

FedEx St. Jude Championship

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TPC Southwind

Jon Rahm

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Good morning, everyone. We would like to welcome FedExCup leader Jon Rahm to the media center here at the FedEx St. Jude Championship. First time entering No. 1 into the Playoffs. Want to get your general thoughts about how the regular season went so far for you.

JON RAHM: Well, it's been a really good season. Accomplished a lot of things I set myself out to do this year, and one of them was to be sitting right here as No. 1.

Really proud of what I've done so far. I'm looking forward to keeping it going in the Playoffs.

I feel like I've played this golf course well in the past. I've played fairly well in the Playoffs in the past. Hopefully I can keep doing what I've been doing and give myself a good chance.

THE MODERATOR: Speaking to your accomplishments from the regular season, capped off as No. 1 for the Comcast Business Top 10. Was that a goal leading into the season?

JON RAHM: Yes, it is. I've been able to be in the top 10 before and never win it. It shows to the wins and the consistency throughout the year to be able to get it done. It's one of those things we can check off the list now.

Q. I think a year ago when the new format for the playoff was announced you were still figuring it out. Now that it's here, you saw the drama last week, how do you feel about 70 being the number and what this format is going to be like the next three weeks?

JON RAHM: Did you say I was trying to figure it out --

Q. You said you were uneasy, I believe.

JON RAHM: Well, you don't know the full facts, right.



Well, we know the reasoning to reducing it now, I think going 125 to 100 to 70 or to 50 to 30 made more sense before. We just felt like, at least I personally felt like in one week going from -- disposing of 55 players is quite a big jump.

I think this has a bit more logical sense to it. All those players that didn't make it still have the fall to be able to earn a better position in the FedExCup, as well, going for next year.

I like it. Obviously being comfortably inside that number, obviously I'm going to like it. But I think it could be a much more format going into future years.

Q. Even though you have yet to play poorly, probably for many decades by now, but do you come into each year with any expectations and knowing that you still have to start over and earn it, or I don't mean to flatter you here, but as consistently well as you've played since you came out, do you just come to expect it now?

JON RAHM: Do I expect it? Yes and no. I put in the work, so I would expect positive results from it. I know what I'm capable of.

What those results are, I can't tell you. I've had a good career so far, and only once I've been able to get multiple PGA TOUR wins.

This is the second year of being able to do it, so hopefully I can keep adding to that and be able to get two or more in many seasons to come.

I like to add that to one of my labels of consistency throughout it. But just having been able to win every single year for the last six years is quite an accomplishment.

Q. I think there's a players' meeting with Jay tonight. What are you hoping to hear from him as this continues to move forward?

JON RAHM: I have no idea. I really have no idea.

I was told before, we got a text that this was probably going



to happen. I'm probably going to go open-minded and hearing the membership out. That's kind of what I go -- I would like to see where other people's heads are at.

I don't know if there's going to be any announcements from the PGA TOUR management side or not, but I'll just go hoping I get to hear what other players have to say and see how different that is or same to what I'm thinking.

I really can't tell you much because I don't know.

Q. Were you a part of the group that sent the letter to Monahan asking for changes and more accountability?

JON RAHM: What letter?

Q. The letter that was reported last week that eventually ended up with Tiger Woods on the --

JON RAHM: Yeah, my name was on that, yeah.

Q. Why did you decide to be a part of that letter?

JON RAHM: Because I believe we have a duty as some of the players, and the more unified front we present, the better chance of getting what we want done will happen.

So yeah. I believe it was a very good cause for the PGA TOUR and for the players.

Q. What was your reaction to what came out of it?

JON RAHM: I was happy. It's pretty much what we hoped to come out of it.

Q. Could you talk about yesterday, obviously had time at the Hub to meet Olivia and Calvin and kind of participate in that. What does it mean to be here with the patients and that activation? How fun was that for you?

JON RAHM: I wish we could do more things like that throughout the year. It was a lot of fun. We're getting questions about golf politics and throughout the year we keep talking about LIV Golf and all of this, and to get perspective and doing a really fun video activation with Jordan Spieth and Calvin and Olivia is very refreshing.

First thing Calvin said when I met him, first thing he said is, I'm blessed to be here, this and that; I don't like the heat, but I'm blessed. That's all he kept saying.

He's an Oakland boy, and he didn't really enjoy the humidity that there is here in Memphis, but he was very happy to be there, and same with Olivia. We were in one

of the biggest hangars I had ever seen, and somehow it didn't seem like it was enough room for her to run around and be herself.

It was extremely fun. For people that get to see it at the end, Jordan and I got into it, as well. It was pretty fun to see us run around and kind of feed off their energy.

It puts things into perspective of what's important. Both of them are purple heart recipients. I believe even within Olivia's family, her sister had some other health issues, as well.

It really shows you what's important in life and how privileged I truly am to be in the situation I'm in. It was a lot of fun, and I hope I get asked to do something similar again in the future.

Q. What are the biggest benefits physically and mentally from just having a few weeks off this summer and having a lighter schedule?

JON RAHM: Well, I usually try to get a little bit more weeks off throughout the year, kind of have it even a little bit more distributed.

But those three weeks off before the Open in my mind were needed. I was able to play really well early on, and we played a lot of tournaments and be in contention, and that can take a toll.

It was very needed to recharge, and I could feel the difference on the golf course at The Open. Especially before the Playoffs, as well, looking forward to it. Those three weeks can be and are tough, and I'm hoping to make it to the end being as close as possible to winning it.

Yeah, just having that extra energy is very nice.

Q. Back to golf politics for a brief second, next year's system, giving opportunities to fields to the top 10 in the FedEx and the ones in between, et cetera, what do you think about the four exemptions? Is that too many or is it just enough?

JON RAHM: Exemptions? What exemptions?

Q. For the big events, the signature events. Each one gets four free spots basically.

JON RAHM: Listen, I voiced this when it came up. I wasn't in favor of those tournaments having invites or exemptions, however you want to call it. Everybody that's playing has earned it one way or another. To get exemption, you just don't want it to go to somebody who

just -- for whatever reason, they liked.

As a person who got his PGA TOUR card through PGA TOUR exemptions, you want them to go to the right person.

I'm hoping those events realize the position they're in and give it to people that truly, truly can do something out of it. There is a way for players not into those events to somehow qualify into those events, so I'm hoping they use some of those to people who were close and didn't quite make it, players that have earned it throughout their play in the past. Just hope they use them in a way that it can be meaningful for somebody for the year or their career in golf.

Q. Do you fear it could become a popularity contest?

JON RAHM: No, no, I don't think so. I don't think so. But it's obviously common for a sponsor or a tournament to basically pull towards home turf. I would be an abdicator (sic) for amateurs or college players to get certain invites. I don't think those events would be the ones where amateurs should be in. That's an example of what I mean. Give it to players that have been playing hard all year and this year to earn that spot and maybe didn't get the chance but were quite close. That would be my view on it.

Q. As it relates to the golf we're playing right now for the year you've had and you've come close to this FedExCup before, is it odd at all that pretty much no matter what you do, it comes down to East Lake, and is the goal outside of winning the next couple weeks just to make sure you're not too far behind?

JON RAHM: Obviously you want to win every time we tee it up, but yeah, the goal is to try to get to East Lake as No. 1 and enjoy that two-shot lead.

It's always made a difference. It made a difference when I finished second place.

It's the reason why they give it to you, so if we can take advantage of it, it would be nice.

Q. Considering everything that's happened over the past two months, do you think Jay Monahan should keep his job?

JON RAHM: I think I made my stance on that at The Open clear. I think he should have the opportunity right now to finish this off the way he did. I think we're quickly forgetting how well he managed a lot of things. He did an amazing job in COVID and kept a lot of people employed. We were the first major sport to come back. I know UFC was doing

fight, but we were the major sport to come back.

A lot of players were able to earn their cards and keep competing thanks to that. I think we shouldn't forget that that quickly. Again, we should give him the chance to see this through.

Then after everything is said and done, if players want to make a change, then that would be a better time, but right now I don't think it is.

Q. If you had the chance to ask one question or make one change, what would that be?

JON RAHM: That's too vague of a question because we really have no idea what's coming. We're not in these meetings. They have until January to be in those negotiations.

I can tell you right now my priorities are a lot lower than what a lot of people would think. If I have to -- if I go by request -- I know this is going to sound very stupid, but as simple as having a freaking Port-a-Potty on every hole -- I know it sounds crazy, but I can't choose when I have to go to the bathroom. I've told the TOUR this many times, as simple as that.

Just simple little things better for the TOUR. Even though they do a phenomenal job throughout the year, just making it more consistent.

Those TPC events, because the PGA TOUR is more involved, our food situation is unbelievable. They have nutritionists that they've hired to work with and the options and the sources are incredible, so I would like to see that more across the board at every single TOUR event.

I would like to see physio areas to be a little bit better. Even though the gym trailer is great, it's still a trailer, so when you have three people in it you're a little crowded, so seeing better workout facilities, as well.

Those are kind of things that I hope come out throughout this whole thing.

I've mentioned many times making the TOUR better for the players, and I mean that. The very basic things they can do in tournaments to make them all as good as they can be is where I'd like to see some changes. Everything else can come out afterwards, but I'm not so worried about purses and bonuses and those things. I think giving us the best amenities possible is one of those things that should be a concern. That's at least a lot of things I keep going to with them. It's not usually what's in people's minds.

Q. Your proximity stats are just super good this season, especially outside 150 yards and proximity to the fairway. I'm wonder what do you attribute that to? Is that something you think about a lot, and how do you go about --

JON RAHM: You said outside of 150 yards?

Q. Yeah.

JON RAHM: I don't know if I attribute it to anything specially.

I mentioned when I made a change to Callaway, it was because I saw room for improvement for me as a player with the golf ball. It was a little bit more dynamic me, and I think this is one of the things I attribute it to. It gives me a little bit more play with the iron shots and a little bit better control for the way I like to hit the golf ball to hit certain shots.

I think that's why you're seeing the stats reflected the way it is.

Q. How often are you hitting those different shots, I guess, from --

JON RAHM: Oh, very often. Very often.

I see obviously various ball flights when I'm attacking a pin, and I've been really confident this year to try to execute every shot I see.

But it's a ball that is stable in the wind, and that's why it's been allowing me to do certain things and move it right to left, left to right, high, low. I'm just comfortable pretty much the ball is going to come out in every window I want it to and with the curve that I need. Not that I couldn't do it before, but it's just given me that extra confidence.

Q. I wanted to look ahead briefly to the Ryder Cup as it relates to what your schedule is look to look like post-East Lake.

JON RAHM: Well, it's not like we have a lot of time after East Lake. I will go play the BMW at Wentworth. It's a great event. I've had two really good finishes there with a great Sunday round last year.

Looking forward to going back, supporting the DP World Tour and enjoying that week and obviously being with the already selected team -- well, the team will be selected by them, so being with the team, the Ryder Cup team itself. It's going to be nice. Looking forward to that one. That will be the only start I have before the Ryder Cup.

I'm not playing the week after East Lake or the week after that.

Q. Who do you think has the tougher job with picks, Luke or Zach?

JON RAHM: I think they both have a tough job. I don't know. I wouldn't know what to tell you because they've both given themselves so many picks that I have a hard time differentiating both of them. I think it's hard for both of them.

I think they're probably going to get the first four pretty quickly, and then those last two are going to be tough. I think they're both equally difficult.

Q. Do you have any snacks or food in your bag you eat throughout the round? What do you traditionally do with that?

JON RAHM: Snacks? Do I look like I don't eat food?

Yes. It's become a little bit more apparent that people are catching on to the sandwiches I have on the golf course. I do have some sandwiches that I eat throughout the course. Nothing special. Kelley is in charge of them. Thank God I have her because otherwise I would forget to make them every single time. It's three of them, and obviously six halves, and eat them every three holes more or less. That's what I do.

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