

Valspar Championship

Friday, March 21, 2025

Palm Harbor, Florida, USA

Innisbrook Resort (Copperhead)

Viktor Hovland

Quick Quotes

Q. Sounds like you made a fairly important change this week, it's already paying off.

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, very happy with obviously the result and the leaderboard. I still feel like I am kind of getting max out of my game right now. So not to put myself down, but for it to be sustainable at that level I need to strike it a bit better and it needs to be a bit more predictable. So I'm still working through some changes and, yeah, I just need to keep working on it. But it's nice to see that the things that you're working on is leading to better results immediately, and it's always a good sign.

Q. The sort of ride you've been on here for the past year or so, how would you describe it? Is it frustrating, is it humbling, what?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, it sucks. You have an ability that you can almost sometimes take for granted. You just wake up every day and you stand over the ball, and you just expect the ball to start in that direction and go that direction and end up somewhere close to the hole. Then it starts to not do that, it's pretty frustrating. You start thinking things you've never thought before. And this game becomes infinitely more challenging and it's already really challenging. So it is really humbling and, you know, kind of handling those moments, I mean, I think there's a lot of lessons to be learned there. And now that hopefully I can regain my ability and see those shots again, hopefully I can be in a better spot where I can handle that situation better.

Q. I think from the outside when people hear you say that, obviously you've got a high standard for what you expect. But is the standard just below that still really good though? Isn't that really good still competitive? In other words, are you being too hard on yourself at times?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: I am hard on myself, yeah. But that's also why I'm good. If I wasn't hard on myself I probably wouldn't be out here. And yeah, I know that even with terrible mechanics I can still get out here and shoot a couple of nice scores. But that can also lead to 80 shots at



THE PLAYERS. Because it's just, I don't have control over what I'm doing. So you get to a place where there's water and trees on every hole, those same shots that might be in the fairway or might be in the rough at an easier golf course, you know, in the long run it's going to cost you. I just, I know that. If I'm standing over the ball and I'm expecting it to start there, everything in my golf swing is feeling like it's going to start there, but it starts there and goes to the right, you know, you can't play with that. I don't care who you are, you're just not going to be able to make that work. So, yeah, you have to be that honest and get to work.

Q. I take it last Thursday was tough, a week ago at THE PLAYERS?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, I mean, the score itself, I don't really care, to be honest. It's just seeing those shots that I'm hitting and how it feels, that's the frustrating part. Because I could shoot even par or obviously I would like to make the cut and play the weekend, but it's like you're not stepping on to the golf course and expecting to play well, it's like, Okay, how bad is it going to be. And maybe if you make some putts and miss in the right direction you can play a decent score, but it's not giving you any confidence when you're hitting those good shots, because they feel random.

Q. Is there a feel or a certain type of shot that you've honed in on this week that's helped you work your way around here?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Not quite, but at least the ball is coming off a bit more solid. I still don't exactly know where the ball's going to start and curve and all that stuff, but if you're hitting solid shots, that's a good start, especially out here, when the wind is starting to blow. Because if you hit a, if you hit it off center and it's not flying very well, I mean, the wind is going to eat it up. So you got to start with hitting it solid and then from there you can usually work around what, where it's going to curve and where it's going to start.

Q. What's something you've done early this week that's allowed you to get to that point of hitting it



solid?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: We're still working on it. Still doesn't feel quite that great, but at least it's improvement. Yeah, we're just kind of, truly identified what the root cause in my golf swing is and then it's working around a feel of, Okay, how do we mitigate that, how do we go back to what it used to be like. That's tricky, because you can't really rely on your feels anymore, you have to reverse engineer things a little bit and start from scratch. But we're making progress.

Q. What made you decide to reconnect with Grant Waite and when did you reconnect with him?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, I mean, he's really smart, and I think I have a little bit of a different perspective now going through a lot of struggles the last year since we worked together, and he has a lot of knowledge and there's a lot of information and I don't think I was quite ready for it a year ago. I just wanted it to be super simple and I'll just find a feel and we'll make it work. Then we actually needed to put some more work and diligent kind of technical work into it to figure this out. And I think Grant is one of the few guys that can solve it.

Q. Obviously you have, you expect to win and contend, but after missing a couple cuts are you able to feel happy a little bit today just to make a cut and get off that --

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, at the end of the day like, yes, it's awesome being at the top of the leaderboard right now, and have a chance going into the weekend. But it's like I truly just care about the things that I'm working on. And if the ball is behaving and doing the things that I want it to do, I'm going to play a lot of great golf in the future. And if it's not doing that, it's harder to repeat what I already did the first couple of days. You just want something that's sustainable. And if your technique's good you're going to play a lot of good golf in the future. That's just how it works.

Q. Was it feeling like even Tuesday when you were practicing so hard that, that you feel like you're going to turn it around this week?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: No, no, not really. I hit a lot of bad shots in the pro-am and like even, yeah, just in the practice rounds and stuff, they just didn't feel great. Even yesterday I was very proud of how I was able to shoot 1-under par yesterday, because I hit a lot of bad shots and it felt like I was leaking oil. But it was nice to putt well, and did hit a couple of nice iron shots in the wind. But, yeah, I think today was a way bigger step than it was yesterday, so we

just got to keep building on it.

Q. When you have those days like you said, not hitting it well, is that putting a lot of pressure on your short game?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, for sure. That's kind of what I've done the last few months or last year. And then my putting's been bad as well. So you're hitting it bad and then you need -- there's so much pressure on you having to make every 5- or 10-footer that you're looking at, so there's so much pressure, and then you perform even worse than you would have normally done. So at least now you can relax your shoulders and then you can just allow your putter to do its work.

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