

The 150th Open

Mixed Zone

Saturday, 16 July 2022

Viktor Hovland



Q. Matching 66s with Rory on Saturday of The Open. Just from an experience standpoint, what kind of day was that for you?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, that was pretty cool. Probably not going to forget that one too quickly. No, I played great, but it was also cool to trade some holes with Rory as well.

Q. Seemed to be a little bit of banter between the two of you.

VIKTOR HOVLAND: A little bit. I think we were obviously both kind of doing our own thing. But as we saw, it was still pretty slow out there, and we had to wait on a lot of tee boxes. Yeah, Rory and Harry are good guys, and we chatted it up a little bit. So it was a good mix.

Q. Especially after he holed the bunker shot and you went in for birdie too.

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Exactly. What a wild 2 on that hole. I was glad I was able to make mine for birdie. But when things like that happen, you just kind of have to give each other a fist bump and say good shot.

Q. Talk about some of those hole locations down the stretch.

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, they're tough, especially with where the wind is at. I mean, 15, it's all tucked on the right side. The wind is off the right. Even though we're coming in from the left side, it's not like you're trying to go for those pins.

Same thing with 16. It's off the right, coming in from the left side. But there's really not much room there.

Then obviously on 17, it's kind of hit and hope for the best.

But I love it because you just have to be really disciplined, and if you hit a good shot, there's still a chance you might get rewarded for it. Yeah, it was a fun test.

Q. What would it mean to you to become the first Norwegian major winner tomorrow, and to do it here?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: I don't think there's any other place that would top it. Growing up in Norway and always watched The

Open Championship for way longer than I ever did, for example, the Masters. Yeah, to win a major that's closest to home, that would be really cool.

Q. What's the first one you remember seeing?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: That's a good question. I can't recall. I cannot recall. Long time ago.

Q. Can you talk us through that shot from the Road on the 17th?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, a little bit disappointed that I ended up there in the first place, but I hit a couple putts through the -- through that in the practise rounds. I didn't really think it was that bad. It just depends kind of how it initially comes out of there. Sometimes it just comes popping straight up in the air and then just comes out dead.

So I wanted to make sure I just got it up there. I was looking a little left, and I knew I had the back stop from the pot bunker. Just in case it went really firm through there, it would have come back a little bit. But luckily it just came out exactly perfect.

Q. Was it always going to be a putt?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, I think so. Maybe if it was sitting up a little bit, I could have maybe taken a 60 degree and just barely landed it over the ridge, but I just felt like the putter was the safest play.

Q. With how much support Rory is getting, is it hard at all to be the other guy?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: I don't mind. It doesn't take the pressure off of anything, but I feel like I had some experience with that in the Ryder Cup last year. And at the end of the day, they're -- well, there's still some shouts there for me as well. So I appreciate those. At the end of the day, I've just got to play my game and not worry about anything else.

Q. Is it just a shootout between you two tomorrow?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: I don't know. There's a lot of things that can happen. In these conditions and these pin placements, you



can play fine and shoot around even-par, and then that brings in a lot of other guys as well.

So it just depends what the conditions are going to be like tomorrow, the pin locations, and just frankly how we play.

Q. Viktor, what do you think the most important shot you hit today was?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: That's a good question. Obviously, like got off to a great start with four birdies in a row, and then I misjudged the 8-iron that I hit on No. 8 and ended up way over the green on the left side. I was really happy that I was able to two-putt that one. I feel like, if I would have made a bogey there, that sort of kind of kills the momentum a little bit.

Even though I did three-putt the next one on 9, I got that one back on 10 and made a nice short putt on 11 again.

Just those par saves are just huge, especially on 16 and 17 as well and a few other short par putts that I made on 13 and 15 as well. A lot of those putts are just huge.

Q. How often are you actually aiming at the pin?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Out here?

Q. Yeah.

VIKTOR HOVLAND: I don't know. Some of the hole locations, you're trying to get after it, but for example, on No. 3 the pin is seemingly all the way back in a pretty good spot, but there's a little ridge on the right side and the wind is a lot on the left. So I'm being pretty conservative even though that pin is very gettable.

Q. So not often then?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: No. You're always trying to play a shot from the middle of the green, work it towards the hole. Yeah, very rarely just right at the pin.

Q. You mentioned the Ryder Cup. Would you and Rory actually make a good Ryder Cup pairing?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: I think so. That would be a lot of fun. I think we'd have a good time. Statistically and stuff, I don't know how you would put everyone together and make the best team, but I feel like we have a good rapport and would certainly feed off of each other.

Q. Did you ever have a thought today this is where I intended to be my entire life, in this situation?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: I was thinking what the hell am I doing

here? (Laughter).

Yeah, I mean, it's pretty crazy from where I grew up and so far away from playing the PGA TOUR, European Tour, for that matter major championships. Just to be here is very special, but to have a chance to win one is -- yeah, I have to pinch myself, but that doesn't mean I'm going to hold back tomorrow.

Q. Viktor, Norway is so well-known for decades and decades of alpine and nordic ski world champions and Olympians, but never a major golf tournament winner. How do you think it will reverberate around your country?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: The support I've been seeing the last couple of years in Norway has been really cool because, as you said, we've always been kind of a winter nation and done well in the Olympics. We have a lot of great athletes, but I think now, not just in golf, but in tennis and football, a lot of different sports, there's a bunch of Norwegian athletes coming up in summer sports as well.

Hopefully we could have a similar impact to when Henrik won The Open a few years ago, and just get more people to play golf and watch it on TV.

Q. Did you also do nordic and alpine skiing when time permitted?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: I've always done cross-country skiing and alpine skiing, but I haven't done it that much in the last decade or so. I don't think you're truly a Norwegian if you don't ski at all. We usually joke around saying we're born with two skis on our feet. So, yeah, I've done a little bit.

Q. The jovial nature of like saying good shot to each other is something that could happen on a Saturday. When does that stop? When does it get real and that kind of stuff?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: It depends who it's with (laughter). Rory is a good guy, so I don't mind saying good shot to him.

I mean, like the bunker shot he hit on No. 10, like disregarding the situation you're in, that's just a filthy bunker shot. So you just kind of have to go, hey, that was a sick shot. Yeah, I mean, it's just part of the game.

Q. You're a pretty chill guy. What are you going to do for the huge amount of time before tomorrow's final round?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, I'm pretty good at doing nothing. I find that time flies by when you're just sitting on the couch on your phone, watching shows. I've been really getting into Billy in Sub and watching a lot of that. I might finish it before my tee time tomorrow.



