

ROUND 3 INTERVIEW
February 18, 2023

JON RAHM (-15)



Q. Jon, congrats, the only bogey-free round of the day. You have to be pretty proud of that performance.

JON RAHM: I am. It's a great round of golf. It's a tricky golf course out there and it shows by the scores, right? Sometimes you can get a little blinded because everybody in the group was playing good, especially early on, the first 12, 13 holes. We kept looking at the leaderboard and there was a reason why, right? It's not easy. I feel like we were the only three making putts out there, probably.

Really proud of today, heck of a round of golf. Took advantage of a couple good lies in the rough and made every putt that I needed to keep the round going, highlighted by the one on 13.

Q. And what about the one at 18 that gives you a little cushion heading into tomorrow?

JON RAHM: The only thing I was worried about was getting that ball to the hole. I've hit that putt a million times, I've seen that putt hit a million times and we all leave it just a couple, a couple rolls short, so I just wanted to get it there. Felt good obviously making it, it's a huge bonus, right? It's a difficult hole, birdies are lacking every single year on that hole. To be able to make one and extend the lead going into tomorrow, it's a big bonus.

Q. Obviously you want to win every tournament you play in. Is there something about this tournament and this golf course that you kind of want to check off before you're done?

JON RAHM: Well, I can make an argument about any event that I play in about being able to check something off, but the fact that Tiger is the host, the fact that he's out here playing and the history of this golf course as a venue is two reasons why I would love to be able to win here. It's a very select group of champions and you'll join -- you join a list of champions that frankly Tiger and Jack have never joined, which probably never happens on any other golf course but this one, right?

It would be an honor.

Q. What happened on 3? Did you know that that was going to be a TIO? Did you think it might have been out of bounds? What was the thought process on that hole?

JON RAHM: I was 99.9 percent sure it was TIO, but take advantage of the rules and hit a



provisional at least. If I hit it good I have a different visual in mind going through the round. And that .9 percent is just in case. I don't want to be walking back up to the tee and if I can, just saving time as well.

Q. This run from late last year until now, is there a common theme in your game throughout it or are you getting it done in different ways with each round?

JON RAHM: It's been different ways. If I had to say something, I wish -- I don't think my driving has been up to the level it's been in the past, but I've been able to make a few putts when I needed to. I think as a whole my short game and wedge game's been a little bit better, which kind of makes up. I've been a really good driver for six years and if I drop from the top-10, I'm still good but if I can improve that wedge game is what can give me the most amount of benefit. I think I've been doing a really good job on hitting them a little bit closer and capitalizing on the putts.

Q. And getting a three-shot lead pulling away a little bit at the end, how does it feel? Change anything going into tomorrow at all?

JON RAHM: I mean, it doesn't really change. I'm fully aware of, like I said in Palm Springs, somebody's going to come out tomorrow and somebody's going to shoot a round of 4, 5, 6, 7 under. It happens every single tournament we play in, right, so I have to be aware that somebody's going to make a run and I'm going to have to shoot a 60s round for sure to give myself a chance to win as well. Just aware that I need to keep doing what I've been doing until now.

Q. Jon, the ability to kick in that next gear when you need to on a Saturday, is that something that you pride yourself in that from a mental standpoint, physical standpoint that you have that next gear to kick into?

JON RAHM: I think we all wish we could access something like that more often or on command. I think today all three of us kind of fed off each other, right? Keith and I started making those birdies and Max makes a birdie on 3. We were all playing so well that I feel like that elevates the average level of the group, and knowing that if we're playing that good, we have to keep it up to have a chance tomorrow. I think a little bit of that happened.

I wouldn't know what to say, I've just been comfortable on top of the golf ball, right? And especially on the greens, I've been able to make a lot more putts on this course than I have in the past and that's what's allowed to put myself in contention.

Q. Do you guys hear the roars for Tiger out there or are you so focused --

JON RAHM: You're fully aware where Tiger is anywhere. Yeah, we know.

Q. This was your third 65 in four rounds here, clearly a very difficult golf course. What is about the course you like and kind of suits your game?



JON RAHM: Could be a very elaborate answer. The main thing is I grew up on poa annua greens, so I'm a little more comfortable than the average on them and it shows. Same with Torrey Pines, right? It's a golf course, both of them I play really well on. This is mainly a ball-striker's golf course. There's a reason Ben Hogan had that success here and why it's very difficult to be able to have people win back to back or win three, four times. You can't really just get lucky, you have to come out here and be the best.

I think that's where it kind of helps me. My ball-striking level on average is usually pretty high and that's why I have consistent finishes. Obviously this week I've been hitting my irons very precisely, giving myself a lot of chances for birdie, that's why I'm in the position I'm in.

Q. What have you learned from being in the final group the last two weeks and things not going your way?

JON RAHM: I mean, I wouldn't say I played bad in Phoenix, Scottie just shot a bogey-free 6 under, that would have been really hard to catch. I think I'm going to keep those lessons to myself.

None of those cases I was in the lead, right? It's a little bit different. The only thing I can say is Torrey Pines is a freaking difficult golf course to play and if you don't have a day, it's going to kick you in the teeth, much like this one. Just got to make sure I do what I've been doing and come out tomorrow with my A-game.

