

# Men's Olympic Golf Competition

Friday, 2 August 2024

Paris, France

Le Golf National

## Sami Valimaki

### Press Conference



#### Q. How much softer did the course play after all the rain last night?

SAMI VÄLIMÄKI: I think it was pretty much the same as yesterday. I didn't feel like any change.

#### Q. Wondering about Tom Kim is on the Leish and an issue about how he might have to serve in the military. Can you briefly recap your experience and how that affected your golf game when you served?

SAMI VÄLIMÄKI: I was in good position, so when I turned pro, I established my first year when I was in the military, and it went fine. But I heard they need to make two years, because I was only six months.

#### Q. So you played while you were serving?

SAMI VÄLIMÄKI: Yeah.

#### Q. What was your job in the military?

SAMI VÄLIMÄKI: Shooting heads.

#### Q. And it's required?

SAMI VÄLIMÄKI: It's mandatory. We just train in big areas, and I was in the sport army, so I had a bit more kind of, how would you say, like you need to be two weeks in and they be you had three, four days off and even if I have some golf tournaments, I could still go there and be one week away. So it wasn't like that strict. So they made it easier for us.

#### Q. Did it affect your golf at all, having to balance?

SAMI VÄLIMÄKI: I wouldn't say no. Of course, sometimes you maybe can't practise as good but when you have the time slot, you practise a bit better.

#### Q. Was there anything in your military training that

#### helped you as a golfer?

SAMI VÄLIMÄKI: Maybe early wake-ups, if I can get something out of there.

#### Q. How early were the wake-ups?

SAMI VÄLIMÄKI: 5.30 to 6.00 every morning. It was early.

#### Q. Is this a big deal right now in Finland that you're in the Olympics? Do you get a sense that it means a lot?

SAMI VÄLIMÄKI: Yeah, I feel like actually more than what I expected. So I would say it's quite a big thing. I didn't think that way but all the people are asking, like, two, three weeks before, are you going there and what are you going to do and that kind of stuff there.

#### Q. Two, possibly in the Top 15 or 20 right now.

SAMI VÄLIMÄKI: That's awesome.

#### Q. Any idea, is there a sense that that translates to more interest?

SAMI VÄLIMÄKI: I hope so. We still don't have any medals, so I hope we can get one of them. We'll see.

#### Q. How do you grow up playing golf in Finland? I'm sure it's not that popular. Obviously the weather. You must have had some sort of inspiration to want to try to pursue it?

SAMI VÄLIMÄKI: Kind of a bit boring. My dad and mom used to play and still play but they took me on the range and I picked it up quite well and I had two really good friends who started at the same time. So we played through when we were 14, 15 together, played a lot of tournaments in the same area. So that was kind of how I get more into golf.

#### Q. What about the off-season? How did you stay sharp?

SAMI VÄLIMÄKI: That was the issue, and it still is the



issue. But I feel like now, more when we go to practise camp in like in Spain, they can do a bit better and of course the indoor house, they are getting better as well and with the TrackMan, you can still practise pretty good.

**Q. Are you and Tapio close? What's your relationship?**

SAMI VÄLIMÄKI: Yeah, we used to play for four or five years together. Stayed a lot of time together in the same hotels and of course now I'm playing the PGA TOUR and the challenge, and it's nice to see him this week because we haven't seen him before this.

**Q. Is your time on the PGA TOUR, being away from Europe, has it been easy? Has it been difficult?**

SAMI VÄLIMÄKI: I would say 50/50. Every new place, you don't know anything about the country, like even where are we going to play or stay. So sometimes I feel like losing a little easy energy, I would say that.

But I played solid golf and hopefully I get done for the rookie year and next year much more.

**Q. Do you have a residence in the U.S.? Are you commuting back and forth?**

SAMI VÄLIMÄKI: No. I'm still traveling back and forth.

**Q. I take it that's a challenge, right.**

SAMI VÄLIMÄKI: Similar in Europe, four or five weeks and then you go back.

**Q. In this tournament, finishing fourth is the same as finishing 6th. Does that change your mentality of how hard you attack and push out there?**

SAMI VÄLIMÄKI: Maybe in the next two days, depends where you at. So I think you can try but still first couple days everyone tried to make the good scores and leave those easy bogeys or doubles away.

**Q. I imagine needing a birdie on 18 is one of the harder holes, if you need to try to make it for a Bronze Medal, would be one of the trickier ones?**

SAMI VÄLIMÄKI: You need to hit two really good shots to even have a chance. But it's going to be tough to even make a four from there if you're leading.

**Q. The last four holes -- the rest of the course seems to be gettable but 15, 16, 17, 18 right now are playing over par.**

SAMI VÄLIMÄKI: Yeah, I would say 16 is a pretty easy hole. But then if you are just missing it off the tee, you are always laying up. You just don't have anything less, or even you hit a good soft 50 or 80, you still might end up in the water for your second shot. So the scores comes easily.

**Q. Any place you've particularly enjoyed in the U.S. visiting this year?**

SAMI VÄLIMÄKI: I would say Scottsdale and San Diego. And of course I love the Waste Management tournament. That was awesome.

**Q. What's your position? Are you going to Wyndham next week?**

SAMI VÄLIMÄKI: No. I'm going to take it off.

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