

Genesis Scottish Open

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North Berwick, Scotland

The Renaissance Club

Viktor Hovland

Press Conference



BRIONY CARLYON: Delighted to be joined by Viktor Hovland at the Genesis Scottish Open.

Welcome back to the Renaissance Club. Just give us your thoughts, firstly, on your recent victory and what you've done in your week off and how you are preparing for this week.

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, it was an awesome week a couple weeks ago of the nice to end a little stretch of American golf and relax with my friends. We had one of my best friend's charity event. Spent just over two days there playing some golf and saw a lot of familiar faces that I haven't seen in a while.

So it's just really nice to come home and relax a little bit.

Q. The last time we spoke to you was in Dubai, and you gave us a great press conference about the struggles you were going through. Having gone through that and having a win like you did a fortnight ago, how good does that feel?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, really cool. Results-wise, I had a nice week that week but it's been very up-and-down. It feels like kind of the last few years I've taken one step forward, one step back, two forward, one back, one back again.

So it's been frustrating mentally to go through that. But I really do feel like not just because I've won last week but I've been seeing the results in practise and things going the right direction, and that makes it a lot more fun to show up to the golf course. I think I'm just a bit more relaxed, not as stressed out, feel like I have to find something this week. I know that what I'm already doing is good enough.

Obviously I want to still continue to improve because I still feel like there's things left to improve but at the same time, I don't have to go and find it as much as I felt like before.

Q. One of the caddies mentioned about you thought the course being sort of matured now; can you

comment on how you feel that's the case?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Seems like after every single year I've played here, they make slight improvements every single year. I do really like the routing change this year. It makes the finishing stretch a little bit more exciting.

And yeah, I think the more you play, I think I start to like it a little bit more. It's a beautiful property and it's a great week to come out and hang out and get ready for The Open Championship next week.

Q. Can I throw the football question in early? Wondering how closely you've been following the World Cup. Your win seemed to spark a golden spell for Norwegian sport. How closely are you following it, and what do you think the result is going to be on weekend?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: I'm taking all the credit, that's for sure. No, I've always been watching the Norway games. I'm not a big football fan in general. I don't really keep up. I don't know any of the players. But obviously it's pretty patriotic to watch.

And when I was at home, last game, you could just -- because I have an apartment that's pretty close to the city and just like sitting on the very end watching the game, you can hear the screams from downtown, like there's 100,000 people in the city just cheering and rooting for Norway. It's really cool to see that energy and you really feel it.

So just to be a part of that is culturally just really cool. I think Norway really needed something like this to happen. So that's really cool to be a part of and I'm going to watch the next game, that's for sure. But I'm in no position to give any sort of prediction but I really hope our country wins for sure.

Q. And the Viking celebration, is that something you've been enjoying?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: I've done some rowing. Every Norwegian has to do at least a few rows out there. No, it's



pretty cool. Ye.

Ah, it's a cool thing that is really taking over the Internet and gone viral.

Q. Do you expect a bit of banter with the English guys before the this weekend?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, we'll see. I feel like it's a very sensitive subject for them, so it might cut a little too deep there if I push too hard. But yeah, I hope they lose and come crying out on Sunday morning.

Q. If you go back to finding, and for someone who is constantly searching to get better, what would you consider the longest stretch where you felt you were on the right stretch? How long would it last?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Like over the last few years?

Q. Coming out of college, if you want to go that far back.

VIKTOR HOVLAND: I mean, I've had a very unique, maybe it's not that unique but at least my trajectory has been ever since I was -- I mean, ever since I was -- ever since I started to get serious into golf I've improved every single year that I've played, basically up until where it culminated in 2023. I got better every single year, and that's when I just took a couple wrong turns and that curve went the opposite direction.

And in that time frame, since then, I've had periods where I go down a path I think that's the right track. Might take one week, two weeks, a month, and then I realise, okay, that's not the right track. So I have to try over here -- and then, okay, that hasn't worked.

That's been the most frustrating part of my career is that normally everything I try to do has made me a better player, and then the last couple years, seemingly almost every turn I take, it hasn't led to any results. But within that time, I might feel good for one or two days. It doesn't have to be perfect now, but I think if I keep doing this, it will eventually turn out to something. And then something happens and then I change course. That's been the frustrating part.

But I do feel like now the last couple months, I've really worked on, you know, some general things that are not super complicated but are good steps in the right direction for me, and I'm really reaping the benefits of it now, even though it's not maybe exactly where I want it to be, I'm at least, you know, a good bit on the way there.

Q. No u-turns in the immediate future?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: No. I feel like I definitely have my sight in the right direction. You might make tweaks here and there. You're always going to have to course correct a little bit or adjust the direction, but no u-turns. If you're not doing u-turns, you're in a good spot.

Q. And you spoke a couple weeks ago about not being too caught up in results. You had a nice one last time you played. Does that mean anything to you?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, of course. It's easy to say not getting caught up in the results but when you're right there and you have a chance to win, you want to win. That was really satisfying for me because I haven't been in that position in a long time.

Obviously having to play Saturday and Sunday in the last group with Scottie, No. 1 player in the world, and come out on top, after not having been in that position for a couple years, pretty satisfying.

Obviously I care about the results but at the end of the day if I hit the shots and play the ability I know I can play in my practise, I'm going to feel good in the tournament, and I know the results are going to come from that.

Q. Fascinating to watch you're striving for perfection all the time. How many weeks in a year do you think you're actually happy with yourself?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: There are many weeks I've had in my career where I go, I'm really playing nicely.

It's really hard to win golf tournaments. I might have one really good round of golf, and next time you might have an okay one and you still win golf tournaments because it's about how bad your bad golf is. And if you play really well, your bad golf is still pretty solid.

I haven't had that many weeks where I go, okay, I'm firing on all cylinders. I would say that my win at Olympia Fields is really good. I didn't make that many putts the first few rounds, and then finally when I started making putts, I shot a really low score.

The FedExCup Playoff, TOUR Championship next week, was one of those weeks where I felt like I played close to flawless golf for me, but yet I've been a pro now for seven years. Those weeks don't come by very often.

Q. And just very quickly on what David was talking about about the football. You obviously are aware of the rivalry with Scotland and England. You might have



30,000 people doing the rowing boat with you on Sunday.

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Let's do it on Sunday. That would be great. First tee, we're doing the rowing.

Q. We're only 14 months away from another Ryder Cup, which is remarkable given the memories of last year are still very vivid in everybody's mind. What does it mean, do you think to, have the likes of Jon Rahm and Tyrrell back in the DP World Tour again and playing the events to try, and make sure that there is a strong European Team as can be to go to Adare Manor next year?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, I mean, it's undeniable. They are a huge force for our team, and to have them back playing these events is awesome. We've missed them.

You know, you would -- unless something crazy happens, you would think they are going to be on that team next year. They add a lot, not just on the golf course but in the team room. They are great leaders, good personalities and just bring good vibes in the team room.

Obviously we've been teammates now for the last three Ryder Cups, and yeah, I feel like that bond just kind of increases every single time. So they seem to be playing good golf, and so it should be an exciting week this week and hopefully we can all peak at the right time next year.

Q. Jon was sitting in that seat exactly where you are half an hour ago, and he was talking about how this week and next week, it feels like back-to-back majors, given the strength of field this week. Is that similar to how you feel? Because it is such a strong and elite feel?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: It really is. The Scottish Open has a lot of history. There are great champions here that have won this tournament. Yeah, we all really want to win this event, and the next week, as well.

Obviously next week is the big one. But to reiterate Jon's point, this does feel like two really big events back-to-back, and there's also other excitement coming to play links golf. I think it's one of the most fun ways to play golf.

So any time you get to do that in a tournament, I think adds another element to it.

Q. Your most previous win before the Travelers was the Valspar, and I would guess that you would say that that was a week where you won despite not maybe having what you would have preferred, the best of

your game and I think you were coming off a tough week at THE PLAYERS the week before. From the outside, people would maybe say, why is that not good enough to just take what you have there and go with it? Why not be satisfied with that, especially even in a winning effort?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Those are great questions. Pretty profound question. Because I never -- when I was younger, I was never the best at any stage. I had to work. I had to improve to kind of become the best junior player in Norway.

And then when I got to Oklahoma State, I wasn't the best player on the team. I had to qualify, and then eventually got to the point where I was one of the best college players. I got to No. 1 in the Amateur World Rankings. You turn pro, you're not the best pro in the world. I got to a point where I was No. 3 in the world.

So you have to have that mindset if you want to get better. I can win a tournament and go, yeah, I won a tournament, I'm pretty good at this game, which I am, but I want to win more. You have to be honest with yourself, and go, well, I missed three cuts leading up to that event. You know, do you just not think about that? Just go, Oh, well, I won, everything's good, everything's all right?

And there is this -- it's very interesting because obviously placebo is a psychological phenomena, and your mindset is extremely important, and you have guys that are maybe delusional on the side where they overestimate their capabilities or their skill set, and they are the ones that get maximum -- they squeeze all the juice out of what they have versus I almost -- I'm just wired the complete opposite direction. I want to be able to play at such a high level to where, you know, I don't have to be delusional in my capabilities and still perform at a really high level.

But there is -- you're in this in-between phase where -- and this is something that I have had to learn for myself is that, okay, it's not perfect. I want it to be better but it's good enough. And that's when at a certain time you have to believe, as well, and just not focus too much on the bad shots and just see the good shots and perform as well as you can with the things that you've got.

And I feel like that's what I did at Valspar. That's what I did at Travelers. When I'm in that position, I really good a great job of that. I just need to do a better job of that week-in, week-out.

Q. A lot of success since the 2022 Open at St Andrews, but is there anything you still take from that final round that you've learned from or is it still too far

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

in the past that it's far gone?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: That was a good experience for me, being in the last group there with Rory; arguably the most prestigious major at St Andrews. It doesn't get much higher than that. You can argue about which one is the most sought after but it's hard to argue with that one.

Yeah, it was disappointing not performing as well as I would have liked. But similar to kind of losing the PGA in '23, I felt like I used that as fuel and learned a lot, and was able to win Memorial just a little bit later, and then had my run at the FedExCup later that year.

You are going to win some and you are going to lose some. Yeah, I think in that position, when you haven't been there very much, it's easy -- you play a little bit scared. You're not as comfortable. You're not as relaxed and just trusting your shot shape and going for the shots that you have to go for. And if you play a little bit more timid, which is understandable in a major championship, it's harder to perform your best.

And now I feel like I do a way better job of when I'm in that position, I go for it. I don't try to protect the lead or be afraid to hit a bad shot. You just have to go through your process, and, yeah, just try to execute.

Q. It's interesting hearing you say that you've been happy with your golf for a couple of weeks in your career. Curious, what makes you happy?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: What makes me happy? My trainer always asks me after a session, like if I'm happy. And I say, "Just stop asking me that. If I'm happy, not happy, it doesn't matter. If I'm content, if I'm hitting the shot that I'm picturing in my head, then I'm content.

It's like if you execute, if you control the things that you can control, results are eventually are going to go your way. If they don't, it's almost more stressful to live and die by each result or each bad bounce or bad break or lipout that doesn't go your way. Ultimately, over the course of 72 holes, if you execute and you play well, hopefully things are going to go your way in the end.

So I try to just like be very, very -- I set high goals for the fundamentals. If I execute the fundamentals and I don't double-cross, for example -- I start the ball left and the ball moves to the right, and I can control the shots that I want to, in the way that I want to control them, I'm a happy man because I know that I can handle any condition out there.

Q. Just a quick one on links golf. You talked about it being different from what you guys see. Is there a

specific shot that you need to master this week in order to be successful this week and then looking into next week

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Depends on the conditions a little bit. But with the wind obviously yesterday and today; I played college golf in Oklahoma, and really got to perfect kind of that low, bullet shot. So I can launch it very low, but I can also spin off but also in the down winds, I can get the ball up in the air and stop it quickly as well.

I think you really have to control your ball flight, and I think one shot that really works in my favour when playing links golf is just that low, piercing ball flight and with the firm fairway. So if you hit it straight, the ball goes a long way. I think that's a very good shot to have around here.

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