

Aberdeen Standard Investments Scottish Open

Wednesday, 7 July, 2021

North Berwick, Scotland

The Renaissance Club

Jon Rahm

Press Conference



A Rolex Series Event

NEIL AHERN: Current world No. 1 and Race to Dubai leader and most recent Major Champion. The last time you were in Europe was in October 2019 when you won in Madrid. A lot has happened personally as well as professionally I guess you would say. Can you tell us how excited you are to be back on European soil and in Scotland.

JON RAHM: I'm very excited. I'm very happy. I always love coming back. Sometimes the change in place, change in golf, it's very needed. It's refreshing to be here where it's not a million degrees like Arizona or like anywhere else.

I am excited to be here. It's a spot in the calendar I haven't played yet. I haven't played this golf course but I've heard a lot of good things about it. After playing it the last few days, I'd say it's a great track. Hopefully I can put in a good week.

Q. Are you here because you want competitive practise or are you here because you think the Renaissance course is similar to St. George's and it's a pretty good tee-up for next week?

JON RAHM: Well, in the past, I've played the Irish Open, and this year because it wasn't a links golf, I decided to play this one. It is a better way to get prepared for The Open Championship.

I would say Royal St. George's is quite different to this golf course, but I haven't been there in a long time. It's a little trickier. This one might be a little bit longer, but for the most part, you hit a tee shot to the center of the fairway, you won't get of those wayward bounces that happen the St. George's. It's a bit more fair but the best way that I can see to get myself prepared for next week.

Q. I just wonder in the weeks that have followed your victory in the U.S. Open, just what it's actually been like, has it kind of matched up to how you anticipated life would be after winning your first major? And just a

second question, with Royal St. George's next week, how much better do you think you will be for the vagaries of an Open Championship given the qualities that you demonstrated in that win in the U.S. Open?

JON RAHM: Well, I think I'm pretty prepared and better experienced mentally for what an Open can be. If I remember correctly, it can get quite windy on that part of the country and what I said, it not the easiest links golf course, right. You're going to have adjust to the wind, the atmosphere and the golf course every day. I feel like I'm better prepared after that.

Now when it comes to my life after the win, it hasn't changed too much. It shouldn't change. There might be more people that recognise you and more people that come up to you for picture, autograph or just to say hello but for the most part it hasn't changed. All I can say is I celebrated more than I have in the past, but I feel like it was well worth it.

Q. Curious what you think about the restrictions next week for the players at The Open, and if having gone through what you did with COVID and obviously now you've sort of be on the other side of all that, having to go through it again, does it change your mind at all or disappoints you or how do you look at it?

JON RAHM: What do you mean, having to go through it again?

Q. I mean, you wouldn't be subject to that in the US, the restrictions.

JON RAHM: Well, it's government -- because of what I experienced, it is what it is. You can argue or complain as much as you want, it's not going to change. Just take it with what it is and that's about it. I feel like a lot of the family restrictions in, let's say, each player's team restrictions, it's a little too much.

But I understand why they want us to stay at home and why they want us to keep the players as safe as possible. It doesn't change my mind that much. I usually just go in a major championship, I'll be in a house and go to the golf course and come back to the house. I'm not going out the sightseeing or anything else. In that sense, it hasn't changed.

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But if you have your significant others or want family to be here, it is more difficult and in that sense. It does get a little harder. But again, it's the rules they put up and we just have to deal with it and follow them.

Q. Can you recall a first trip to Scottish links courses back when you were an amateur at all or any golfing holidays you may have enjoyed back in the day?

JON RAHM: Well, my first ever experience in Scotland -- I'm trying to think where it was. I know we went to Glasgow to play an event. I think it might have been the British Boys. I just don't remember where it was. It was ten, eleven years ago, so I don't remember the golf course.

I do remember going to -- we went to Prestwick just to see kind of a little bit of the museum they had there. We didn't play but we watched one, we saw the first hole and the 18th hole, as well. So I do remember that, seeing a bit of the history of the event, knowing that the Open Championships first editions were played at Prestwick and seeing a bit of history of golf, it's a little fun.

Q. It's obviously something you would have taken a shine to given your record in Ireland. Is there something about it that suits you?

JON RAHM: I would say Irish people and Basque people are very similar, very, very similar, and I think they see that in me. So they kind of take me as one of them.

From the first day I played in Portstewart, the support I had from the Irish crowd was very, very big, even though I was playing with Rory McIlroy, which obviously is their superstar, right, but I had a lot of support, as well. You think that, with the success I've had, it adds up, and I think it's that they see a little bit of Irish in me is my guess, and I think that's why they treat me so well and why I've played so well.

I do like Irish golf. I've enjoyed it. I've had a lot of fun. It's a little bit different to some of what we play on The Open rotation and I feel like it's a little trickier, a little quirker. So I can't really tell you how many blind par 3s I've played in my life, only one that I can think of and I think that's something that I enjoy. I enjoy that challenge and I enjoy playing a little bit different golf.

Like I say, it's very refreshing when we come to this part of the world and play, and I think that's why I've had success.

NEIL AHERN: Thank you very much for your time. Hope you have a great week this week.