

RBC Heritage

Thursday, April 13, 2023

Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, USA

Harbour Town Golf Links

Viktor Hovland

Quick Quotes

Q. Viktor, in at 7-under. Looks like the weather is deteriorating a bit. You've got to be really happy with that start.

VIKTOR HOVLAND: That was really good. Hit some really nice shots starting the day but didn't make the putts. It was a little frustrating, but stayed patient and just kept on hitting great shots. Then the putter started heating up, and it felt very stress-free from there on in.

Q. Is there a chance you might lead at the end of the day, looking at the weather for this afternoon? You led after the first round last week at Augusta National. What did you learn from that experience, and what can you take from that into this week?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, especially last week, I didn't putt it as good the last three rounds last week as I did the first round, which obviously is hard to do. I hit it okay, but I didn't hit it as great as I did the first round.

But I took a big lesson from not short-siding myself as much last week because out there on that golf course on some of those pins, I got a little too greedy and I missed it in the wrong spots, and I just can't allow myself to do that.

So this week I'm just trying to play a bit more, not conservatively, but making sure that I hit more greens, center of the greens, and can kind of lean on my putter. And if I do miss a green, I feel like my short game's in a good spot where I can make an up and down.

Q. What did you do Monday to refresh yourself after such a massive week? It seems like whatever you did worked today.

VIKTOR HOVLAND: I drove from Augusta to here Sunday night, and my mom was headed back home on Monday morning. So I drove her to the airport, drove back, and then just got some lunch. And then I was pretty bored, and I was actually feeling fine. So I went out and played the back nine out here kind of before it got dark.



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So, yeah, it was pretty peaceful. And then I had to make sure that I just got a bunch of rest.

Q. So basically an Uber driver and then you snuck in nine holes Monday afternoon?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Pretty much, yes.

Q. Viktor, I heard you say earlier, when you were here in 2020, you shot 64 in the opening round. What is it about this course that you're able to take to it pretty quickly without having a lot of experience on it?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: I think it's cliché to say, but it's all right there in front of you. I'm a big fan of Pete Dye golf courses. I think they're just awesome. And tree-lined golf courses, it's pretty narrow, so I can kind of hit that drive where I tee down, grip it down a little bit, and just hit like a low bullet. It's hard for me to hit a disastrous shot with that shot.

As soon as you start hitting drives up in the air, the wind can start to blow, and it's hard to hit it straight. But, yeah, if I keep driving it off the tee like I am, I'm going to have a lot of looks from the fairway, and also putted well today.

Q. Is it just the timing of this tournament right after a grueling week at the Masters that makes it comfortable for you to kind of take a little time away and refresh?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, that's one of the reasons why I haven't come back here very much even though I do love this spot. It's just scheduling purposes, you can't play every week even though this is one of my favorites. But happy to be back here this week obviously.

Q. I heard you say that at the start of the back nine you missed a couple putts on a few holes, and you thought it was going to be one of those days. How did you kind of get yourself back in mode and turn things around?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, I just kept telling myself I'm hitting good putts, and instead of freaking out or questioning all the reads that you make, that's not going to fix anything. So I just kind of kept trusting the process and

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kind of cleared my head a little bit.

So when I'm standing over the ball, the only thing I'm thinking about is just speed. I'm not worried about the stroke or the read that I've already given because that should be all done when I'm standing over the ball. So kind of just going back to those principles.

Q. One blip in the round. What happened on your second shot at 15?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, that was bad. It was one of those like I guess I maybe hit too much club. Should have maybe hit a 7-iron and just hit it right, play a little bit more conservatively. I tried to hit the 6, and then I had to go a little bit more left because it runs out of room on the right.

The wind was off the right, and it was on an upslope, and I was like, okay, I want to make sure -- I just picked the wrong shot where I wanted to start it left and cut it off of the water.

I have a tendency when I drag my left arm super far out to swipe it across, I tend to shut the face. It was just -- yeah, it was just a dead pull in the water. I should have just aimed right instead of trying to cut it off the water.

Q. There aren't many times you see two PGA TOUR pros lay up into the water. Two of you in the same group.

VIKTOR HOVLAND: That was really bad.

Q. But is that Harbour Town? You just have to hit these different shots?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Those shots would have been pretty bad everywhere else. Yeah, I mean, it's just that type of golf course. You've got to be precise. There's some places you just cannot miss, and you just -- yeah.

You can't like force the ball out there. You have to step up and hit the shots. Missed it on the wrong spot there.

Q. I was going to ask about 8, your next to last hole. That's not usually a birdie hole.

VIKTOR HOVLAND: No.

Q. You were able to kind of convert there even though you were on the left side with a left side approach. What did you do there?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: I think the wind was very conducive today, kind of off the right. Especially for me, I like to cut

the ball off the tee. So that gives me some more room to kind of hit a straight ball, and even I drew it a little bit and hit that low one, and it just kept on running.

Even on the second shot, I could kind of hit a cut 8-iron up against the wind and used the backstop there. I think the wind off the left there is a lot harder for that hole.

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