

DEAN & DELUCA

Invitational

Thursday, May 25, 2017

Jon Rahm

Quick Quotes

Q. Jon, your first perspective round here at the Colonial, the Dean & DeLuca. Talk to us about those conditions out there.

JON RAHM: Well, you know, the conditions of the first eight holes could have not been anymore perfect. Actually the first seven. Started on the back nine.

Once we got to 16, on 16 had like a nice knee-knocking four-footer for par. I was having a good round and the wind just started blowing. That's when it got a little tougher.

Luckily 17, it's a short iron off the tee and then another short iron to the green, so it wasn't that transcendent. Then 18, 1, 2, 3, you could kind of take some advantage of the wind. It was helpful.

4 and 5 and 6 were not easy. Luckily I managed to go actually even par on those holes.

I feel like the front nine today was more of a battle with this wind. I feel fortunate to have tee'd off in the morning.

Q. Certainly drove the ball well out there. That's a prerequisite to scoring well here. You've come here before; what would it mean to you to collect the plaid jacket at the end of the week?

JON RAHM: You know, it would be amazing for various reasons. I've had some success in this clubhouse so far, and to be able to win with Sergio his first event, to be able to win where Mr. Hogan won five times -- you know, you go through this clubhouse, and every single champion of old and new eras has won here.

So it would be amazing to be part of that group.

Q. Pretty sure you've heard this all season: What a start.

JON RAHM: (Laughter.) Yeah, couple times, but thank you. It was a well-rounded day. I felt very comfortable and very calm. That's usually a good combination of feelings.

Q. You came in here with a lot of the experience but never playing the golf course in tournament. Two-time Ben Hogan Award winner. You seemed to get



very comfortable out there very quickly.

JON RAHM: I knew all about the clubhouse before I came here, that's true.

It's an old school golf course, and usually I like those. We have quite a few of those back in Spain. I feel comfortable, even if I drive it like I did today. I try to use it as much as possible, and rarely found myself out of the fairway. When I did, it was on the right side of the rough so I had a good chance to hit a good shot.

I feel like we thought properly out there. The one shot I missed I got lucky. Monkeys in those trees just threw it on the green. I still don't know how that ball faded and hit in the top of the tree and just bounced so hard left.

It was the lucky moment of the day, and probably the luckiest moment I've had in the while.

Q. Not even a full year as a professional golfer. Do you feel like every golf course you walk out on, given the way you play, that there is not one golf course that doesn't suit the way you play?

JON RAHM: Well, it's a good mindset to have. It's just the way I've been hitting the driver this year there is always room to hit it.

The original courses like this one where you're not supposed to, you know, a lot of them are fade holes and it's suits my eye perfectly, so I'm able to take over corners like I tried to do on 18, like I did on 1, 2, 3. Even if I went through the fairway.

I'm comfortable enough to start doing that. Even when I'm not supposed to hit a fade, like 12 or 14, I still hit a fade in the fairways.

There are many ways to play this golf course, and many different players that have won here, so this is the only effective way.

Q. What was it like playing with Sergio today?

JON RAHM: You know, it's a great feeling. We've played a lot of practice rounds together. Last time we played together was a little bit of a different vibe because it was a do or die, right? One of us was not going to keep going in the tournament.

But it's always special to play have with one of your

heros, one of your idols. It's amazing. He didn't have the best day and still ended up with an under-par round here on a tough day. That shows how good he is.

Q. You tweeted yesterday about the Arizona State women's team. You watched it. How excited you were. Talk about that. And a year ago you were getting ready for your tournament.

JON RAHM: It's amazing to me. I practice with these girl for better part of two, three, four years. To see them win in the fashion they did, it was amazing. I kept texting the coach. I could have not been any more astonished or impressed. I am not a person who is easily impressed like that. It was amazing the fashion they won. How Monica ended up winning that championship when she was four back, four holes to play individually.

How Linnea played the last four holes after someone made a 6-foot eagle putt to her and ended up with three birdies on the next four.

How Roberta, who's an Italian player who is very Spaniard like, fiery competitor, being the first time they are on a stage like that and to compete the way they did to me was something amazing. I cannot say anything but nice things.

The coolest thing is that's the closest I'll ever be to experiencing something like that and I'm happy for them. The cool thing is like from now on to the rest of their days they're going to wake up national champions. Nobody can take that away from them.

It's something I'm jealous about, but extremely happy and proud to be a Sun Devil.

I could have not the represented the program any better. To be honest, that energy and positivity probably helped me today. If they could do what I did, why couldn't I play good today?

Q. What was your first impressions coming around here? Obviously handled it very well.

JON RAHM: Well, it was different thoughts. I got to say, yesterday it was one of the worst driving rounds I've had in a while. I though, Man, I got to get my stuff together. Really.

But my putter was feeling really, really well. I had good feelings going on the greens which I kept going today, and I just backed it up with the driving today.

It's obviously a golf course that you need to be strategic in and you need to think what you're doing off the tee. Luckily the driver is my confidence -- the club I have the most confidence with. I was able to hit it quite

often today in a very effective way, which usually is going to help out on this course.

Q. You said you might pull it as many as ten times. Did you pull it six or eight today?

JON RAHM: I mean, I don't count it, but okay, 11, 12, 14, 15, 18, 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 9; 12 times.

Q. Oh, wow, you used it a lot.

JON RAHM: I think the only time I didn't hit it was 10 because you can't, and 17. The only two that I can't hit driver on, otherwise I probably would.

When I keep hitting, I didn't miss any single fairway until 18, and I don't even consider that a fairway missed because that's the way you want to miss it. In my mind I didn't miss any of the first fairways that I hit almost.

The ones I missed on 2 and 5 I considered it's the way I had to miss them. You got to go left and give yourself the best chance. I was smart about how I was hitting the driver, and luckily it paid off.

Q. Sergio won here the first time he played here. Did you pick his brain before the round? Are you aware of his history?

JON RAHM: I'm aware of his history, but doesn't surprise me. He's one of the best ball-strikers ever. It doesn't matter if he hits 3-iron, driver, or 3-wood off the tee, he's probably going to have a chance to make a birdie putt on that hole.

It doesn't surprise me. I didn't try to pick his brain too much before. He's been quite busy with his own things and enjoying his own success. I didn't want to take that away from him.

Maybe if I'm in some trouble tomorrow I'll ask him. Maybe I need to. As in right now, we'll try to play the best golf we can and keep going the way we've been playing.

Q. Bring some pants to go with the plaid jacket on Sunday?

JON RAHM: Well, I always wear red on Sunday and the same pants, so it's not something I'm going to dress according to.

Q. There is a school of thought that this is a really tough course for power players. I know you have one competitive round, but what's the thought process on that?

JON RAHM: Well, it is true, but you don't always have to hit drivers. Adam Scott won here and he hits it pretty far.

I think it just means that people who don't hit it as far

have a better chance of winning, I would say. A lot of holes they hit it to the same spot we do, and most of the time they're a lot more accurate than we are.

With that being said, it doesn't mean it doesn't favor long hitters. It just says that shorter hitters are going to have a better chance to win. It's not like Jordan Spieth is a short hitter and he did a good job last year, right? Ryan Palmer was up there. It is true players like Snedeker and Zach Johnson play good here, but it doesn't mean long hitters can't play well.

Sure, it will be tougher if you get too focused and hit it too far off the tee, but if you just stick to your game plan, I think we have as good of a chance as other people.

Q. You said your past wins here, the Hogan Award, kind of gave you good vibes about this place. I guess today takes the vibes up another level.

JON RAHM: It's a different feeling. First of all, just because the last two times I was here all I recorded was super happy and positive memories. As soon as I step foot here, there was nothing but that, right?

I don't think playing good or bad today was going to make any difference. It's just the vibe that I have around this place is so positive, especially with Sergio winning and with the Ben Hogan history I'm related to now.

I don't think there is anything that can change that, but it sure does help.