

Men's Olympic Golf Competition

Saturday, 3 August 2024

Paris, France

Le Golf National

Thomas Bjorn

Quick Quotes

Q. How much credit do you get for the course record?

THOMAS BJØRN: None. I took him to a good restaurant yesterday that he liked. That's about the credit I'll take.

Q. What was the restaurant? Italian? Chinese?

THOMAS BJØRN: No. It was French bistro that we always go to when we play, Le Limousin, which we always go there when we play The French Open. They wanted to get out of the hotel last night, and kind of have a bit more normal night than what they do week-in and week-out. It was a nice evening for them, both of them, and Thorbjørn played well, as well; but no, I don't take much credit for.

We have an unbelievably good atmosphere between the two of them and in the group with their caddies, and the small group that we are here. Women arrive tonight and then we are going to have a nice dinner with them. Then we go back to our hotel. Dressage team won Silver in our hotel, so that will be a nice atmosphere with that. There's a nice thing around the group. That's it. You try and keep the mood light and I try and keep them in the right frame of mind and not getting in their own way, which was easy for them to do after the first two rounds.

I felt like they played quite well but didn't quite get anything out of it, which golf can be like that. But certainly today Nicolai got his fair share.

Q. What do you think has been the most influential thing that you've done for the team so far this week?

THOMAS BJØRN: I think just keeping a good atmosphere. When you come in as a professional golfer into a world of the Olympics, there's a lot of new people, different people from our own federation, from our own Olympic committee and you know, there's a lot of different people around.

For the two of them to have a face that they know and that when they have things that concerns them, or you know,



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people get maybe a little bit too close in their every day doings, then it's nice for them to have me.

You know, I can kind of get in between and keep that balance right. You know, they are both great at understanding that it's not a normal golf tournament. It's the Olympics. A lot of other things come with that. But they also, you know, they want to have their space and do their work. I think having somebody like me for those things and that they know so well, helps them just to go out and feel comfortable that things are not going to get away from them.

I think that's what I add a lot and I think that's when they learn. When they came back from Rio, they felt it was difficult, and obviously Tokyo was a different kind of Olympics that week and we kind of don't really make it -- you know, with all the surroundings, it was a different kind of Olympics.

But they felt after Rio, they wanted to have somebody.

Q. How did you look at Nicolai's performance today?

THOMAS BJØRN: I thought it was unbelievable. I thought he showed a lot of strength and character. He knew -- when you sit last night and you talk about where you are, you know you need something 65 or below to play yourself in for a chance with a medal, and then to go out and do it with that kind of pressure and that knowledge is pretty cool for a guy that's 23 years old. It means a lot to him.

When you look at his career, winning the Eisenhower Trophy, European Amateur Championship, when he puts on a shirt that carries the country's name, he takes an unbelievable amount of pride in that. I think the first two days, maybe the Olympics was a little bit -- almost a little bit too big for him; the occasion of it, and you know, talking to him, we have to kind of settle him down to just play his golf.

And today, I think maybe because he felt a little far back, he could just go and freewheel it today and when he gets in that mode of being right in his mind, off he goes. Today

was as good a performance as I've seen in a long time and certainly from a 23-year-old.

Q. So how do you take somebody who realises that this stage is big, and maybe with wisdom, make it small?

THOMAS BJØRN: It goes back to everything, you focus on what you are and who you are and what you can control, and all those elements. We have an unbelievable great group of guys that understands each other well, and we just try to go back to simple things.

I think something like going out for dinner last night puts them in an element of what they do week-in and week-out, instead of staying in a hotel and having a lot of people around them. I think things like that just kind of puts them in a frame of mind of getting away from what is the Olympics.

We get into our own little bubble, our bubble that we are in normally on tour, and I think that kind of helped both of them to come back to the hotel last night. They came down this morning with a different look in their faces, whether it was dinner last night or whatever it was, or just because they were disappointed. It takes a lot for a person to rise, and they both did, and all the credit is on them. It's not on anything else.

I always said, that's what we try and do in Ryder Cups and all our team events, we try to build an environment where they can perform and the only way you can build that environment is create an environment that they are used to. I think the Olympics, this occasion is very different for them. It's very different for tour golf to be in this environment.

So there's a lot of things to take in. We talked a lot about this week that we don't want to be tourists of the Olympics. We want to be here to achieve. We are here to try and get the best out of our receives. If you want to see the Olympics and you want to be that, well, then stay next week and take it in that week.

But this week when we are playing, we are focusing on playing as good as we can.

Q. So it sounds like there's kind of this unique combination of the Olympics are big and be your normal self.

THOMAS BJØRN: Yeah, well, that's what it is. They are not used to -- when they go to a golf event, all the focus is on the golf events. Here, it jump, the journalists jump from event to event, and it's a fast-moving thing and they are not

used to that. There's a lot of impressions in their head and we just try to keep it as simple as possible.

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