

ROUND 1 INTERVIEW
January 25, 2018

JON RAHM (-4)

Q. Nice start to defend your championship here, 4-under par 68. I've got to ask you, how do you feel walking off 18, happy you made the par or disappointed you put it in the water with your second?

JON RAHM: Oh, definitely really happy I made the par. I hit a really good drive and it ended up in the semi rough a little deep and you never know how it's going to come out of there, right? It was 5-wood distance. It's either going to come out really hard or high spinning like it did. Just unfortunate it happened but I made a good putt, had a couple really good putts down the stretch and had a good finish. Good momentum going to tomorrow.

Q. I like the way you rallied. You were frustrated with that three-putt at 12, then came back, had an eagle look at 13, made a birdie there, another birdie on the next, another birdie at 16. This was a nice way to come back.

JON RAHM: Yeah, you know, I hit a lot of good putts out there today, they just didn't drop. You know, it's a thing that happened on those greens, maybe a bounce or maybe I misread them. But definitely I played really good golf from 13 on, really, really good golf, really good putts. I made 13, 14, 15 I thought it was in the hole, 17 I thought it was in the hole. So really, really good finishing stretch and happy that it ended the way it did obviously.

Q. Six birdies and two bogeys in a round of 68. How do you feel about your day's work?

JON RAHM: I mean, I'm extremely pleased with the result, especially I'm really happy about the way I finished. You know, the last six or seven holes I hit the ball really well. I got really comfortable on the golf course and it showed making a couple birdies coming in after 12. The front nine was a little shakier. I hit a couple of good shots, I made good strokes, but felt just a little bit off in general. Hit a couple bad iron shots that I could have given myself birdie opportunities, but this is golf, right? It happens. Really, really pleased that it ended up the way it did.

Q. How much are you feeding off memories of winning here last year?

JON RAHM: I'm trying not to think about things like that. Just a couple times like on 17 when I got to the fairway and I got a straight flashback to last year, I'm like well, got to hit it five feet again. Didn't happen. But I have a great energy here. I love San Diego, the city of San Diego and I feel like the city loves me back. To get the support of the veterans tent over there on 13 was huge. It's always a confidence and mood booster, right, when they started chanting, it was great, helped me out a lot.

Q. Speaking of victories, obviously you won last week at the CareerBuilder in a playoff. Players tell us it takes it out of them when they win, it's mentally exhausting. It doesn't seem to do that to you. You won four times and you seem to carry on playing well?

JON RAHM: No, I was definitely paying off the stress Monday and Tuesday. In fact, Monday I stayed in Palm Springs, didn't sleep anything because my adrenaline was still so high, and drove in, stayed in the afternoon. And then Tuesday I had this day planned and my manager, realized that I was a little too active, a little too amped up and they told me listen, you still have the adrenaline way too high, you need to focus on this week and cut the whole practice in half. We changed the press conference, played nine holes and got off the golf course as soon as possible to relax. Yesterday just watched a movie, flipped the switch and got at it again. It's what it is, right?

Q. How would you assess your round?

JON RAHM: Honestly, obviously it's a great score. I feel like anytime you can go under par at Torrey South you need to be extremely pleased, and when you can finish 4 under with a great round the last few holes, a great par save on 18, yeah, definitely really, really happy day today.

Q. How were you feeling starting out, a little anxious, defending champion? What were your thoughts?

JON RAHM: I was really curious how I was going to react. I was trying to keep myself calm all day. Once I hit the first tee shot down the center of the fairway it kind of all went away. Just got me back into tournament mode and I ended up playing some really good golf on the first few holes. Actually, the first three was almost a dream start with one birdie and two birdie looks, it was great.

Q. Jon, how tough is it playing three different courses over in the desert, then you come over here and you have to play two? How difficult is that? You're playing all these different courses.

JON RAHM: Well, I feel like it was a lot tougher last year just because I had never played them before, but I had seen them this year so it's not like it's not that difficult. I know how to play those golf courses, we know the strategy, it's just executing it. And when you're playing good, everything kind of seems easier.

Q. Do you feel like you're playing as well now as at any point last year?

JON RAHM: Definitely. I mean I just won and I shot 4 under today, so yeah, I'm playing really good. Like I said, today was a little iffy at first, the driver started going a little to the right, I wasn't hitting it on the fairway, I wasn't hitting it centered on the irons, but pulled it

back on the back nine and played -- I mean, last week it was some of the best golf I've ever played tee to green and this week we thought being the best is still really high quality.