



Nicolai Højgaard Rasmus Højgaard

Press Conference Tuesday, April 8, 2025

THE MODERATOR: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. We are pleased to welcome Nicolai and Rasmus Højgaard to the interview room. Yes, you are seeing double. They have helpfully dressed accordingly. Nicolai and Rasmus will be the first set of twins to play at the Masters. Nicolai, we'll start with you. You had a great start to your Masters career with a top-20 finish, and at one stage on Saturday you were even leading the event. Can you share some of those memories with us and how that's helped with your preparation for this year?

NICOLAI HØJGAARD: Yeah. I mean, very special to be back. I have some great memories here from last year. I wish I would have finished it off a little bit better, but I've learned a lot from that week. The last 27 holes was probably the most important learning experience I've had in golf, and to go forward, as well, in majors. But it was one of the best weeks I've ever had.

For my preparation, I'm more aware of stuff, especially on the back nine. It's playing tricky. But if you hit the right shots, you're going to have chances. And par is a good score at times, and I think you forget that when you're playing. When you're up there, you want to keep pushing.

It was a great learning experience.

THE MODERATOR: Rasmus, it's your debut at the Masters, and uniquely, you get to play with your very slightly older brother. Could you share some of the memories that the two of you had when you were growing up when you first started watching the Masters?

RASMUS HØJGAARD: I think we've had many moments on the putting green at our local golf club where we would tell each other this is the putt to win the Masters and then trying to compete with each other.

I think we really started watching the Masters when we were about 10, 11 years old. So 2012 when Bubba won was probably the first real memory we have of the place.

Yeah, it's nice to be here now.

Q. The Masters is tracking every shot that players hit on the range this week. I'm curious for viewers at home, what should we be paying attention to in your opinion about the way you guys practice and warm up?

NICOLAI HØJGAARD: I think it's very interesting that you can follow every shot and also to see how players prepare. I think it's really, really cool. The Masters app is the best app in the world. You can see a full round of golf and you can see exactly how people prepare and the numbers. I think that's interesting when you see someone hit a 7-iron, you can compare to yourself.

I think it's a really cool feature, and I think that a lot is going to benefit from it.

Q. Any numbers in particular that we should be keeping an eye on in terms of things we can learn?

NICOLAI HØJGAARD: I think you're going to see -- distance control you see from the best players and how similar every shot is. It doesn't vary that much. It's the same thing, same flight almost every time, and I think that's the impressive part, the consistency of players.

You're probably going to see some really high ball speed on the range from a few players but also see some players with lower ball speed that's going to compete, and I think that's the really cool thing about this place and how different golfers are and what qualities different players have.

Q. I would like to follow up on the conversation we had last week with both of you. Nicolai, what was it like showing Rasmus around here on Sunday when you guys arrived for the first time, and what was it like standing on that 10th tee that we had a conversation about?

NICOLAI HØJGAARD: I mean, I don't know anything about the course really. I've played here once. So I told Rasmus what I did last year and a few things and a few advice I got from a few players before showing up last year.

I said, Ras, this is what I did. He can deal with it how he wants to. But we're going to play some practice rounds with some very experienced players and ask them more questions, and I think that's important, as well. I've only been here once, so I know a certain amount, but we're going to play with players that have been here 20 times.

I think for Ras, he should probably ask advice from some of the more experienced players.

RASMUS HØJGAARD: Yeah, that 10th tee shot, yeah, it looks crazy. It's such a cool hole, but standing there, and it's your first shot you're going to hit at this place, I was quite nervous there Sunday. But somehow managed to find the fairway, so I was happy with that.

Q. There aren't many people in the world who know what it's like to play in the Masters, but a lot of us know what it's like to have a sibling. How much of your success today do you attribute to your brother?

RASMUS HØJGAARD: I think growing up it was very difficult because we were very competitive. I don't think we supported each other very much back then. We would fight a lot more than saying congratulations. I think over the years we've matured quite a bit.

It's always having someone to practice with, competing against I think is very helpful, and I think we can both say that we probably wouldn't be here if we didn't have each other.

NICOLAI HØJGAARD: I pretty much agree with what Ras said. I think when we were younger we learned how to deal with when somebody was playing well and we couldn't talk to each other for days, and that helped a certain amount of really wanting to beat each other and that competitive edge we both have, and I think that's been really important.

Then when we got older and more mature we can shake each other's hand now and say congrats when someone is playing well and be brothers as well and friends at the same time. It's been pretty cool, the ride we've been on together, and hopefully it'll be even better going forward.

Q. Just wondered, the similarity, first of all, Ras, it's very helpful that you've kept your hair long. I remember the stories you used to tease Keith Pelley by pretending to be each other. Are there other instances where you've had a bit of fun with people not being able to tell you apart?

RASMUS HØJGAARD: Yeah, back when we went to school, we would switch classes, and everyone in the room, they obviously know that it's the wrong one that's here, but the teacher wouldn't know. So we would sit there for an hour, and everyone was trying to be serious about the situation. Then the teacher eventually would find out that it's Nicolai here and not Ras, and they would just laugh about it. We did that a few times, and we thought that was quite fun.

Q. Did Keith ever manage to tell you apart properly or not?

RASMUS HØJGAARD: Struggled in the start, but he got better over time.

Q. Nicolai, you said it was the single biggest learning experience of your career playing here last year. Why, considering you've played and tried a lot of things as a golfer already, Ryder Cup, all the majors? Why did you learn more here?

NICOLAI HØJGAARD: Because I was leading after 10 holes in the third round and ended up finishing 16th, so after the tournament I looked at that thinking, what did go wrong after you had been in a perfect position to then finish 16th, and going forward what can you learn from that.

I think looking ahead and when I went back to the drawing board with my team, we talked about think of pars as a good score sometimes, when you're out of position, get it back in play, bogeys are not necessarily a bad thing in certain situations.

I think play the situation sometimes more than the long game or -- you get too far ahead in a situation -- I could easily remember walking over to the 11th tee that, okay, we're in this situation now, this is what we've been dreaming of, how to deal with it now.

It was the first time, and you've got to have a few tries potentially before you get it right. I'm quite happy it happened for me. So to go forward, I think I'm in a very good position and know how to deal with it better than last year.

Q. Nicolai, we're of course in a Ryder Cup year, and you've now had the experience of playing in the Masters and playing in the Ryder Cup, and I wonder if you can compare the individual to the team, just what those different experiences were like. And, Rasmus, obviously both those being on your goals this year, how this experience could contribute to potentially making that team at Bethpage.

NICOLAI HØJGAARD: Two very different events, but the two favorite events I've ever played in. This week is probably the one event you want to win at some point hopefully in your career, and the Ryder Cup was the coolest week in a different way. It's hard to explain, but the team environment and representing Europe and the bonds you create that week and what we did in Rome was super special.

Yeah, you're doing something right if you're playing this every year and you can play a few Ryder Cups, so that's the goal.

RASMUS HØJGAARD: Yeah, again, obviously seeing Ryder Cup up close in '23 was pretty cool. I was driving Thomas Björn around as a vice captain and got to see all the golf from inside the ropes. Yeah, it was special. It just makes me want to get to one of those teams.

Obviously this week can do a lot for that. If you play well you can get a lot of points. But again, it's still in five months' time, so I try not to look too far ahead at the moment and just stay more present.

Q. Whose idea was it to wear the same clothes today?

NICOLAI HØJGAARD: It was completely random, to be fair. Ras left the house a little bit earlier than me this morning, and when I came out here, he was sitting in beige pants and a green jumper, and I said, Ras. Because I saw he left in a black shirt, so I thought, perfect. Then I realized we've got the same jumper on. We actually thought, it's not too bad, actually, make good sense going into the press conference in the same clothes. So it worked out all right.

Q. Do you still feel like you practice similarly, and do you like to practice together? And last year when, Nicolai, you were on PGA TOUR and, Rasmus, on DP World Tour, what did you miss most about each other, just being on separate continents?

RASMUS HØJGAARD: You know, when we are around each other, we play, practice and compete with each other every day. So I think, again, it's one of the things that helps us getting better. But at the same time, it's nice to have the time alone, as well. You've got to deal with that, too.

I think we both learned that quite a bit over the last couple years with Nicolai playing more over here and I was playing in Europe.

It's been -- we kind of knew at an early age that we weren't going to be on the same path all the time. At some point one is going to get a little bit more ahead of the other one, and Nico did that by getting to the PGA TOUR. And it's nice to follow him now, and then we can travel and play out here together. Yeah, I guess that's the lessons learned from the last couple years.

Q. I'm curious if you can take us back to the moment that you found out you'd both be in the field making history and what that was like for you.

NICOLAI HØJGAARD: It was back in January, actually, and I got a call, I got a special invite for this week, which I'm very thankful for, and I said to Ras the following day that we're both going to be in the Masters.

I was actually sick at that time. I was in bed feeling ill, and it was a good way to get the mood a little bit up. Yeah, it's cool sitting here now and to share the experience.

Q. I know you guys played the golf course on Sunday. Any adjustments to the bag now having seen the golf course once? Anything you guys, either one of you, are doing to the bag in prep for this week?

RASMUS HØJGAARD: I've put a 7-wood in the bag. That's pretty much the only change. I've tried different grinds on wedges and all that, but I think I'm going to stick to what I know and what I've been using the last couple weeks.

But yeah, I've got a 7-wood in the bag, which I tried it a little bit a couple weeks ago, but finally now it's in the bag.

NICOLAI HØJGAARD: My bag still looks the same. I'm playing a 7-wood and 3-wood and driver and pitch to 4-iron. It's a very similar bag that I've played all year and last year. So you won't be able to have a 7-wood swing to a couple par-5s potentially, and you want the 3-wood on a few tee shots. Yeah, the bag is very similar, as you know.

Q. Speaking of tweaks and changes to your approach to this week, there was a video out, Nicolai, by Butch Harmon last week. What was the reason for that visit?

NICOLAI HØJGAARD: Yeah, I went to see him for a day. Yeah, I've wanted to do that for quite a while. And there was time for it, so I went to see him for a day, and it was really, really good. Enjoyed the day with him and José María. I had a great time in Vegas.

Q. Nicolai, this is a question for both, your 16th place last year is the best result you've had (indiscernible) ambitious as you are (indiscernible) top 5 yet, or are you thinking this is going to happen in due course?

RASMUS HØJGAARD: We still haven't played that many majors, and it is different playing majors than normal tournaments. I think for both of us, our goal is to compete in majors going forward. It could be this week, it might not be this week, but I think there's a lot of learning still for us, and I think an experience that Nicolai had last year was very key.

I sat at home watching it, and I probably felt a little bit of what he felt out there. But we have big goals for the future, and again, we try to take day by day, and do we get in the positions of where we are in contention. It's a new experience, but again, it's where you want to be. So we're trying to take it as a learning process, I think.

NICOLAI HØJGAARD: Yeah, I agree with what Ras said. Played a few majors now and you always want to play well when you play them. There was bits last year for a few of the majors where we were up there after a round or two or three.

So looking back, there's been some great learning experience, and I think going forward, yeah, we've got high expectations and big goals for the future, but as Ras said we're taking it day by day, and it might happen this week, it

might not. If you're in the process of that, I think that's going to someday happen.

Q. Rasmus, has anything surprised you about being here so far, about the property, the field, the golf course, anything different than you expected?

RASMUS HØJGAARD: There's a few places on the course where I think -- the 3rd green, how big that runoff is short of the green there shocked me a little bit. 10th tee, Nicolai said to me, that's probably the tee shot that's going to shock you the most. I didn't quite know what to expect, but standing there on the 10th tee, it looks very different from what I've seen on TV.

I think in general, I've probably watched every footage of the Masters since 1975 on YouTube, so I feel like I know the course a little bit, but then when you see it up close in real life, it's very different.

Certainly around 3 and 10 was the biggest "wow" for me, I think.

Q. Nicolai, you talked about making some adjustments from last year. Just looking at the numbers it's interesting the way the course sets up. The par-4s average 4.2 and the par-5s average like 4.6. Is that partly what you have to adjust to is knowing that, hey, these scoring holes you have to put the pedal to the metal, and then the par-4s you might have to settle for 5?

NICOLAI HØJGAARD: Yeah, the scores are going to be on the par-5s this week. If you take care of those and you kind of play the par-4s somewhat decent -- I think it's only the 3rd hole that's the short and a little bit more gettable par-4 probably. Other than that, every hole plays over par.

Knowing that before you head out might be a good thing, but it also might be the thing that potentially scares people slightly. But I think knowing that par is a good score is very important when you're here, and then the par-5s are quite gettable. Every one of them are reachable, so that's where the scores are. You have to make your scores on the par-5s, and if you make a few on the rest, you're in a great position. But pars in general are really good.

Q. You mentioned you're going to play with some experienced players in the practice round. I was curious because I know Thomas Björn used to do that when he came to the European Tour; he looked up Darren Clarke and Lee Westwood and those guys. Which of those players have you reached out to play with here in the practice round?

NICOLAI HØJGAARD: Last year I played nine holes with Jon Rahm on Tuesday and then played with Adam Scott on Wednesday. Tomorrow we're playing with Adam Scott again. I texted him a few days prior and asked if he wanted to play nine holes with us, and it's something -- he's a guy we look up to as a golfer but also as a person, and him being a specialist around this place I thought would be good for both of us.

We were supposed to play with Jose on Monday, but the weather kind of was a little bit in the way for that.

Q. With the competitiveness but also obviously the brotherhood, how would it be to watch the other guy to put on that green jacket on Sunday?

RASMUS HØJGAARD: Probably be very frustrating (laughter). No, I think it would be very cool. It would be very cool. I don't know how -- I don't think what we can expect from that.

If something like that happens, I think we'll deal with it at the time, but I think it's hard to sit here and try and explain what that would feel like because that's going to be a little different from what we've tried before.

NICOLAI HØJGAARD: Agree.