

ROUND 1 INTERVIEW
March 1, 2018

JON RAHM (-4)



Q. Jon, 4 under par, what do you make of that performance in round 1?

JON RAHM: I'm extremely happy. It's not an easy golf course. Anything under par, especially in the 60s, you're going to take it. It was a pretty well-rounded day. The only thing I could really improve is maybe hitting the fairways on the par 5s. Besides that, I had a good day.

Q. Jon, let's look at a little highlight from the 5th. Talk us through this one. Tee shot might have been great, the second --

JON RAHM: The tee shot looked the same as that second shot. I had, after the altitude and all that, I think it was 175 meters. This is a perfect pin to be able to hit it back there. The altitude, it's not easy to do. Grabbed my 7-iron and hit it, flipped my hands as hard as I could. Never expected that but I knew because of the angle on the green the ball ended up close. That's always a bonus.

Q. Jon, a lot of local support out there for you as well. Those calculations you made about how to deal with altitude, you've got a year of experience from last year as well. Did you feel like you had it all sorted by the time you went out today? Did you feel you were on with your calculations with the altitude?

JON RAHM: Oh, I did have it. Well, first of all, the support is amazing. It's great to be out on the course and have almost as much support as I do in Spain.

And then the altitude, to be honest, some of my full shots I could have hit a little better. Wasn't the best ball-striking, but still held the line so there's nothing to complain about there. I felt like we had it figured out. Sometimes it will surprise you. If the wind picks up like today, it's really hard to deal with it because a foot difference in height is going to make it go two, three, four yards further.

So you just need to accept you're going to hit some good shots that are going to end up in bad spots and some bad shots are going to end up in good spots. Just try to be patient, and I think that was the best thing I did today, try to stay in the moment and patient.

Q. I know the real positive thing about your round of golf today. Tell us about what you're doing as well with the charitable side of things.

JON RAHM: Yeah, too bad I didn't make an eagle. Well, I realized after a lot of us donated for the hurricane relief in the U.S., Mexico during that time -- Mexico City actually got a bad

earthquake, really high on the scale. A couple days ago, maybe a week ago by now, a part of Mexico got another one. The Hispanic and Latino community, I want to help out that community. Luckily, I'm in a position where I can help out. So for every birdie I make this week, I'll donate \$1,000 to the Mexican Red Cross, and for every eagle, \$3,000. So fingers crossed I make some more eagles and birdies during the week.

Q. Jon, that was a I'll call a workmanlike 4-under par. A great finish for you, but I think there's some more out there for you?

JON RAHM: Some good and some bad, I would say. I started hitting some great shots off the tee with driver. On the holes that actually (inaudible) the par 5s, I didn't, so I didn't take advantage of those. You know, but it all balances out. I hit a great shot on No. 5, ended up making a birdie where it easily could have hit the tree, go left and have no shot to the green. I think it was pretty balanced.

I think that the one thing -- the two things I did extremely well today was my short game. Besides a couple bunker shots that are really hard to get up and down from, I was able to have tap-ins for birdie and just staying patient out there. You know you're going to make birdies, you're going to have some bad breaks, you just have to assume some bogeys are going to happen and just keep going.

Q. Didn't seem like the greens were that fast but they had some tough lines on them, didn't they?

JON RAHM: Yeah, they're just -- I mean, some of them were sloped. I think most of them are sloped back to front, but then you have little ridges and little slopes over there. And it's thick grass so those little things make it move a lot. So sometimes when you think you have a straight putt, you're like uh oh, because just one of those little ones can make it move. But besides that, you just need to be -- I feel like once you commit to the line, commit to it.

Q. Final thing, I want to make sure there's 6,000 so far for earthquake relief?

JON RAHM: Six birdies today?

Q. I had you down for six.

JON RAHM: Yeah. Two bogeys, right?

Q. Yeah, \$6,000.

JON RAHM: \$23,000 for the week, that would be pretty good.

Q. Jon, must be rather pleased with your effort today?

JON RAHM: Anytime you come to World Golf Championship after a couple weeks off and

you shoot under par you should be happy. You know, after the first tee shot I hit today, if you told me I was going to shoot a 4-under par, I would have been jumping up and down with happiness. There's nothing to complain about today, solid round. I just hope it can continue.

Q. I think the elevation is probably different, but is this anything close to what you grew up on?

JON RAHM: No. I grew up about 500 yards from the beach.

Q. But the actual golf course, not the elevation.

JON RAHM: Oh, the golf course? Well, I mean it's traditional golf, right? It's an old golf course, much like Colonial and other golf courses that are close to a hundred years old. They're very similar to the style of golf we play in Spain. I love that. I love having tree lined, I love being able to take it over corners, take some risks, because you feel like on those courses, on holes like No. 4 if you're able to cut across and get 30, 40 extra yards, you can get a huge advantage. So I love this kind of golf course. It's pretty similar to what I grew up on.

Q. You are among the leaders and the altitude factor is important to you guys, how did you feel?

JON RAHM: Yes, there are many factors in this course such as the greens that are very complicated and you have to be patient because it is difficult to read them. Let's say that with days like today with the altitude and the wind when it it gets up a bit stronger it is much more complicated to know what will happen. As it happened to me and to Dustin on the 16th hole where we all were long and it was difficult to predict what was going to happen.

Q. You talked about being an aggressive player. With how far the golf ball goes here, is it going to bring out a little bit more aggressiveness in you?

JON RAHM: I love it. I mean, I went for the green on 1, went for the green on 2, hit over on 4. The only one I could have hit driver that I didn't hit driver on was No. 10, and I kind of wished I would have today after that tee shot I had. But I'm always aggressive. If I can have a driver in my hand, I'm going to, and this is a course that allows to, but you know if you miss a shot you're going to be penalized. Luckily, today I hit the ones that I hit.

Q. What does being number 1 in the world mean to you?

JON RAHM: It's a prize, a prize that means you have played good golf. The goal is to play well this week and possibly win.