

U.S. Amateur Championship

Thursday, August 20, 2015

Jon Rahm

Press Conference



Q. Did you ever trail all day?

JON RAHM: Me? No. I don't think I lost a hole today in the afternoon. No, I lost one, 14, that's it. In the morning I never trailed, no.

Q. We've got Jon Rahm from Spain via Arizona State University, 3 & 1 winner over Daniel Wetterich in the third round of the U.S. Amateur and a quarterfinalist. Jon, you've got to be pretty pleased with that statement that you're in the quarterfinals of the U.S. Amateur.

JON RAHM: Yeah, it's a great feeling, especially after all the trouble I went through to make it to match play, having to play a playoff, birdieing 16 and 17 of my regular holes to get into that playoff, so yeah, I'm extremely proud of myself how I just pulled it off.

Q. Let's continue that line of thinking with the question about not trailing all day. That's probably a good way to be in a match; you're always ahead.

JON RAHM: I really never thought about it, but I think in the three matches, I've only had like three bogeys, so one each match, and I've had like two or three birdies in each of them. You know, if you don't make bogeys here, it's hard -- you're hardly going to trail, unless someone is playing really good, obviously, and I've been lucky to make birdies, especially today. I had my putter going. I don't know what happened in the morning. I started making putts and I kept it going in the afternoon. Anything inside 10 feet was going in. It just kept me extremely confident.

Q. What do you think the biggest putt was? I might argue it was 13 from just off the green there.

JON RAHM: Oh, that one was definitely the biggest one, yeah. It was a big change because he had that four-footer up the hill for par, and he was probably thinking that was going to be to win the hole, and me making that -- he made it, too, but being 3-up, five to play, if I just kept playing the same way, I knew if I made all pars I was not going to lose.

Q. Especially when you thought that first one was out; you hit a provisional, and to make 4 out of that --

JON RAHM: I just hoped it was there. I knew the grass was long, but I didn't know how far the ball flew. Yeah, it was actually my second flier of the day. I was not expecting it, and I got lucky it was there. It wasn't

much of a swing, but I hit it somewhere up there. I was lucky to make the putt, obviously.

Q. You made it to 16 last year; to go one step farther, I'm sure that's the goal is to win it all, but just to feel like you maybe got over a hump today?

JON RAHM: Oh, definitely. Last year I was playing great, too, but I had to face Corey Connors who got to the finals and played great. I think he shot 4- or 5-under at Atlanta Athletic Club, so this is like here, if someone shoots 4- or 5-under, I got to 17 and just congratulated him because he played great, and this year I seem to be the guy who's making the putts, and hopefully I just keep it going. It's definitely like mission accomplished is to get farther than last year.

Q. Why is it you're the guy making the putts this year?

JON RAHM: I don't know, they're just rolling in. I didn't make a putt yesterday, actually. The only one I made was the one on the second playoff hole to tie it, and that's it, but I didn't really make many. I played even better probably, but just all those 10-footers weren't going in.

Q. Were you fighting the conditions today, or did the putter allow you to relax you a little bit and kind of take some center-of-the-green lines?

JON RAHM: No, I stayed pretty aggressive. Unless the shot was really hard, like on the back nine when you have 5-irons in, for example, on the last few holes. I had 5-iron, 6-iron, 5-iron, so obviously you can't be too aggressive. If the pin is in the center, obviously you're going to aim for the center, but you don't want to short-side yourself.

Q. When you're the No. 1 amateur, the Ben Hogan Award winner and so forth, is there a little bit of a target on your back because you're like, hey, if I beat that guy I've done something?

JON RAHM: I think there wasn't until now because I barely made it to match play. But now that I got all the way here, they're probably going to start going back in time, be like, oh, he did this in the Phoenix Open, Ben Hogan Award, did this and that.

Q. You've got the rundown.

JON RAHM: Yeah, so they're probably going to be thinking about that, and it's probably going to motivate

them to beat me, but it also motivates me to know who I am and how far I can go.

Q. Are you playing as well or better now than say at the Waste Management?

JON RAHM: It's different. It's a different situation. Match play, stroke play is completely different. Today I putted way better. In Phoenix my iron game was a lot sharper.

Q. What was the key to your putting today?

JON RAHM: Well, all I did, which is really simple, was to pick a spot -- I imagined the line and picked a spot to aim really close to the ball. Like it was no farther than three inches, and actually obviously three inches from the ball, you're pretty accurate, so all I did was just commit to the line, and it worked at the beginning and gave me a lot of confidence, so I just kept doing it.

Q. You really seemed to manage the pace better than anybody I watched all day.

JON RAHM: Yeah, I think every good putter loves fast greens, especially obviously to get the speed. But yeah, it's kind of hard in the morning because they're a lot faster. They're a lot faster. In the afternoon it's a little easier to hit putts up the hill and downhill. Downhill in the morning, they just kill you. If you don't make a putt downhill in the morning, you can go six feet by easily. I don't know, I just adjusted. I feel really confident with the putter, so when you're confident it's hard to miss it by much.

Q. You said last night you were probably 70 percent over the jet lag. Where would you say you are today?

JON RAHM: Close to 90 percent. Actually I got a really nice night's sleep, and playing so good in the morning having the chance to rest was great. I had a couple hours. I got to the bar and sat down, and then I went to the gym, foam rolled, stretched, took a shower, and when I got out of the shower I actually had a lot of energy in me. That actually helped me a lot. Having extra time tomorrow is actually going to help me even more.

Q. Is this fun?

JON RAHM: Oh, yeah. I love match play. I feel like match play is the most fun. It's the way you can enjoy your golf the most because you don't get to play it often and it's way different. I feel like each one gets the best out of what they can do. You shoot lower in match play than stroke play, definitely. I feel like you make more birdies. I don't know, you're more aggressive. It doesn't matter as much if you make a quadruple.