

U.S. Open Championship 2025

Tuesday, June 10, 2025

Oakmont, Pennsylvania, USA

Oakmont Country Club

Jon Rahm

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Welcome back to the interview area. We're here with Jon Rahm, the 2021 U.S. Open champion. How has your week been thus far, and what are some of your initial impressions of the golf course?

JON RAHM: It's early in the week. It's been great so far. It's a place that I think every time you come, and having been able to be fortunate to play here for the second time, it never ceases to amaze, in the sense of the history, the old school feel of the clubhouse. I think I saw a scale in there that's probably older than every building around here. Then the golf course in itself with some new changes that still maintains the essence of what it's all about and what Oakmont is. Extreme challenge.

Even when you just stand on the putting green, seeing the whole property, you know you're somewhere special. It's quite iconic. It's one of those things that makes it a great venue and a great championship.

Q. What is your mindset just going into a U.S. Open week?

JON RAHM: I mean, in theory, same as any other, but you're aware of what a golf tournament here is going to be like, it's going to be a challenge. A lot of unfortunate things are going to happen. It's hard fairways to hit, bad lies, difficult bunkers, difficult greens. It's going to be a nice test, a difficult test. And I think one of the truest representations of what a U.S. Open is all about.

Q. What are some of the kinds of shots that you'll have to hit this week that you might not hit any other time this year?

JON RAHM: Hard to say kind of shot because in any golf event, in any major event, you need to have it all. You need to be playing really good golf. I think it's what players will be okay with, with regards to where to hit certain shots.

Like in the 1st hole, let's say you hit a great drive, it's downwind, and you end up with a wedge in hand. I think a lot of times if you just hit the green, you might be happy. Usually if it's outside 15 feet, none of us would be happy.

So it's a little bit more of understanding what can happen here and what it is.

I think the 10th hole is another great example, where if you don't hit your number very easily, that ball starts trickling off the green, right? And if you hit the fairway, you don't have a long iron in.

I wouldn't say exactly the type of shots, but it's more the circumstances and positions you might put yourself in that you need to be okay with.

Q. Jon, you talked a little bit about the course itself and the history. How do you kind of get away from the aura of Oakmont as you prepare to play here?

JON RAHM: I think you embrace it. You know how great it is.

But to be honest, once you start the tournament, all of those things kind of go away. It's business at that point. It's time to post a score. You're not really thinking, oh, this is Oakmont. It's more like, okay, here's the 1st hole, hopefully make a 4, then move onto the next. That's kind of how it goes.

I think the first few holes you think about it in practice, but then after that, it's, okay, what do I need to do to hit the best shot possible and then the next shot.

Q. You've won this tournament before. What's it like to play on Father's Day in this tournament?

JON RAHM: Luckily, it's a different day in Spain for Father's Day, so I was a very new dad when I was able to win it. I can't say Father's Day was really on my mind that Sunday. I think it only comes into play obviously if you can get the win.

As regards to my father, it's weird because I feel like this might be more of a Father's Day to me than it is to him because in Spain it's a different day. So in that case, I never had that feeling. It's only something that I think would come to mind if you do have a chance to win on



Sunday or if you do win it on Sunday.

Besides that, I think the week is big enough than to be adding onto that.

Q. Does size matter this week? In other words, you look at some of the more recent past winners here. They were strong men, naturally strong players. Is that an advantage?

JON RAHM: Because where do we go -- Dustin, Angel, Ernie, Larry --

Q. Jack.

JON RAHM: Johnny, then Jack, right? It's a long golf course. Any time you have heavy rough and length, just being able to hit a distance, that speed to move the ball forward is always going to be a massive, massive advantage.

You rarely have a combination -- maybe at Pebble Beach nowadays -- where you can't really lengthen it. So you have tricky greens, tricky fairways, but it's not that long. Somebody with a really good short game might be able to get it around. But even that year, Gary Woodland won.

Length in a major like this, and even now in general in any sport, having that power is always helpful. I would like to see all those champions in common. I would like to guess that that week the driving was very much on point. I think it's obviously nearly impossible to win a tournament here if you're not hitting it well off the tee because, if you keep putting yourself off the fairway, for lack of a better term, you're going to get Oakmont very often.

I would like to -- whoever is the number cruncher in the group can probably see how they were probably very, very -- not very superior, but they were really solid off the tee, and that's usually the way to start.

Q. I was thinking of you specifically too. Are you able to move it out of the rough?

JON RAHM: It's very dependent. When it's this thick, sometimes you get somewhat lucky to where the grass is strong enough to hold the ball and you might be able to have a shot. A lot of the times you won't. It all depends on the club. Obviously if you're looking past an 8-iron, it's always going to be very difficult to move it. It's to a point where you're trying to get more rollout than carry. It's very lie dependent.

There's going to be times where you get very lucky and have a wayward tee shot and have a near perfect shot,

and there's going to be times when you miss the fairway by a foot and you're going to have to punch out 20, 50 yards at best. At that point, it's luck of the draw.

Q. We've got another major on a golf course that's been restored and taken out a ton of trees. It seems like trees are kind of the enemy in this process recently in golf course design. As a professional, when you see a course that took out all the trees, does that make you breathe a little easier, or does it not really make a difference?

JON RAHM: I never got to play with trees. In '16 they had done a lot of that job already. If they've taken -- if there's any trees that they've taken out were already on the outside of the property. So they told us the only tree in play is the one on 13. So I never got to see it that way in this case.

I don't remember playing many majors where they've taken trees out. Like I know they've done it to Congressional, but I haven't been able to play the course.

Q. Oak Hill.

JON RAHM: I didn't play it before. I don't know. I don't know what to tell you.

It's funny how 80, 100 years ago they plant the trees and let them grow, and then 100 years later they say, I want to see what it was originally, but the original founders planted the trees for a reason. So it's always funky in a way to see the difference.

I think in a weird way in some cases the trees on a golf course like this one can't help because, if a ball's going offline, most of the time it might stop it and have a decent chance. I don't know how thick the rough was running, but having trees and tree roots can prevent the rough from being as thick and lush as it is now.

Either way, this golf course is going to be difficult. I think this is one of the cases where it's nice to see it just because of what I just said. When you stand on the 1st tee, 10 tee, 18, 9, you get a layout of the whole property. You get to see the entirety of it. As beautiful as it is, I think that's worth it here.

Q. Totally unrelated. You've got 21 top 10s. You've been top 10 in every LIV event you've played in. Talk about trying to contextualize that. You're the only one who's lived it on both sides. How would you contextualize your top-10 streak?

JON RAHM: I would happily trade a bunch of them for

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

more wins, that's for sure, but I keep putting myself in good position.

Listen, I'm a realist in this case. I've been playing really good golf, yes, but I'd be lying if I said that it wasn't easier to have top 10s with a smaller field. That's just the truth, right? Had I been playing full-field events, would I have top 10 every single week? No. But I've been playing good enough to say that I would most likely have been inside the top 30 every single time and maybe even top 25, which for 21 straight tournaments I'd say that's pretty good. I still would have had a lot of top 10s, that's for sure.

It's hard to say. There's definitely some weeks, like last week for example, having a weaker Sunday than everybody else, I don't think I would have top 10'd. I was able to finish eighth. I think winning is equally as hard, but you can take advantage of a smaller field to finish higher.

I wouldn't always -- as much as I want to give it credit personally for having that many top 10s, I wouldn't always give it as the full amount just knowing that it's a smaller field.

Q. Looking back at the PGA, it hadn't been that long since you were in contention on Sunday at a major, only a couple years. Is there anything that you forget that you have to relearn being in that situation again? Did it serve as a refresher of any kind? Is there anything that you remembered once you were done with the round or anything like that?

JON RAHM: Not necessarily, no. I was fully aware of the situation, what I was putting myself, and once I got to that point, as well, if anything, it was a true joy to put myself in that position again. I was very happy to be there and felt like I was in control. It was nice.

It was unfortunate that -- not even 16, just one bad swing on 17, which wasn't even entirely that bad, it was just a very difficult hole -- cost me as much as it did.

Nothing that I can think of would be a reminder of something that I had to remember, no.

Q. I guess what I was getting at, I was thinking of Brooks, how he lost to you at the Masters, then won the next time. Bryson lost at the PGA, then won the next time. Do you think there's anything in you that's now better suited to win now that you've gone through the experience of it again?

JON RAHM: Yeah, I think just the experience of being there in general always helps. I would say Brooks was a different case because he had the lead going into Sunday

both times. I was five shots back going into Sunday, so it was a long chance.

Obviously it does help just knowing that you've been there in a more recent tournament. It's always going to help, yeah.

Q. I'm curious if you saw what the amateurs did here a few years ago, hitting their tee shots down different fairways, and if any of those shots, having seen the course this week, if any of those shots still make sense?

JON RAHM: I've spoken with a few of the players, one of them being Preston Summerhays. Obviously being an ASU alum and a member at Silverleaf, I've seen him quite a bit, and a couple of others that played the U.S. Am here. I remember telling them there's zero chance in this world that anyone goes to 11 tee and hits driver towards 10.

What I remember from the U.S. Open, that rough between 10 and 11 might have been the thickest on the entire property. You were not advancing it anywhere. Same on 1, they were almost bailing left for whatever reason. It is very weird to see that happen because that is not the course I remembered. I know they had weather and had to adjust a little bit, but yeah, I told him, if you ever play a U.S. Open there, there's no chance you're doing that. If you are, you're taking a big risk obviously.

Q. You said earlier at a course like this, in a week like this, bad things were probably going to happen. What's the mental approach knowing that that's going to be the case? Then I'm curious for you, how is the way you've responded to bad things happening on the golf course evolved the longer you've been in your career?

JON RAHM: It's gotten a lot better. I think my main issue is always with accepting the mistakes. I'm fully aware that I can make mistakes, but accepting that I've done it but it's my fault and move on. A lot of times I'm very vocal about blaming something on the outside even though when I'm saying it, I'm fully aware it was my fault. So the quicker I accept that it's me and I move on is going to help.

There's been weeks where I've performed really well on tough courses where that was the case. I think, as it relates to me, it's that, just that acceptance that it's going to happen and it happens and do what you need to do to hit the better shot next time.

It's just a tough course. It's so difficult where very few times anybody has won under par. If it doesn't rain, most likely over par will win again. It's something that none of

us, I would say, are used to, but it's a challenge you need to embrace.

If there's any part of your game that will be tested on a week like this, it will be your mental game, that's for sure.

Q. You said earlier how important it is to drive it well here obviously. How would you say you've been driving it this year? How do you feel about your -- and do you need to hit a lot of drivers here?

JON RAHM: It starts off the tee. It does start off the tee. You need to do everything well. If you just drive it well and everything else is poor, you have no chance. It all starts at the tee.

They've added some length on some holes. Like 3 you didn't necessarily have to hit driver, now you kind of do. You can always choose not to, but I wouldn't be going into those greens with 6-, 5-irons by choice. That's too small of targets to have a chance. As often as possible, I would say driver is going to be the play.

I feel like I've been driving it good this year. I wouldn't say it's my best ever, but I'm feeling good. It's been a good year. If we go back to the last major, PGA, I felt really confident on the tee and moving it both ways, so carrying that over to this week as well.

Again, it's so much more than just that, right? It's a test of all aspects of your game, and that's what makes it so special.

Q. Was the driving something that held you back a little bit in the early part of last year? You mentioned before that you had swing issues and you've worked through them.

JON RAHM: Well, I haven't changed my driver shaft since early 2013. What I explained last year right before the U.S. Open, I changed to the current shaft, was I think I had outgrown the shaft I was playing. It's not that -- it was the exact same one. We would literally take the head off, put a new one in, and go. So I think that shaft had just run its course.

It wasn't performing the same way mainly because I have more swing speed. I think back then when I did it, I was around 175. If I stepped on it, 177 ball speed now; it's almost 10 miles an hour more. That's a big change.

The way the shaft was performing was having me have to compensate during my swing to avoid certain mistakes, and I think that bled into the rest of my game. I changed that basically a year ago, and it's been something I'm trying

to come back since. It's still some feelings and some compensations that still come from that that just got accentuated because of that, right? It seems so simple, so trivial, but I think it had been happening for a better part of a year, year and a half, and I think overcorrecting those mistakes is always going to be harder than creating those bad habits.

It's still something I'm fighting every once and again, but it's in a much smaller measure now.

Q. When you come here, where do you gain or get more of your confidence from? This is in regard to a previous answer. From how you've played on LIV recently or just the belief, you're a two-time major champ, you've won an Open before, and you know how to compete in these majors?

JON RAHM: Both. I know I've been playing good, and it's been consistently good. It's been consistently good. I get it from both, knowing that I've been -- I've done well in majors in the past, I've done well in majors recently, and week in and week out I've been playing good golf. So both things combined.

Q. If you lived in Pittsburgh, would you want to be a member here? If so, why?

JON RAHM: I would say yes just because you'd be able to say you're a member at Oakmont and play it whenever you want. Would I play here every day? No.

We had an event last night at Fox Hills. Looked beautiful. I would probably play there more often. And I'm sure there's some great golf courses in the area as well.

I actually met with a member at a function yesterday, and I was asking him, do you play Oakmont every single day? It's just like, when you go, do you even try to shoot a score? Do you just go to play and have fun, or are you counting them every day?

I feel like, when they set it up hard -- like if they have a superintendent's revenge here, I don't know what the average score must be. I think 90 percent of the field doesn't finish. It could be absolutely impossible.

All jokes aside, yeah, of course I want to be a member here. It's a beautiful golf course and very historic.

Q. So you were joking?

JON RAHM: No, I would be a member. Would I play here every day? No. I wouldn't play anywhere every day. I would like the diversity of playing elsewhere.



confidence that I could get it done.

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Q. This would probably sound simple. If someone were to ask you what's Oakmont like and you said it's very hard, why? What's the one thing that makes this place hard?

JON RAHM: I don't know if there's one thing. Assuming the rough is lower on an average day at Oakmont, in a non-U.S. Open year, the biggest challenge off the tee will be those fairway bunkers. They're usually very penal. They're very often just deep enough to where you don't have a chance to get to the green due to the length.

But if there's just one thing, it's the greens. It's very complicated and intricate greens that, if you were to make them flat, this golf course would be very, very different.

Q. Being a low am that actually finishes in the top 25, I think, in '16, you were arriving before everyone is really ready for you to arrive. I'm curious what that moment told you about your game, like I am actually -- I have a future here?

JON RAHM: I had luckily performed well on PGA TOUR events before then. I think I had two top 10s, one in Phoenix and one in Mayakoba. At that point, I was fully confident that I had what it takes. I knew I was capable of competing with the best players in the world. I had no doubt.

At that point, it was getting the test of a U.S. Open. I think naively, not knowing what to expect, helped. I just thought, oh, this is what a U.S. Open is like. I didn't know it was the top tier of difficulty of a U.S. Open. It's just like this week to week. It was great.

It's funny, after I went here and I went to Congressional, I was like, oh, this place is easy. It's a piece of cake compared to what we played last week.

It helped play really good that week, and even in the first round I had a double and triple and it cost me a lot; I think I shot 6- or 7-over in the first round. Having to go out Saturday morning after sitting out all day Friday and knowing I had to shoot a low score to make the cut and doing it and shooting 1-under was a huge deal. I know I got up-and-down on 18 to a short pin and from just past it on the right to make the cut.

I think I was already in it even if I bogeyed, but to get in and just keep performing well. Those last three days, I believe I was somewhere between even and 2-over par. That was a huge deal. To finish that high was a massive confidence booster in many ways; when I approached a tough golf course, which I did the week after that, I had the

