

The 151st Open

Mixed Zone

Saturday, 22 July 2023

Viktor Hovland



Q. You started off with a bogey early doors. You must be thinking, I need to work in there. You were 6-under for the rest of the round. You must be just delighted with that.

VIKTOR HOVLAND: I started birdie on 1, so --

Q. Forget what I just said. Great round. Just talk us through it in English.

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, obviously a nice start and was a little disappointed to bogey the next. I knew the conditions were out there and we could score, but I was very happy about not bogeying a single hole after that.

My putter heated up, so it was nice to take advantage of some of the nice iron shots that I hit in there.

Q. Was it a case of just eliminating the mistakes today?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: A little bit. Yesterday was windy and it was difficult. I certainly made a lot of birdies yesterday, but I just made way too many bogeys.

That was a little disappointing.

But today when it's a little bit easier you can make a lot of birdies, but the bogeys hurt a little bit more when it's playing a little bit easier for sure.

Q. Can you give us a sense of how much you feel like you've grown over the last year? You haven't missed the cut since Scotland last year. How do you feel inside?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, it's pretty cool. Again, I feel like I've had a lot of good weeks the last year where I really haven't felt like I've played amazing golf. I haven't played where everything feels like -- sometimes I'm maybe fighting a shot or trying to bunt something out there off the tee and not really swing as loose or free as I would have liked.

To be able to put myself in position to win tournaments with not my "A" game, I think that's been really cool.

I think my short game has gotten a lot better, which has really allowed me to be able to do that.

When my putter gets hot, that can really make up for some bad shots off the tee or some bad iron shots.

Q. How would you assess the overall effect of Joe Mayo in terms of your improvement?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, he's been awesome. He's a very technical guy, and he likes math and physics and just facts, and we like to measure things. I think we both think alike in a lot of different ways.

I think it's been great to have someone that kind of conveys information like that, but also I'd say he's helped me a lot mentally, too, just understanding tournament golf, tournament pressure.

He's been out here for a while and he's a very smart guy. Not just with the golf swing, but he sees the bigger picture in other things, as well.

It's been great to have a person that has that perspective on things.

Q. Of the percentage of things that he's influenced you in, is short game proportionately the biggest or is it equally across the board?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, I would say, yeah, we could call it probably 50, 60 percent is the short game. Then just maybe a harder look at the stats in terms of ball-striking, because I feel like I've had some bad ball-striking weeks and then some really good ones.

I feel like I've always been a good ball striker, so he always says if he's going to help me with the ball-striking, where is the equity going to come from, because when I'm one of the best drivers off the tee and I hit my irons well, there's not that much to improve, so it's more about kind of understanding what I'm doing and when I get a little bit off what can I do to get it back and not let it get off the rails.

Q. Did you have your "A" game today?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: I wouldn't say so. I played some good golf. I just scored really well. But in terms of stripping it and



hitting it perfectly, which I probably never will, I didn't feel like it was that great.

As I've mentioned to Joe, when I can miss the centre of a face and put, quote-unquote, bad swings on it and the ball is still going straight, that means we're doing something right.

Q. Nicklaus used to say my talent was playing badly well.

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yep, that's what it's all about.

Q. You agree?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yep.

Q. How good does it feel walking off the course with only half the deficit from this morning?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, so far, so good. It makes it a little bit more interesting tomorrow. When you keep climbing, that's pretty cool. Yeah, so it certainly makes the dinner taste a little bit better.

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