

# DEAN & DELUCA

## Invitational

Tuesday, May 23, 2017

### John Rahm

#### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome John Rahm to the Dean & DeLuca Invitational. John is currently fourth FedExCup, 12th in the world, and second in tee-to-greens category for his game.

Can you talk a little bit about how that might play into your advantage this week at Colonial?

JOHN RAHM: Well, you would think tee-to-green will help me out this week, but this is not a usual course or any similar to where we usually play. It's an older style golf course and makes you think your way around. Doesn't allow me to hit as many drivers.

Or if I want to hit drivers, I need to be a lot more precise than I have been. You really need to think when you want to be aggressive or when you can be aggressive and pick and choose.

But I like this kind of golf course. It reminds me of back home. I'm comfortable hitting irons off the tee as well, and I think the iron play is going to be key this week as well as putting.

Usually not many low scores win out here. If I recall the last few years, it's somewhere between 10-under and 13-under. We're talking about the best players in the world and a lot of holes they have a wedge in and they can't get lower than that.

So it's a golf course that's going to test every part of our strength. I hope my ball-striking helps me out this week.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

#### **Q. Do you like this style golf course? Kind of have to dial it back a little bit?**

JOHN RAHM: Yeah, just pick and choose. Depends on the wind obviously. It all changes.

So far there are a lot of holes her shaped left to right, and that fits my eye. I like hitting fades, and a lot of those do move a little bit left, right. Holes like No. 15. It's an awkward fairway but of the way it's positioned, but it moves left to right. Same with No. 1, No. 2.



And most of the holes where I need to hit a draw I can just kind of cut over the corner. Like on 18, I can still hit my fade over the corner.

On 14 -- yeah, well 14, it's a little longer.

You know, I'm comfortable on those golf courses. Back home in Spain at least where I live we don't have many long ones. Most of those are old-style golf courses like this on.

I am used to hitting driver on those. Doesn't mean I am going to be hitting drivers, but I do like it.

#### **Q. Until this week had you ever seen this course?**

JOHN RAHM: On TV. No, I have been here for the Ben Hogan Award Dinner, but unfortunately I was never able to play.

#### **Q. Is there one particular course in Spain that you would say is most reminiscent of Colonial?**

JOHN RAHM: Well, thinking about it, it's really kind of similar it Valderrama. You know, different trees. Obviously a little different type of -- just visually a little different, but it's very similar.

You have to hit a lot of irons off the tee in Valderrama and it's precision golf. You have to keep it in the fairway and hit those tiny greens. In that sense it does remind me a lot to it.

#### **Q. One last question: Coming out of the PLAYERS probably wasn't what you expected. What did you get out of that week and what have you been working on since?**

JOHN RAHM: Well, there is a lot to get out of the first two days. I was 4-under at my first PLAYERS. Shot bogey-free, 4-under par at Sawgrass my first time ever in competition golf, which I was really happy about.

I would never have guessed I would shoot an 82 on Saturday, especially with how I was feeling. It's golf; things happen. Things started going south and kept going south. Just anything can happen.

The main thing that I got out of that golf course, is that I really liked it. I had been told I can't hit drivers, it's not my kind of golf course, but I loved it. As I said, I have this hybrid 4-iron I love hitting off the tee, and it's

something I used a lot that week.

I'm comfortable. It reminds -- it's the same designer. It kind of reminds me back to the ASU Karstan Golf Course. It's a Pete Dye design, which I have some success on.

It's not the same golf course, not nearly as tough, but it kind of does remind me a little bit of similarities and reminiscence.

It's a golf course that I do like, and I know going in the future I'm going to have some success.

**Q. I know you didn't get a chance to play the course the last two years when you were here, but you did walk away with a cool looking trophy each time. Does that kind of vibe from winning in a different type way at this venue give you in any extra confidence or any particular good vibes when going around here even though you're kind of a newbie at this place?**

JOHN RAHM: Well, I didn't have to do anything those two days especially to win. It's a lot of positivity for me surrounding this place. Every time I have been here I've been a nerve wreck the first few hours, and then because I've ended up winning a trophy, I ended up getting a lot of humbling and positive emotions, which it's always good as a golf courses.

Kind of had the same feeling if I played great here before and I've never played it. Certainly the people and the volunteers and anybody involved with the Ben Hogan Foundation and organization really does help out, because everybody reminds me and tells me how much they been looking forward to me being able to play here probably as much as I have.

When people who have been here for a long time are excited for someone like me to play, it's something that motivates me and helps out to play.

As I've said, being able to walk out with a trophy twice, even if it's not the same one we're competing for this week, I do have that positivity in the back of my head. I haven't had a single bad moment here yet, so it's all good going forward.

**Q. John, being relatively new on tour you're encountering a lot of courses that you haven't played very much. What's it like planning for those versus planning for courses you do play a lot? Are you sort of used to that by now?**

JOHN RAHM: Yeah, I kind of am. Coming straight from college, I pretty much played every week being new, and only having one practice round, right? So having more than one practice round, I do get a lot

done.

But there really is some golf courses where not knowing where things are, sometimes it's a lot better. Just go out there not knowing. I told my caddie. Shell Houston was a great example. I was able to play nine holes, that's it.

The first day we tee'd off of 10 and I had not played the back nine yet. I told Adam, Hey, Adam, just tell me what to do. Don't tell me where the hazards are. Don't tell me where the bad things are. Just tell me where, what club.

You know, it kind of simplifies the thought process. I don't have to think on problems that I don't know where they are. Granted, experience can help out a lot of times on the greens or when wind conditions change or with certain pin positions, knowing where to be. But that's where I have Adam. He's a 17-year veteran, plus a couple years on the LPGA, so he does know where to keep me in check when he has to.

**Q. Have you figured out how many drivers you actually are going to hit during the course of this round, and how many times you're going to shelve it considering you're one of the longer hitters out here?**

JOHN RAHM: I haven't thought about it that much. It all depends on how I'm feeling in the moment. As many times as I say, There is no way I am going to hit driver here, and then I am feeling good that day and end up hitting driver, right? There are obvious holes. I am not hitting driver 10 or 17 obviously.

I haven't counted, but I can tell I'm playing No. 1 -- I am talking about the maximum drives I would hit. No 1, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15, and 18. Ten drives. Maximum obviously. Still a chance I might not hit driver on some of those holes.

As I said, if the stats back up, I'm a really confident driver off the tee. If I'm able to use it, I'll try to.

**Q. If you took the win out of it at Torrey Pines, what's been the best part of this first year on your for you?**

JOHN RAHM: Well it's kind of hard. Because of the win I was able to do so many other things. It really is hard to take out of it.

I would say -- I got to say -- it's kind of hard, but I would say that match against DJ playing the MatchPlay. It was really fun. To start the way I did against DJ and still put a fight to the best player in the world after being 5-down is probably the most fun I've had on the golf course aside from Torrey Pines.

Obviously there are great moments: teeing it up at Augusta for the first time. Being top 5, Top 6 after the first two rounds. Having a chance to win in Mexico. I could keep going on and on about all of the -- playing Pebble Beach for the first time and making six birdies in a row at Pebble Beach. That's something I had never thought of it.

If I had to pick, I would say making that 25-, 30-footer on 16 to keep Dustin in check going up to the 17th hole.

**Q. You've talked about your hybrid 4-iron. Is there one club in your bag that you lean on more than any other?**

JOHN RAHM: Driver. Most likely. Yeah, I mean, I usually tell Adam a lot of times, I tell a lot of people, I either hit driver or 4-iron. If I have to hit a 3-wood, I know I'm going to hit the fairway more times than driver; same goes for the 5-wood.

Unless for distance purposes or wind purposes is or whatever reason is I have to hit an iron, I will hit the 4-iron, otherwise driver is the club I have the highest percentage to hit the fairway being in a good spot with.

**Q. How many times will you hit that 4-iron this week?**

JOHN RAHM: This week? It all depends. I can't tell you. There is going to be a day when I'm feeling confident with that shot and I hit it ten times; may be just one sometimes. I can't tell you exactly. If I knew, I would.

I kind of create a strategy, but it deviates depending on the day, morning or afternoon, or how my swing feeling.

**Q. You talked about the strategy at Shell. You wouldn't take that same strategy this week where you just say, Tell me what to do, right?**

JOHN RAHM: Well, I'd played the course so I kind of know what the lines are. A lot of times, yeah. You know, he knows my game perfectly and knows how I like to think. We're both pretty aggressive, so more often than not he's going to tell me, Hit the driver.

We kind of have an unspoken agreement where he's realized that I'm out here with the driver, so if I say, Hey, I'm confident, he will let me hit the driver.

I mean, unless it's a ridiculous play and I tell him, Oh, I think I can get it over the water on 10 and that was not true. Unless it's something like that, he will let me.

It's funny like that. He trusts my feelings in that way.

**Q. When was the last time he told you that?**

JOHN RAHM: I can't think. Kind of happens a couple times a tournament. I can't really remember the last time he told me -- I told him I was confident with the driver.

Shell Houston was one of them. On No. 12. Even if we couldn't quite get to the green, I was just more confident hitting driver than hitting an iron into that fairway. I can't tell you exactly what times. It happens quite a bit, quite often.

THE MODERATOR: Any more questions?

**Q. After your practice round today, can you give your impression of holes 3, 4, and 5, the Horrible Horseshoe, and talk your strategy?**

JOHN RAHM: I haven't played three yet, but I've seen it obviously. I almost want to say it's the easiest of the three, which is hard to say.

You know, 4 being a really long par-3. I mean, I hit a hybrid 4-iron which I hit really far and I didn't get there this morning. Might be even a 5-wood for me. The length is the main defense of that hole, right?

I feel like you just need to be smart and know where the pin position is and where the miss should be. If the pin is short left, do not miss it short left. If there is a ton of room right, just make sure you make par.

It's not really holes where you're looking for birdies. Obviously once you put it in the fairway you're going to have a chance, but hitting No. 5 fairway is not easy at all.

I hit driver today. I hit a really good driver downwind; still had an 8-iron. If wind conditions change or no there is wind, I'm going to have a 6- or 7-iron to a small green, which is not the easiest.

It's just a couple holes where you just hope to go through with a minimum amount of damage.

**Q. Given all that you're doing that's new this year, how you handling figuring out how many tournaments to play in row, gearing up for the Open, for example.**

JOHN RAHM: I learned from my past mistakes. One of the things about being a rookie. I played two tournaments leading up to Augusta, and I was kind of burned out going into the weekend.

That's mainly why I changed my schedule. Originally I was going to play Memphis, and once that happened, I talked to my manager, Tim, and said, Listen, I'm not going to risk it again, and I do want to play Colonial.

Once the thought came into my mind I am going to take the week off before the Open and make sure I'm rested. I've always thought -- it's kind of hard once you're a rookie because you want to play as many tournaments as possible all year. Like if it was up to me I would play every one in a row. I can't.

I've been taking breaks. After Augusta I took three weeks. Between the WGC I took two weeks. I been trying to give my body enough rest so at this part of the year I'm able to perform my best.

Also after the U.S. Open I'm going to be going Europe for quite a while, so I need to be ready for that. We'll see. If the week before the U.S. Open I rest and I play good, well maybe that's something I need to do for the majors. There are different opinions, right? Phil plays always the week before; Jack or Tiger never played the week before.

It's just up to your body and each one's preference.