. Perfect example of it is second shot on 4. That pin looks like it's in the middle of the green and I was lucky that that ball went dead straight at the pin and it didn't draw, because if it goes an inch left of where it was or way down there, where if you just hit it 15 feet right you're going to have an easy putt.

Same with the shot on 13. If you're able to hit it on line, great, if not you're going to have 60 feet over the slope. It's difficult.



Again, pars aren't bad on any hole, so you've just got to manage that and take advantage of the times you can. But yeah, you have to be pretty smart with where you're putting the golf ball pretty much all day.

Q. Did I see you lay up on the par-5?

JON RAHM: Yeah, I had no chance. I was in the downslope, in the rough on that left side. There was no other way. Had it been in the bunker on the flat I might have had a chance to go for it, but not where I was.

Q. What's the atmosphere like with the fans? How close to normal is it, or not?

JON RAHM: You know, I don't know how many we have, whatever it is, 10,000 or around that. From zero to 10,000 it's a pretty big difference. It's nice that they're back, to be honest. I don't know how to put it exactly, but you can feed off the crowd. That's a thing, right. You're going to get a lot of people that are supporting you, and whether you hit a good shot or bad shot, you can feed off that positive energy that they're giving you.

I've missed them. I'm glad they're back. Hopefully we can keep having them, and as long as we don't get any outbreaks or any spikes, hopefully we can keep playing events with the crowd.

At the end of the day we play for ourselves, but we're here to entertain, as well, so we're playing for them. Not only for us, but for them, I hope we can keep it going.

Q. A couple guys have said they can almost hear them more, because there's fewer, hear them talking...

JON RAHM: No, I think pretty much on every hole on every group there's the one group of five people that have missed being out here and they've been thinking for a whole year of something to say when we hit a shot, and that's what they absolutely have to yell every single time. They want to be heard. And I don't blame them. It is what it is. There's always somebody like that, I think, that's just taking advantage of the last time.

Q. A lot of guys, when there was no fans, they said they kind of hit it shorter because you don't have the adrenaline feeling on some of the yardages. Did you find that to be the case, and now are you hitting it a little bit further because you do have adrenaline again?

JON RAHM: Not really. Some holes maybe. I mean, a perfect case is 16 in Phoenix and here, 17. When you have that big massive crowd of 30,000 people and whatever you can have here, I mean, it's electrifying. You

step up there and you hit it a lot shorter than you usually have to. There's a lot of times on that hole on 16, you've got 170, 180 to the back pin and we're hitting pitching wedges and people that should never hit a pitching wedge, but you're just so amped up that the ball goes forever. Same here on 17, certain shots. So yeah, it does happen sometimes. I wonder if we played those two holes absolutely empty without grandstands how it would be, but in a general norm, no, I haven't really felt it.

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