

U.S. Open Championship 2021

Friday, June 18, 2021

San Diego, California, USA

Torrey Pines Golf Course

Jon Rahm

Flash Interview



THE MODERATOR: Jon Rahm, 1-under 70. Really good consistent play yesterday and today. How do you feel heading into the weekend?

JON RAHM: Feeling confident. Two very different rounds yesterday and today. I feel like yesterday I hit it really, really well, hit a lot of fairways. Just made a couple of mistakes going into the greens that cost me a few bogeys, a few more than I would have liked.

Today it was the opposite. Took me a while to get going, didn't hit my second fairway until the 13th hole, I believe, and I just had to survive. I've got to say, that stretch of putts on 10, 11, 12 was key. Things could have taken a turn for the worse, and I was able to save some great three pars in a row.

Hopefully, I can just swing it like I did on the last four holes because I hit some beautiful shots and keep it going on the weekend.

Q. I was going to get you to elaborate on that. It looked like you had those lefts early. How do you turn it around mid-round and get it back to where you did late?

JON RAHM: Well, I feel like it looks worse than it really was. It's easy to get a little bit tight on this golf course, very, very easy, and all of the shots, the start lines were proper, they just weren't fading. In my case, I'm just not turning fast enough. I just have to swing a little bit harder with the driver, and that's exactly what I did starting on 13. Even 12 was a great tee shot; just can't believe that ball got to that bunker into the wind.

But those drivers starting on 13. 13, 15, 17, and 18 were absolutely perfect. They were all exactly the way I thought they were going to be, the way I visualized them.

Sometimes that's what you need to do. I focus more on visualizing the shots rather than just getting too technical because I started thinking of it too much on the swing, and I just kind of let it come to me, if that makes any sense.

Q. Did I hear you mention you're a believer in karma

over there, that it might be karmic retribution potentially if you could pull this off this weekend?

JON RAHM: No, well, I do believe in karma in the sense that good things happen to good people, and bad things happen to people that do bad things. Again, we're talking about things I can't control.

What happened a couple weeks ago is something I can't control, unfortunately, but what I can do is control what I do every time. Just every second of the day, just following the routine, make sure I'm hydrated, make sure I'm eating, and make sure I'm thinking the right things out there on the golf course. So far I've done a great job, and hopefully I can keep going.

Q. How much has the game changed since 2008 and in what specific ways are the biggest shifts?

JON RAHM: I mean, I was 13. So, in my case, a lot. I don't know, I feel like now you have a whole lot of generation that grew up watching Tiger play, and I think we all had those goals in mind of playing golf the way he did. That's why you see so many people much like myself and around my age that are playing golf the way we are. We're playing at a really high competitive level consistently.

I think that's the biggest difference. I think Tiger changed the narrative of golfers to think of ourselves more as athletes, and I think everybody is just bigger and stronger. Obviously, technology has made advances, but I think overall, when you see the top players in the world, everybody is just a little bit bigger, a little bit stronger. When you have that many players playing good, you know you have to bring your best to be able to win a golf tournament. I think more and more players do it when we need to.

Q. When we come back here, the iconic U.S. Open victory for Tiger, it gives you time to think about how things have changed. For you as a competitor, when you step on Torrey Pines, do you think about that win with Tiger?

JON RAHM: I think about all eight of his wins, how

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different the golf course has changed, how much has changed over the course of his career. If I believe actually, since 2008, the only difference is the tee box on 15. Yeah, sorry, I lost my train of thought over there. God, I'm a little hungry. I'm sorry.

Q. I respect that. Get some lunch.

JON RAHM: No, what was it? Sorry. I completely lost my train of thought.

Q. Just how much do you feel Tiger's absence this week and his influence?

JON RAHM: You feel it. He was the last champion here as the U.S. Open champion. Every time Tiger is on the premises, whether he's playing or not, you can feel it's a little bit different on the energy and the atmosphere of the spectators, especially if he's playing. It's just a little bit different. When he's in contention, it's even bigger.

The impact Tiger's had on the game, it's been massive. Very few athletes get to have an impact on the game the way he did in golf, and we owe a lot of things to him. I feel like whoever's not a pro playing right now owes the state of the game to him because we have so many great players out right now thanks to what Tiger Woods did.

Q. How close were you today to losing your temper, and what allowed you to maintain it?

JON RAHM: Am I ever going to escape that question? Like I never lost it. I got a little frustrated on a couple of holes. Just because, like I said, I felt like I was making decent swings and just not getting -- not that I was getting bad bounces or anything, but just not getting the results sometimes that you'd expect with certain swings. They weren't that bad. I just kept going off the fairway and off the fairway and off the fairway.

I think the most frustrating moment might have been 13 just because of how good a tee shot I had. I had plenty of club to get in there. I had a 5-wood, and I didn't even have to hit it that hard. I just hit it so bad and it ended up so short in a tough lie. Just making a bogey there was probably the most frustrated I got today.

I was a bit more vocal on 14 after the second shot because I felt that was a good swing and I felt like it just got gusted. But, hey, I made the next shot, so I can't really say much. I never really lost it.

Q. It's the same course with a different setup. Bubba's had a good day, and he's up there. He's won Farmers, and you've won Farmers. What can you get from that,

and what can't you get from that?

JON RAHM: I think it does play a little bit different, but tee shots are the same. Having played this course in every possible wind always helps, and I think just the memory of some putts and some breaks can always help, right? Obviously, they're rolling a little bit different, a little bit faster. You have to play a little bit more break, but there's a couple out there -- like in my case, the putt on 11, I knew it was straight -- I've hit that putt before. I've missed it before. And I knew it was straight. Like the putt on 10, I knew it broke a lot more than it looks.

It's just situations where I think that experience can help out. We all know everything tends to break towards the ocean, but it's not always the case, right? I feel like just the experience on the course in certain moments can always help out.

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