

Men's Olympic Golf Competition

Tuesday, 27 July 2021

Saitama City, Saitama, Japan

Kasumigaseki Country Club

Viktor Hovland

Kristian Johannessen

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We'll get started with questions. Norway is a proud sport, especially when it comes to the Olympics, if you could just speak to how important it is to have golf in the Olympic games to help grow the sport in Norway.

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, I think it's really cool, obviously growing up in Norway we watch a lot of the, especially the winter Olympics and we usually crush it in those and get a lot of medals. That hasn't been the case with the summer Olympics as much, but we're going to try to change that and, yeah, it's just really cool to see all the big Olympians from Norway, what they have been able to achieve and, yeah, hopefully Kristian and I can be a part of that.

KRISTIAN JOHANNESSEN: We obviously have a lot of memories from watching especially winter Olympics and I think we actually have multiple athletes now in the summer Olympics who have a good chance of getting a medal and hopefully we are too. So looking forward to having a chance this week to getting a medal.

THE MODERATOR: My last question, talk about your two how well you know each other for those who don't know about your relationship growing up or how you guys, how well you guys have known each other on and off the course.

KRISTIAN JOHANNESSEN: I known Viktor probably since I was 13, 14. He came up like a, yeah, a fat little kid and started to play really well and after that we just kind of had a good tone for a lot of years, even though we started out not the best, but, yeah, I think we're having a good time and, yeah.

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, we obviously you kind of start off on a regional level playing in Norway and when you get better and better, the Federation usually takes the players that have stood out and when we were kind of the age of



13, 14, 15, we were in the same groups together and we would go in the winter when we couldn't play and in Norway we would go to Spain together, we also went to the same high school together, so definitely seen each other a lot throughout the years and I feel like our relationship has gotten better every year, even though we started out hating each other, but it's getting better, still a work in progress. (Laughing).

THE MODERATOR: We'll open for questions.

Q. Are either of you guys staying in the village this week?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: So we're actually staying at a hotel about 15 minutes away, but I think we're going to try to move our accommodation over there.

Q. So you're going to go to the village and stay there?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah.

Q. Okay. What's the thought process behind that and, yeah, how did you land at that decision?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: We were kind of thinking that the gym is obviously amazing over there and the fact that you can eat whenever you want, they have access to all the foods that you want and need. The hotel is about 15 minutes away from here, which is obviously a lot more convenient than the village, but the fact that we don't have as many people working than at the Olympic village so you have to kind of schedule things a little bit differently as a team. Whereas staying in the village you can just kind of do your own thing a little bit and have it set up exactly the way you want it to be set up. So I think we just kind of had the same line of thinking there and we don't mind the extra 45 minutes to get to the course back and forth.

Q. From your youth, Viktor, you were friends with Magnus Saugstrup and can you just tell me a little bit how that was, you were went played football together with him.

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, we went to the same



elementary school for seven years, we weren't in the same class in the elementary school, but we also went to the same junior high school for three years, we went to the same school for 10 years and we became pretty good friends. I remember we had some sleep overs here and there and we were on the same football team, soccer team, whatever you want to call it. So we were, we stayed in touch for many many years and then obviously he went different route with the hand ball and I started playing golf, so I haven't talked to him that much recently, but we were on the same Youth Olympics team as well and that's basically the last time I've seen him. Obviously he's been great, so it's cool to see.

Q. As a Youth Olympics you did not get a medal. In the last round how was that?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Thanks for reminding me. I think I was leading after two or three rounds and I can't remember if we played three or four rounds, but I remember I shot 68 and 68 the first two days and played really well, but struggled with my put terrible the last day and I ended up in a playoff for the bronze and I lost that playoff. Hopefully, I got a little taste of what it is to compete for a medal and hopefully this time I do a little bit better.

Q. You went the college way instead of the European Tour. Why?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Just watching the kids coming out of Norway they would turn pro right out of high school and play the Nordic League and try to move up through those grades. I decided I wasn't good enough to turn pro, I needed to see how it was in the States and play college golf but at the same time get an education and kind of get the best of both worlds.

Q. Why didn't you become a ski jumper like your father? He was in that game, business.

KRISTIAN JOHANNESSEN: Yeah, I'm just too fat. (Laughing.) No, but I tried the cross country skiing and I tried a bit of ski jumping, but I was just, didn't have the talent for that, so ended up playing golf instead and, yeah, happy with that choice.

Q. You choose to go to European way instead of the college road. Why?

KRISTIAN JOHANNESSEN: Yeah, I thought a lot of that process but ended up turning pro. I think it was more about the college for me, if I could of went to like OSU like Viktor did, because I know the his coach and he's really, really good and their whole schedule as well is very good, then it would be maybe an easier choice to go but since

the colleges I looked at wasn't that good, I decided to turn pro and, yeah that was it really.

Q. Why did you, I think the words you used, "hate him." Why did you hate Viktor?

KRISTIAN JOHANNESSEN: No, I think it was the other way around, really.

VIKTOR HOVLAND: I hated him.

Q. I'm sorry. Then why did you hate Kristian?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: So specifically I remember the first time we met and we were playing a junior event in Spain, just like early in the year and he went, he was at the time he was in high school and I was thinking about starting at this high school so they let me kind of come early a couple years early and stay with the school team as well as play the event that was there and I remember staying with they rented like a big house like a villa, where a bunch of people were staying at and I was sharing a room with a good friend of mine, but he had a girlfriend at the time and she was there a lot, so I didn't get to spend the time that I needed to in that room and I was young at the time and I might have like complained a lot about that and I had never met Kristian before, but I knew who he was and after I like told this a couple of different people he just asked me straight up, Well, what did you shoot the first two days of the tournament? Because we had already played two rounds. And I just said, Well, I shot 82, 82. And he was just like, Well does it matter where you're sleeping if you're shooting 82, 82? Never met the guy before and I'm like, all right, we're off to a good start. And I was thinking, when I start at this school in a couple years, we're probably going to butt heads a lot. But yeah, despite the nasty comments he's actually a pretty decent guy.

Q. As a follow-up, if you -- I'm asking specifically for fans in Norway -- which would be a bigger deal to the fans in Norway, you winning a major or you winning a medal?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: That's a -- I don't know how to answer that. I think winning a major is bigger, personally, and I think most people think that way and I think maybe the Norwegian people would interpret it that way, just based off of the reaction of other people. But people not knowing anything about golf and there are plenty of those people in Norway, I think would probably be more excited about an Olympic medal compared to a major because they might not know what a major is, but everyone's heard of the Olympics and an Olympic medal carries a lot more weight than a major maybe does for some people.

Q. (Question in Norwegian.)

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Basically just talking about the relationship between Collin and I. I guess he said some nice words about me and, yeah, just basically want to commend him for his presence and how he's been able to handle all of his success. He's -- I've had a quick start to my career, but he's had an even quicker one and it's cool to see him handle it the way that he does and he's just as nice as he was when he was in college and we were competing against each other. So that's cool to see.

And basically we just touched on the Olympics, what it means to be an Olympic athlete and I guess we answered some question about that earlier, so basically the same things.

Q. (Question in Norwegian.)

VIKTOR HOVLAND: I just explained the story between us two from Spain in Norwegian and just talking about our goals and stuff for this week.

Q. What does Kristian do better than you on and off the golf course and then the same question about Viktor.

VIKTOR HOVLAND: On the golf course I would say Kristian definitely has a better short game than I do. He definitely has a lot of touch and it looks nice, it looks like he knows how to put spin on the ball, hit it low, hit it high, so I'm impressed by that.

Off the course, he's probably better at having fun than me. He likes to enjoy his down time and I should probably take some notes.

KRISTIAN JOHANNESSEN: Definitely on the course you can just tell by his scores he does everything a bit better than me and he's said that before himself (laughing).

Off the course, I like the way Viktor just don't give a shit about anything other than what's best for him and I can definitely learn from that.

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