

The Saudi International powered by SoftBank Investment Advisers

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King Abdullah Economic City, Saudi Arabia
Royal Greens Golf and Country Club

Viktor Hovland

Press Conference

STEVE TODD: We are joined by Viktor Hovland. A warm welcome to the Saudi International. I think the last time you travelled across to this part of the world you came off the back of a great performance on the PGA TOUR. It's déjà vu this week. I think you've done the same. Just give us your thoughts about the week ahead and the shape of your game.

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, it's been a long trip obviously but glad to be over here. Had a good week last week in San Diego. And just trying to look to continue to build on that. I feel like my game is in great shape and I've just got to get adjusted and get ready to start off the week.

STEVE TODD: You have been out there for the Pro-Am. Just give us your initial impressions of the golf course.

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, it's fairly generous off the tee but you still have to drive it pretty well just to get into some good spots where you can be aggressive. I feel like the scores are going to be pretty low this week. The greens are really good. So if you're hitting the ball close, you can make a lot of putts and make a lot of birdies.

But the wind picks up at all, it's going to be interesting. A couple par 3s are pretty solid and some water here and there, as well. So you've got to be conservative maybe on some holes and you can attack more on others.

Q. Did you have a chance to look at the new R&A and USGA stuff about those limiting distance stuffs? I'd like to have your thoughts about that, please.

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, I saw some articles yesterday about it. I didn't really read it in-depth. Obviously there's a huge debate going on with the distance. And I think it's probably smart to make some considerations of in the future, we don't want it to get out of hand, but I'm a little skeptical, as well, on putting limitations on kind of what the athlete can do because I think just people are getting



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stronger and faster and people are just going to hit it further and further, any ways.

I don't really see what's wrong with making a bunch of birdies and shooting low scores. Some people don't think that's a whole lot of fun to watch but I don't see a problem with the ball going so far, but maybe in the future, it's fine to create some limitations on it.

I really haven't thought much about it but there's not really a single case or argument that I find very, very compelling.

Q. There was a question that Alex Miceli asked earlier today, which I think was really interesting: Do you consider yourself more of an entertainer or an athlete now?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: More an entertainer or an athlete? I wouldn't consider myself an entertainer. Although if people find me entertaining, that's cool. But show up here because I want to compete and I want to beat the best players in the world and have a chance to do so. But if I can do both at the same time, that's a bonus.

Q. Speaking to Pádraig Harrington around Christmastime about your Ryder Cup qualifying campaign, he said you were going well, and he not only saw you on the team but saw you playing five matches; that you would be a guy with responsibilities. Do you see yourself that way, as a guy prepared to play five matches in The Ryder Cup and be one of the leaders?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: That would be awesome. I love match play and it seems to bring out the best in my game. Having some good memories from the National Championship in the States and U.S. Amateur and some cool memories from the junior days in Europe open playing European Boys' Team Championship.

So have a lot of fond memories in match play, and I'm still young enough to where I feel like I can play five rounds, but it's obviously up to the captain and the rest of the team, and I'll first need to make the team but if I do so, I'll do whatever is necessary. I'm fine with anything but I'd love to

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play.

Q. What kind of interaction have you had with the captain so far and what do you make of him generally?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: So we played at Wentworth about a year ago I would say, just over a year ago, and that was kind of my first meeting with him, I believe. Had a good two days with him. Got to spend some time and talked about golf in general and some other things. He seems like a very intelligent person, thinks things through and kind of geeky in a sense. Don't mean that in a bad way. But he's very into golf and he has a lot of passion.

Since then, I've kind of seen him here or there at tournaments, but haven't really talked that much. But I see him every now and again.

Q. Just staying on The Ryder Cup, obviously quite a few of the European guys play over in the US, as well, but how important are these European Tour events to you in terms of getting to know some potential teammates?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, obviously growing up in Norway, I love coming over here now. We're not too close to home from here, but just seeing European players that I grew up playing with, yeah, it's just -- not just -- it doesn't kind of just get me closer to reaching the goal of playing The Ryder Cup, but just coming more of a complete player. Instead of just playing in one country, I'd really like to travel and see how my game fits other courses. I like to challenge myself all the time, and you get to see some different faces, as well. It's all great fun.

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