

DP World Tour Championship

Tuesday, 14 November, 2023

Dubai, UAE

Jumeirah Golf Estates, Earth Course



Viktor Hovland

Press Conference

CLARE BODEL: Like to welcome Viktor Hovland to the Media Centre here at the DP World Tour Championship. Talk about what you've been doing since Rome and your time off.

VIKTOR HOVLAND: It was such a highlight of my career and it's been really nice the last six weeks. After that, let it sink in but it's good to be back.

CLARE BODEL: You won in Dubai a couple years ago. How much would it mean to win out here again.

VIKTOR HOVLAND: I love golf here. The golf courses are really good. The weather is nice. Food is good. I just really enjoy coming here. But obviously would like to win on another course over here and I think this course suits me well so I'm looking forward to playing some good golf.

Q. Six weeks off, is there any fear that the magic might disappear in that time?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: I took three weeks off and I didn't really touch a club at all, so that was really nice. I can't remember the last time I've taken three weeks off. I've taken one week off and then I always try to play and get back to it because there's always that fear of what the game is going to be like when I come back.

It was a little bit rusty, of course, but I would say this is kind of the first time in my career where I felt like I haven't completely forgot. I felt like the techniques, I know what to do; that even after some time off, it doesn't feel that far off.

So I went to Oklahoma for a week and started practicing then and felt like the game started coming pretty quick. That doesn't mean I'm going to play amazing this week but I'm just excited to play, and if we play well, great. If we don't,...

Q. What was reception like in Norway? Were people lining the streets? Are you up there with Mr. Haaland?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: I don't know about that but obviously when he's been doing and a couple of the other Norwegian

athletes are doing these days is pretty cool. It's cool to be Norwegian and rooting for all the Norwegian athletes out there. It's been amazing.

It's been fun, I had a lot of friends and family that came to Ryder Cup, and it was just nice to share that experience with them, and yeah, everyone that I hung out with, just yeah, the experience was really cool. Especially after a week like that, there's a lot of stuff going on and a lot of people. I just enjoyed staying pretty low-key.

Q. Following up on that, 10 out of 10 of public awareness in Norway, where would you be?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: I didn't spend enough time in Norway to to kind of know that but maybe -- it does seem like a lot of people are following and paying attention to what I'm doing, which I think is really cool.

The usually ask follow-up question, "Do you play golf," and a surprising number of times, they will say, "I don't golf." I think that's really cool because I think for the most part, the people that watch golf are people that play golf.

So we can get more people that don't necessarily play golf to watch it, I think that's a really good start.

Q. Other sports players from other sports tend to use golf as their relaxation when they have their time off. When you're in that position of putting the clubs away, what do you do to chill out? What other pursuits would you do?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, I was surprisingly bored. I enjoy playing golf, not -- I don't have to be at the golf course six hours a day just grinding. It's almost, as you said, it's therapeutic just going out there hitting balls for 45 minutes and go home. It's nice to go out and do something.

Went out for a lot of walks. Just hung out with a lot of friends, working out, just staying active. You know, I really like listening to Podcasts. I try to learn as much as I can, and try to, I haven't really read any books in my entire life, so I kind of wanted to take up reading a little bit more and just, yeah, learn some more things.



Q. What sort of Podcasts?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: A lot of kind of self-improvement stuff. You know, there's a lot of biohackers out there. Just always try to optimise the things that I can do. If I want to recover better, what can I do to recover better; how do you sleep better. You know, just random little things like that. How can you supplement better. Then some history stuff, and then exploring kind of mysteries of the world, you know, pyramids in Egypt. I was in Malta over the break and they have a lot of ancient temples there. Just learn more about history, where we all come from.

Yeah, it's not something that I feel like a lot of people think about where we come from but it's just a crazy question, and the more you think about it, the crazier it gets.

Yeah, it's just interesting.

Q. I've noticed you don't indulge too much, you live quite modestly but you've had an incredible season, I don't know if you've seen the Instagram post, 1.4 million per event and \$5,000 per shot. Was there a point in this season where you actually thought about how much you were playing for and how much a putt was worth?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: I mean, I knew FedExCup was 18 million but I really didn't have an idea how much I made this year, and yeah, it's cool. It's nice to have. I don't mind it. But when I'm sitting here and especially after the Ryder Cup and I'm just looking over the year, it's the moments that we had in Rome, that was incredible, and then just looking back to, hey, I won three times this year, big-time events.

I'm really proud of the way I won those events. I don't feel like I would have been capable of winning those events earlier in the year. I feel like I've taken a big step to be able to win those events.

I'm thinking back to that stretch as, man, I got a lot better this year and I was able to achieve some things that I wouldn't probably have done before. That's kind of how I'm sitting here and thinking about that. But I would say the money is nice.

Q. Will you treat yourself to anything this winter?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Nothing -- not necessarily like materialistic things. I took my mom to a restaurant in Malta and we went there and hung out and ate good food and checked out some places and went sightseeing a little bit.

Q. Would you prefer, what's your favourite, winning 18

million for the FedExCup or the Ryder Cup?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Ryder Cup was awesome. Obviously winning THE TOUR Championship was more important for my career but the memories from Rome, I'm going to remember those moments for a lot longer and those memories are a lot stronger than TOUR Championship. Everything was just perfect for our perspective that week.

Luke did a great job. Everything was just so prepared, and when we got to that week, it was smooth. We all knew what we were going to do. We had a plan, and we just trusted the process and it was -- yeah, I think even from the people that watched and from the American side that I've talked to when I was in the States, they all thought it was a great Ryder Cup regardless of the results and rooting for us. It was just a great event, and to share it with all the people that were a part of it, it doesn't get any better.

Q. Every time you tee it up, you want to win, of course, but how do you manage those expectations after such a long break?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, six weeks, it feels like a long time. You know, you need those breaks to recharge because it's hopefully a long career. So you've got to -- you can't play every single event that's out there but I do feel like my game is good enough to step up and play as well as I did before the break.

You know, it's going to be maybe a little bit rusty but I still have the mindset and I think just this year with how much I've improved and the tools that I have, I feel like I can still shoot pretty nice scores not having my best stuff. If I hit a couple bad shots, yeah, I might make a bogey or two, but I'm not going to let that ruin the round or the tournament.

I put so much pressure on myself to play perfect golf because I felt like I had to play perfect golf to win tournaments, but I don't believe that I have to do that anymore. It's almost like, yes, there's more expectations because I know what I'm capable of doing but at the same time, if I don't play to that level, I'm not going to freak out, either. There's a sense of calmness.

CLARE BODEL: Thank you, everyone. Thank you, Viktor.

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