

# The Ryder Cup

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Kohler, Wisconsin, USA

Whistling Straits

## Jon Rahm

### Press Conference



**JOHN DEVER:** Welcome to the 43rd Ryder Cup here at Whistling Straits. We are with world No. 1 Jon Rahm.

Jon, welcome to your second career Ryder Cup. Frequently through these interviews, we hear about the reverence the European side has for Seve and José Maria and such, but beyond your countrymen, are there any players that you watched in The Ryder Cup beyond the two that you locked into and were captured by their spirit and their fervor for The Ryder Cup?

**JON RAHM:** I think one that is often, or often can be overlooked, is Monty. Monty had a really good run in The Ryder Cup, especially in singles, right. Somebody who had a great career, who maybe was not the most vocal player out there like maybe Seve was but got things done. He was a tough guy to beat. I think Monty was one of those that can be overlooked.

**Q. Only your second Ryder Cup but you're already expected to be one of the leaders, certainly, on the course, aren't you. Are you ready to make that step up?**

**JON RAHM:** What kind of a player would I say if I say no? Right. So yes, yes, I'm ready for that. It's a challenge I look forward to. Obviously it's a lot of players in our team that have a lot of experience and know how to get it done. I'm ready to add my name into that group.

**Q. Did you have a feeling there was going to be extra responsibility, obviously given your position in the rankings?**

**JON RAHM:** Yes and no. We have plenty of players in the team that are vocal enough that have done this enough that naturally will gravitate towards for guidance. I'm not going to actively go and just make myself, hey, I'm a leader now, because I don't have that massive of an ego.

In that case, hopefully like I've done so far this year, I'll let the clubs and the ball do the talking and I'll leave the speeches and the leadership to the guys that have been

doing this for a long time.

**Q. Can you describe what you believe Poults means to this team and what he's done over the years in this competition for you guys.**

**JON RAHM:** I think Poults is one of those players that you might get once in a generation, right, that embody the spirit of The Ryder Cup. You have somebody who World Ranking-wise, from 40, 50, you wouldn't say World Ranking or stats-wise is anything massively special.

But when he steps through the doors and you get to The Ryder Cup, it is Ian Poulter and he's got a pretty good record and he's a tough guy to beat. It's match play and it's something special. That's the beauty of this team and that's the beauty of this event and that's the beautiful part of something and somebody like Ian Poulter that really becomes somebody this week.

**Q. Can you put yourself on the other side as an opponent and when he gets on those rolls that he's gotten on with the eyes and the fist pumps?**

**JON RAHM:** Yeah, when he gets possessed.

**Q. Exactly. How rattling or maybe under the skin can that be for an opponent do you think?**

**JON RAHM:** I wouldn't want to play Ian, especially in that mode like we saw at Medinah. Because you have somebody who is a very good putter, who will make the putt at the right time. Even though as I said, might not look like anything special, he's not going to make any mistakes and he's going to hold onto that match and just be there and be relentless and that is the worst type of opponent. He's a tough man to beat.

You know, he's a great guy -- it's one of the guys in other sports that you may hate him if he's not on your team but you love him if he's on yours.

**Q. I know there's still The Ryder Cup, but when you look at the season you just completed, there was a lot going on. How do you sum that up or how do you**

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## reflect about that?

**JON RAHM:** You know, it's not the first time I answered this question. It just dawned on me that it's only been 5 1/2 months since my son was born, and there's been so many things that happened since then. It almost feels like it's been a couple years worth of experiences in those five months.

Besides the setbacks I've already talked about extensively, the good moments, the great experiences, the happiness vastly outweighs the setbacks, and that's all I can say about this year. I became a dad. We're in a really good place family-wise. I'm very happy at home. It's been amazing. Got my first major and played really good golf all year round.

I have nothing to complain. It's been amazing. No matter what happened COVID-wise or what events I missed or what could have been, it still has been an amazing year that I really am thankful for. I think that's the most important thing. I think it's very easy in life to focus on what could have been and what you didn't have. But it's good to just realize all the good things that happened and forget about those moments.

**Q. Does that give you some perspective coming into an event like this that a lot of people view as, you know, the biggest thing, ultra important, super important, obviously you want to win?**

**JON RAHM:** We do want to win but it's a team effort, right. It's not like I can do it by myself -- unless you're Poulter; he can do it by himself.

It would be a really nice end to the year, right, even though we have already started the new season technically. It would be a very nice end to what has been a wonderful year. That win in France, you create a bond that's unforgettable and it would be a really good feeling to be able to do it in my first try in my case on U.S. soil, as well.

It's something we always want to add to the calendar and always want to add to the repertoire and winning a Ryder Cup, especially in an away country.

**Q. From what you've seen so far, what are the biggest differences in temperament and captaining style between Thomas and Pádraig?**

**JON RAHM:** I don't know if my vice captain will let me disclose too much. I will say that I didn't know either of them before The Ryder Cup. I had only been a pro for a couple of years before Paris, so I didn't see Thomas that much or Pádraig.

The only thing I'm going to say, Pádraig is a lot more calm than Thomas was. Am I right on that? A little bit, yeah, okay. I feel like that's a better question for a vice captain because they see in here a lot more reality where the captain needs to be calm, cool and composed for all the players, he can't be going off on all of us.

We might not see the whole truth, but obviously they have both been very well-spoken and very well expressive in what they have in mind and what they expect from us. They have made it very easy and made it comfortable for all of us. They have done a good job of letting us know what we have to do and in my case letting me know what they expect me to do and that's been wonderful.

**Q. I know you can't come names obviously but how early were you given the information of who you were going to play with?**

**JON RAHM:** What do you mean? Tomorrow?

**Q. Yeah, who you'll play with tomorrow.**

**JON RAHM:** I still don't know. You tell me. I think you guys think we know a lot more than you guys know. I have an idea of what players I might be playing with. Didn't you guys see us throwing balls on the tee yesterday? Well, there you go. That's how we do things, leave it up to chance.

**Q. Can you talk about the transition going from golf as an individual sport to golf as a team sport, what the transition is like for you?**

**JON RAHM:** Honestly it's great. It's something that for some reason for all of us becomes quite easy. I think because we have so much of individual golf where for the most part you only care about yourself. A lot of the decisions in life and even at home I've made due to golf and what we need to do to be better players. When you get here, it's not just about yourself or your family. It's about all 12 of us and to be fair a lot of the decisions are made for us; it's a lot easier.

But it is really cool to see all these great players, people that have been doing this for a very long time. I mean, when Lee played The Ryder Cup for the first time, I wasn't even three years old yet. To see all these great people that have accomplished so many things come together with a smile that only a team even like The Ryder Cup can bring to you, a juvenile excitement that you don't usually expect a 48-year-old to have, it's very unique and it's something that I wish everybody could see because I feel like a lot of times we're missing that in life, and a week like this can

definitely give you that youth back in that sense mentally, right.

Even though I'm still 26, I'm very young. Still takes me back to when I was a kid hoping to be playing in The Ryder Cup when I was a kid representing Spain and how I felt back then, obviously magnified times a hundred in this situation. But it's something that's very, very fun and it what makes The Ryder Cup so special amongst other things, right. We are all one and we are all the same and we have the same level of excitement and the smiles that we see around and the happiness and the joy is something I wish everybody could see.

**Q. You're world No. 1 and U.S. champion. Do you take any confidence from that or does that put pressure on you? And have you ever actually met Monty?**

**JON RAHM:** I have met Monty, I can't say when, but I have met him, quickly in passing. I remember not meeting him, but I remember watching him finish the last two holes in Valderrama, I think it was 2009, the Volvo Masters, amongst many other players, Paul Casey and Stenson signed my shirt. There was a picture that came around a couple years ago. I remember watching him then.

If anything, being a Major Champion this year in a tough setup, gives me confidence. At the same time, it's match play. It's different. Tomorrow morning, foursomes, right, or fourballs, so you're playing with a partner, not an individual anymore. It is a little bit of a different game but at the same time you've got to do -- try your best, right, and in that sense it's the same thing. If anything, just gives me confidence in that sense that I know what I'm capable of.

**Q. It's a pretty demanding golf course obviously and the cold and wind can wear down on anybody. How do you prepare your body and mind for the possibility of going all five this week?**

**JON RAHM:** I'm physically ready for it. I know I don't look like it but I train every day when I'm at home, believe it or not. I'm in really good shape. I have no problem walking 36. I feel like the biggest challenge in an event like this is possibly five rounds of the mental aspect of it, and that's where I think you need to learn to really unwind quickly and get ready when you need to.

And I mean on the golf course, as well, you can't be 100 percent focused and locked in for five hours. That is mentally driving range. You have to learn how to switch off a little bit and have fun with your partner and then caddies and be ready to hit the shot in there. It's a bit of things. Also when you get to the team room after the round, practice round, whatever it is, everybody is having such a

good time that that in itself is a great rest.

In my case, the most important things outside of all that would be hydrating properly and getting enough sleep. Those two things are going to be the keys this week, as well. Throughout the week, make sure you're sleeping enough and letting your body recover and hydrate to make sure your recovery is even better.

**Q. When did this competition really begin to matter to you? And the video that came out out of context from Team Europe, is that an accurate depiction of how you celebrated in 2018?**

**JON RAHM:** No, but that's what they want me to do this year if that were to happen. I mean, it's not what I did, I can tell you the environment is not too far from that, okay. Now, nobody was on tables, shirt off; I certainly wasn't. But the environment is somewhat similar. Some people were going just as hard that night celebrating, which I don't blame them. It's a stressful long year.

Like I said earlier, when you are in an environment with no judgment, you're not scared of anybody posting on Instagram, you can let yourself go a little bit and be vulnerable, and that's the fun part of things like that.

**Q. And when did this event...**

**JON RAHM:** I don't know exactly the age but it's been on my radar a long time. When you're born in Spain, the Ryder Cup is something special. There's a lot of legacy in this event between Seve and Ollie and the players got the most amount of Ryder Cup points for Team Europe in history.

It's a lot to live up to, I'm not going to lie. It's a lot of expectation when you're a Spaniard. But that just means -- a lot of times we're called a different word for passionate, but I think that's when all these great emotions can be used in match play and that's why in general people have done great.

And so for a long time I've been looking forward to being a Ryder Cup player and it still is something you have in mind every day, especially while you're approaching. Obviously we have a lot of individual events going on, but when the topic comes up, it is something, you can't explain it but it's very unique.

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