

Men's Olympic Golf Competition

Thursday, 1 August 2024

Paris, France

Le Golf National

France

Victor Perez

Quick Quotes

Q. What was that like emotionally and did it help, hurt?

VICTOR PEREZ: Yeah, obviously a lot going on. Like I was saying, it's never the easiest place for a golfer to be. Nobody enjoys the first tee, I think ever.

I told myself on the range, I told my caddie, James, let's be there the full ten minutes before and really soak it in all in. It's definitely a once-in-a-lifetime. I'll never hit this tee shot again, opening games in Paris and being French and having all the home support. I wanted to be there. There wasn't going to be more pressure whether I was there ten minutes or four minutes.

So I was like, you might as well just try to be there and take it all in and enjoy the people. It was great. I managed to hit a good shot, actually.

Q. Some people don't think golf belongs in the Olympics. What would you say after your experience today?

VICTOR PEREZ: It's difficult because everybody's looking through their own eyes and it's difficult to kind of like pick a side. Obviously we're very fortunate to do what we do, and play for millions of dollars around the world, week-in, week-out. We are fortunate.

But it's still entertainment business in a sense. I think the people, the French, really enjoy having golf here, for the millions of golfers around the world and the French golfers that live in Paris and see this tournament every year, I think it was great for them to enjoy having Scottie Scheffler and Xander Schauffele just off The Open win, that's great.

I think Le Golf National has put on a great event with maybe in between The Open de France and the 2018 Ryder Cup. I think the stands are there and the people are there, and I think it's great. It also allows people that are



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just coming to the games, maybe not familiar with golf, to go, you know, whatever the price is, we'll go see the golf and spend a nice day with weather and be with family is also a good side.

Q. What were your expectations this morning?

VICTOR PEREZ: Obviously the ceremony was the craziest thing because it was lashing down with rain and people were cheering from balconies and along the Seine, it was a crazy experience. They really kept on going.

I was fortunate to go to a few more events along the week before the tournament started and being there on the first tee at nine o'clock was great. They were there on the range before the round even, cheering me on, boosting me up. It worked for the first tee shot. Didn't really work for the front nine but besides that, yeah, it was great.

Q. You've won at the Home of Golf. How did today as an experience compare?

VICTOR PEREZ: Yeah, again, it's difficult because we are in different stages of our careers. It's really hard to compare. It's not really apples-to-apples.

Back when I won in St Andrews in 2010, it was my first year on tour, life-changing win for everything that comes with, it whether it's exemptions and everything. This is kind of a little bit more isolated, I would say.

This sticks out a little bit more, doing it in France in a place where -- this used to be a putting green when we were kids. We played the Under 12, Under 14, Under 16 French Juniors here, and I remember staying in the Novotel and coming out at nine o'clock doing putting games against the older guys and trying to win and playing for a coke or something.

This place is very special for me, and I think Matthieu will agree the same when you guys speak to him in a bit. It's obviously so much mixed feelings and emotions, and also happy to manage a strong back nine, so not shaming myself out there.

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Q. When you go to other events and interact with other members of the French team, is it humbling? Do you feel like a real Olympian athlete in the presence of all this greatness?

VICTOR PEREZ: Obviously not in the gym. Definitely not when we are lifting weights. I'm not going to putt that out there but at the same time, golf is a skill just as much as there's archery, shooting, equestrian. I think what I remember the most is maybe being in the cafeteria and telling myself, everybody in this room is exceptional at what they do from everywhere around the world, and that kind of brings everybody to the same level. Obviously we are coming from all different backgrounds but from a skill perspective, I thought that was great just to be in the same room with people that can just throw the javelin 80 yards and another person can just ride a horse and do crazy things and swim 100 meters in 45 seconds. It was quite extraordinary.

Q. When you were on the putting green, ten, 15 years ago --

VICTOR PEREZ: 20.

Q. Could you have imagined seeing that on the first tee for you?

VICTOR PEREZ: Probably not to be honest, because you never know. You're 12 years old. You're just trying to have fun and not embarrass yourself really. You're just so nervous. Everybody is helping you out along the way to do golf when you're a kid.

Q. But that many people?

VICTOR PEREZ: Yeah, you never know. I mean, it's always easy to look backward and be like, oh, of course, but at 12 years old, it's unbelievable, if you told me I would be hitting the opening tee shot in the Olympics, I would be like no way. It's very fortunate that the committee picked me over Matthieu. I was guessing it was going to be one or the other.

It was great, yeah.

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