

BMW PGA Championship

Wednesday, 13 September, 2023

Virginia Water, Surrey, England

Wentworth Golf Club

Viktor Hovland

Press Conference

TOM CARLISLE: Good afternoon, everyone. Delighted to be joined by Viktor Hovland in the media centre here at the BMW Championship.

Congratulations on your FedExCup victory. PGA TOUR season is finished, still very much going on here on the DP World Tour. How much are you looking forward to this week and your run to the end of the season?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, it's been kind of a crazy month for me. I had two nice weeks off back in Oklahoma before coming here. Got some rest and getting ready for this week. This is a big week for the DP World Tour, and I've always loved coming here. Had a good week here last year and hopefully can improve on that a little bit and obviously The Ryder Cup in a couple weeks so lots to play for and looking forward to it.

Q. Wonder, after having that high, having two weeks off --

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, obviously it was a really cool accomplishment for me and those are the moments that make all the practise and hours worth it. But at the same time, I still enjoy getting back to work and trying to get better, and maybe I'll try this thing out and see if that works, so even though I get success in tournaments and winning is a lot of fun, I still enjoying getting back to work and see if I can get better.

So that's why I don't have that hard of a time changing my mindset and thinking about the next week that's coming up. For example, this week is a big week and The Ryder Cup is coming up. I have to make sure that I sit down and enjoy the moment and enjoy the success that I've had, but at the same time I don't let that take away from these tournaments that are coming up as well.

Q. That trip to Rome this week, any particular surprise or did you learn anything about the other players this week, and can we take anything out of you playing with Rory, maybe looking forward to Rome who, is playing with who?



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VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, I think we are all trying to get to know each other a little bit better. Even though most of the guys, we see each other every single week. Some of the guys play over here mainly and other part of the team play in the States a lot.

It was a great time to spend together and see how the golf course was. Not everyone on the team had seen the course before. I played The Italian Open last year. The rough was certainly a lot juicier even back then, which that week it was very thick. So I think we'll probably see a tough Marco Simone.

In terms of the pairings, I just showed up to the tee time and play, so you should probably ask the captain before the tournament instead.

Q. How do you contrast Whistling Straits going into this Ryder Cup from a personal perspective?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: It was obviously playing The Ryder Cup is super, super special. It's something that I think is one of the coolest, just coolest things to be a part of, especially growing up in Norway playing a lot of junior golf in Europe, a lot of team golf and going to college playing on a team. I just love that atmosphere.

So to be part of The Ryder Cup was very special. Obviously it was tough for me as a rookie playing away and not having very many European fans there. And I felt like I played some good golf. I just struggled a little bit around the green and even on the green, I just didn't putt very well and obviously the short game woes that I've been vocal about before I think kind of expressed themselves a little bit that week.

It was a little bit bitter experience. I would have liked to have done better and put some more points on the board but this time around, I feel like a way more complete player. We are playing at home and I think the home crowd advantage is going to be a lot different than it was at Whistling Straits, so I don't know exactly what we are getting into but I feel like it's going to be a different experience.

Q. Do you feel like it changes your role on the team

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and if it does, are you relishing that?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: I don't know, I just try to be myself and I just want to get along with everyone on the team. I think what's cool that we are all so different people on the team and I don't think we should try to be someone that we are not. We all have a common goal and that is to bring the Cup back and with that frame, it makes everyone -- it's a lot easier to get along with each other so I don't think we have to play certain roles. We just be ourselves and we'll get along great and play our asses off.

Q. Other players who have played more Ryder Cups than you, have they reassured you that you got a bit unlucky that you don't always get beaten by ten points?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: I think that goes without saying. We don't really have to focus on what happened too much at Whistling Straits. We just have to learn from what happened, and I think it's going to be a way different Cup this year.

Q. A few players that were there, had a certain bond and a determination to provide a very different result?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: I think we are all pretty motivated to prove that what happened last time is not going to happen again. We are certainly going to wear the uniform very proudly and certainly at home in front of all the fans. It's obviously going to be super special and we are all going to be very motivated to play our best.

Q. I just wonder what your impressions are of Ludvig?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, I've only played with him one time and it was recently. Very, very impressive. Obviously just -- I've been paying attention to his results, and I remember -- this is over a year ago, we had a FaceTime together. Got to know him a little bit there, and I've gone to dinner with him probably once.

So I haven't spent very much time with him. Just watching his results, I'm just very impressed, not just the golf stuff because I've hardly seen his golf swing, or I don't know anything about his game, but just the way he carried himself, his demeanour, seemed very mature. Seemed to enjoy the moment but wasn't scared. I think that's the type of personality that's going to fit very nicely into The Ryder Cup. Didn't seem like the moment was too big for him. I think that in itself as a rookie, just being professional for a couple months, that is way more impressive than any accomplishment that he's made as a professional golfer results-wise.

Q. How did that call come about?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: I guess he was looking into a similar management company that I'm with, and yeah, he just wanted to ask some questions about my representation and we talked about some other stuff. He's a Swedish -- he's from Sweden; I'm from Norway. Just seemed like a good opportunity to get to know each other a little bit. Yeah, he's a good kid.

Q. Is there a bond between the Danes, the Swede and the Norwegian ens? Can you speak Swedish?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, it's interesting, I can read Danish pretty easily, but understanding Danish is very tough just because of how they pronounce it. Swedish is very tough for me to read but when we speak with each other it's very easy. And there's a lot of Swedes in Norway that seek work, especially in golf instructing, almost half the coaches are Swedish in Norway. I'm very familiar with the language. So I think that makes it a little bit more familiar as well when you're on a team and you're at such a big stage and everything is for me in a foreign language, even though it's England, it's nice to have someone that you can speak the same language there and kind of know where they come from. Even though they are from a different culture, like Ludvig and Nicolai, we have a very similar culture.

So yeah, just makes it a little bit more comfortable on that big stage.

Q. Have you seen much of Nicolai's game?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Played with him yesterday in a practise round. That was the first time I've played with him. Very impressive. Has a lot of speed. Yeah, I like his game a lot.

Q. Since you've already played Marco Simone, can you give us an assessment of what the golf course was like and how you play that golf course, and obviously we all know the rough is pretty high. Do you expect it to be that way when you get back there?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, when I played it last year in The Italian Open, honestly not a big fan of the golf course. It's very blind. And for a stroke-play event, I was not a big fan.

This time around when I played it, I still don't think it's an amazing stroke-play event, or golf course, but for match play, I think it's going to be super exciting because there's a good mix of the holes that are easy that you can make birdies and you can make eagles, but there's also some

extremely difficult hole where if you make a par, you could win the hole.

So I think that makes for a really good Ryder Cup because you're not going to see too many halved holes. I feel like there's going to be a lot of movement, and I think that makes for an exciting Ryder Cup, especially the shots required, as well. They are very demanding. You have to drive it well off the tee or else it's going to be very, very difficult.

Some of the pin placements, too, they allow for iron shots to get really, really close if you hit a good shot, and if you miss it, you're going to have a very difficult up-and-down.

I just think there's a lot that can happen and nothing is over until it's over.

Q. Working with Edoardo on your stats, what's so good and what had you used before?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, I started kind of getting into the stats part of the game, say, maybe two years ago. I played a practise round with Edoardo at Torrey Pines whenever the U.S. Open was there. And that was the first time I really met the guy, and he was just a very pleasant guy, super, super nice guy, and the more I started asking about stats questions, because I play a little bit of poker and I'm into numbers and yeah, just South Africa kind of a point of reverence to ask some of those questions, and when I asked him those questions, I was very impressed with the answers that I got.

When he's such a nice guy and has accomplished the things he's accomplished in this game, his information carries a lot of weight. He's also an engineer. He's just a brilliant guy.

When we started diving into some of the stats, you know, we picked up on a couple things, and I think especially this year, we figured out that, for example, my short irons, I've been short-siding myself way too much, almost twice as much as another good iron player, just comparing that. And when you're short-siding yourself twice as much as other guys with short irons, that's hard to overcome, and that's just a way I have improved by not improving my skill set. That's just by thinking better and making better decisions. That's where Edoardo's stats come in very handy.

Q. When did that start?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: I don't know the exact date but yeah, it was just under two years ago, I would say. Yeah, close to two years ago.

Q. Going back to the language point with the Swedes, I wonder if there's a message for your captain when it comes to pairings --

VIKTOR HOVLAND: There's a lot of things that go pairings but obviously if you speak a similar language and you have similar -- similar culture, it's easier to get along and easier -- we can strategise among ourselves, not having the Americans listen in on our conversation.

So there's definitely a little side game there, but if it comes down to that stuff, I think if we just play best or play better golf, hopefully that stuff shouldn't matter too much in the equation but you never know.

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