

# TOUR Championship

Wednesday, August 23, 2023

Atlanta, Georgia, USA

East Lake Golf Club

## Viktor Hovland

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome Viktor Hovland to the interview room here at the 2023 TOUR Championship.

Viktor, you're entering the week here second in the FedExCup. You're coming off of a win at BMW. Just give us some opening thoughts about your excitement to be here and your game recently.

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, obviously still excited from last week and kind of have to turn around pretty quickly mentally to get ready for this week. Obviously another big week. I've never been situated as well as I have this year in other years, so this is a big week and excited to get started.

THE MODERATOR: This is your fourth start at the TOUR Championship, your best finish was T-5 in 2021. I'm sure you've had a chance to play the course already this week. Just some thoughts about East Lake Golf Club.

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, I've just gotten to play the back nine yesterday. I'll play the front a little later today. Pretty hot out there, so not trying to use -- or spend too much energy.

But the golf course is great. It's one of my favorites. I think they have done a really good job of picking three really good golf courses for the playoffs. Southwind is one of my top 5, Olympia Fields is up there, and then obviously this week. It's just three great golf courses and I think it really rewards just the best players. If you drive it well off the tee and you hit the ball well into the greens, you're really going to be able to separate. So I like coming to these venues.

THE MODERATOR: Wonderful. We'll open it up to questions.

**Q. You're starting this week with a significant advantage compared to your past three TOUR starts. Does that change at all, like, your strategy going in or how aggressive you plan on being?**



VIKTOR HOVLAND: Not really. I think in the back of your mind, it helps. I'm still trying to do the same thing on the golf course, but I think in the back of your mind not starting 10 shots behind makes it a little bit easier. You don't feel like you have to get off to a fast start. You can just kind of play your game and if you make six, seven, eight pars in a row, you're not stressing out, you're not thinking, man, I'm 13 shots back now. You're still right in the thick of it. So I think that kind of relaxes you a little bit.

But that still doesn't mean you can let up because if you let up, these other guys are going to make birdies and get even further ahead. So mentally try to just do the same process and hopefully the putts keep rolling in and keep hitting good iron shots.

**Q. What's the biggest difference, you feel like, in yourself from a year ago?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Just more overall confidence, I think, more peace. Obviously it helps being able to chip the ball. Just my all around game feels a little bit more complete. I think just amassing really good experiences over the last year, being in contention, failing in contention, being in contention and succeeding in contention. I think that's been really cool to just try to learn from any experience, whether it's not finishing well on a Sunday or what happened, what went wrong, what can I learn from it. I feel like I've used those opportunities to just get better the next time around.

**Q. Any good stories from amateur golf about competing with Scottie?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: I didn't really get to play too much with Scottie. I think we might have only played once together in college. I think that was my freshman year. It was a long time ago. Freshman or sophomore year. We played a college tournament in Mexico. So I don't have a lot -- obviously we played a lot with Texas, but usually -- I just remember my first couple years when we played with Texas a lot, I would be the fourth or fifth guy, so I usually didn't play with Scottie.

**Q. I just want to follow up on a comment, please. Where's the peace coming from?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Great question. I don't know. I think



it's just one of those things. If you want to get to the next level, you have to look introspectively, and you realize that, okay, when I'm in these moments and things are not going my way, I'm maybe reacting a little bit too much to it. Obviously if I hit it in the water, that's a bad scenario. But you can -- you have a choice whether you want to react to that shot and make it affect the next shot or the next few holes, or you can use that motivation or energy into something better and you can try to say, okay, let's get past this, let's see if we can get this round back together or just basically get the round -- prevent it from going off the rails.

I think when you try to be honest with yourself and ask yourself, okay, how can I get better, I just basically have to force myself to change a couple of these mindset things. I don't think it's something that -- to some people it comes natural. It hasn't really come natural to me, at least to that extent, so that's something I just have to work on.

**Q. You obviously work with Edoardo Molinari a bit with your stats. I'm just wondering if there's been anything surprising that he's kind of uncovered in your game since you started working with him that has helped you?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, I touched on this a little bit earlier this year. I think it was right after Augusta -- it was right after Augusta National. I had obviously been working with Edoardo for an about a year -- or even more than that, a year and a half, and Joe Mayo, my instructor, got on board earlier this year and just from watching me play the first kind of three, four, five months of the season, he was like, Look, man, things are looking really good, but I would have a double bogey here or a double bogey there and it would just kind of mess up the whole tournament for me or it would get me out of contention.

He's just -- he even said this while we were playing the Masters, while I'm in contention. It's like, there's something that's missing. There's something that's not right. And in terms of in poker terms -- we like to play a lot of poker -- it's like my frequencies are a little bit off. There's a certain percentage of the time you're supposed to bet, you're supposed to check raise, or you're supposed to bluff. And basically there's a certain percentage you're supposed to short side yourself. But basically I was doing that way more than the average player. And that's when Joe asked Edoardo to see if the stats backed that up. And, yeah, we got a pretty good idea of just that's basically what the stats showed. I was short siding myself way more than the average TOUR player does. So that was very revealing.

**Q. Edoardo is vice captain on the Ryder Cup team this year. What impact have you seen him have already on**

**that team and what do you think he can kind of bring for your group there?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Obviously he's the genius when it comes to the stats. And it's very rare to have a person that has that much expertise and competence. He's very intelligent, but at the same time he's played at the highest level himself. He's played a Ryder Cup. He's won big events. So it's just rare to have that combination. And on top of it all he's just the best guy there is. He's an unbelievable guy and he's just a lot of fun to be around. So even if he didn't have the stats portion to help us out with, he would still be an unbelievable asset on the team. You just feel good around him.

**Q. I'm just curious, your first memory of the Ryder Cup is off TV, I guess. How old were you, what do you remember?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: I think --

**Q. You guys had a TV, right?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: On TV, yeah. Yeah. I think the first one that I really watched like almost the whole Ryder Cup was Celtic Manor. So that would have been 2010, I guess. 13 years ago. Those are kind of the earliest memories that I had just watching the whole Ryder Cup basically.

And then obviously Medinah, the next Ryder Cup was pretty cool. So those are the earliest memories that I have.

**Q. What do you remember getting off TV? What feelings did you have watching it off TV? And did it live up to your expectations when you played in one?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Just the number one thing that sticks out is I remember when, I think it was Jeff Overton that made a wedge or he holed an approach shot, just like spun it right in the cup. And he loses his mind. He's playing with Bubba, I think he loses his mind. And it was like you could kind of tell they did it on purpose as well, just to rile it up. I just loved it. I thought it looked really cool. It's just a completely different tournament. You get to act silly on purpose sometimes. And it's just fun. Because it just means a little bit more. Things are a little bit different. It's not just a random stroke play event and you're playing for yourself. You're playing for your country and continent. And just I think that spices things up a little bit.

**Q. As it comes to this competition, who is more famous in Norway right now for playing in the couple, you or Suzann?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: I still think I would have to give the



nod to Suzann. She's been in the game for a long time and she's won majors and lots of tournaments. So I'll give the nod to the queen.

**Q. Did you have a proper chance to celebrate on Sunday or since or, you know, last couple days?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: It was a quick turnaround. But I got to have a nice little meal at the course and a couple glasses of champagne and, yeah, just sat there for a little bit in peace and enjoy it. But it was a quick turnaround. Had to catch a flight. And then obviously this week is a big week. It was awesome to win last week, but one of the bigger things with it as well is that I managed to put myself in a great spot for this week. So hopefully I can take care of business this week and I can kind of let the celebrations go a little bit longer after that.

**Q. Have you had a chance to see the Norwegian announcer's call of the finish of the tournament and if so what did you think of it?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, I saw the clip. Those guys are very passionate. And they're good people, too. I saw them on multiple occasions when I was home in Norway in the summer. They're just good people. So it's just fun to see when I do something well, and obviously it means a lot to me, but it's cool to see other people that I care about react the same way or even crazier. Just, you know, they wish me the best and I just think that's really cool and they're just good people.

**Q. You told us you used to splurge with some extra guac. If you win this what would be your splurge?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Say that again? What would be my?

**Q. How would you splurge if you won the FedExCup?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: How would I celebrate or?

**Q. Or splurge. Would you buy a new car or?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: I don't know. I don't have anything in mind that I would buy. Just kind of -- I'm, to be honest, I'm just looking forward to getting some down time this fall and just will spend some more time in Norway, hang out with my friends and just kind of relax and enjoy.

**Q. Have you let yourself or allowed yourself to think about just the history that you could etch your name in this week with it being the TOUR's event?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Say that one more time.

**Q. Have you thought about how big and significant this week is in terms of etching your name in history at the TOUR Championship?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, it's a pretty good company or there's a lot of big names on the trophy. It's hard to win the FedExCup if you haven't had a great season and you beat the best players. And, you know, you can get lucky and win here and there, but I think that's a -- I mean, it's a very complete tournament to win. Obviously there's a lot of work to do. Haven't started the tournament yet. But it would mean a lot to be a part of that group that had won the tournament. But, to be honest with you, I haven't thought about it too much. It's just kind of just trying to take care of one shot at a time and one day at a time and we'll see what happens.

**Q. In 2018 you won the East Lake Cup here at East Lake. I was wondering, does that give you some sort of extra confidence coming into this week, since you've already won here before?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, thanks for the question. I think a little bit. It always helps when you have good memories somewhere. Just even the little things like on the back nine par-3 15. It's a really hard hole. And I just remember the first time I played here at the East Lake Cup, I just remember hitting good shots into that hole. When you get a tough hole like that and you get off to a nice start, you just start seeing good shots into certain pins, certain holes, you just get a good feel from that. So hopefully I can put that in the back of my head and use later on this week. So, yeah, got some good memories here.

THE MODERATOR: Well, thank you for the time, Viktor. Good luck this week.

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Thank you.

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