

Arnold Palmer Invitational

Thursday, March 3, 2022

Bay Hill, Florida, USA

Bay Hill Club and Lodge

Viktor Hovland

Quick Quotes



Q. I mean it's kind of a different Bay Hill this year with the gnarly grass, no more runoffs, all that stuff. Just kind of assess your round considering the tougher conditions?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, it was a tough start, I feel like. Certainly possible to make birdies, but you don't have to be far off to get off to a rough start. The wind kind of got me in spots and made a bogey on 3 and managed to bounce back pretty quickly, but it was a lot of back and forth all day.

So, yeah, it's a place where it's doable to score, but at the same time, you don't have to be very far off to make bogeys and doubles.

Q. How aggressive were you out there today? How many drivers did you hit? Did you hit iron off of 10 and 11? What did you end up doing?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: I've always hit driver on 10, so that wasn't a big change. I've hit way more 3-woods this year than past years. Partially because I'm hitting it way longer than previous years. It's just so important to be in the fairway, and I just think I'm going to hit a few more fairways with a 3-wood.

I'm a good long iron player, so I feel like, as long as I'm hitting from the fairway, I can get a good score around here.

Q. How did you add distance? Were you lifting fridges or something over the off-season?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Just over kind of the past couple years trying to get a little bit stronger. It's all about, if you want to get faster, you've got to practice getting faster. So just swinging it harder. Allocating some time every single week to -- yeah, just trying to ramp up some speed.

Q. Then also it's different around the greens this year with the lack of runoff areas, like behind 6, on 4, 15. Do you prefer the runoff areas, or do you prefer kind of

the thick rough? What's harder?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: I'd say generally I like runoffs better just from a design standpoint. But I think the certain holes where they took away the runoffs and just made it rough, I think it actually fits better because with how firm the greens get -- multiple times, for example, on 15, I'll hit a good shot, land on the green, barely roll off the green, and then it's almost in the rough all the way down on the other side. Whereas if you just hit it in the rough off the tee and kind of chunk it down in the bunker, you're actually way better off than the guy that hit a decent shot and rolled off the green.

So I think it protects some of that a little bit. Same thing on 6. You can hit a pretty decent shot, but the fairways -- or the greens get so firm and sloped away from you, again, you go all the way down in that runoff, and then you've got a left pin and you've got no shot.

So I like that aspect of it, but it's not easy either because, as you said, the rough is really thick. It's just a different challenge.

Q. What's the best runoff area you've played ever or on TOUR?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: I don't know the best, but one that stands in my mind, I really enjoyed playing Zurich Classic because all the greens are just kind of out in the open but there are very subtle slopes around the greens. If you miss greens, you can either loft it up in the air to spin it or you can bounce something into the slope or you can putt it. So I really like the versatility around the greens. I think that course really does a good job of that. Any Pete Dye course really does a good job of that.

Q. You were talking about trying to get more speed earlier. What kind of drills are you doing in practice to kind of get that speed?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: The first kind of point for me was I had a really slow backswing before, like my tempo going up was really slow compared to going down. First step was just to try to swing really fast going back. Then I kind of got past the threshold of making that comfortable. So



now I don't have to think about that.

Yeah, now it's just kind of three, four days a week I try. I don't get to do it as much on the road, but when I'm at home, at least try to give myself 20 minutes where I hit 30, 40 balls, and just try to hit it as hard as I can. Then when I'm done with that, go back and try to hit it straight.

Yeah, you just kind of have to shock your body a little bit.

Q. Coach Smith was telling me about the four, five, six drill that you do with putting. How do you describe that to the general golfer?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: It's just looking at my putting stats, I feel like I'm a pretty decent putter, but I've had a tendency of missing a few too many short putts. So the four, five, six drill is a good way for me to kind of -- I'll hit, obviously, one putt from four feet. Then it's in kind of a cross performance where I hit the same putt from five feet, but it's just further back.

So I can kind of get into a rhythm of knowing where my starting points are, but then at the same time, mixing it up by going around the hole. Yeah, it just gives me confidence before I go out and play.

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