

BMW Championship

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St. Louis, Missouri, USA

Bellerive Country Club

Viktor Hovland

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome Viktor Hovland to the interview room here at the 2026 BMW Championship, our 2023 BMW Championship winner, one of four players to win this tournament in route to the FedExCup title. Viktor, welcome back to the BMW Championship. If we can get some comments on being back here at Bellerive this week.

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, my first time in St. Louis and first time at Bellerive. Played the back nine yesterday. Impressive place. This is a big boy's golf course. So I look forward to competing on Thursday.

THE MODERATOR: Making your 150th PGA TOUR start this week. You won earlier this year at the Travelers Championship. If you can just comment on your season up to this point and then your expectations over the next couple weeks.

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, it's been a little up-and-down. I feel like I've struggled to find the consistency that I used to have, so that's still been kind of a work in progress. But it was really cool to see third place at the RBC, that kind of gave me some good vibes going into Travelers, and to obviously come out on top that week was really special, to have my mom there to watch me win for the first time. Just, you know, the way that I won, playing with Scottie over 36 holes on Saturday and Sunday and winning in a playoff was really cool. So that kind of has turned, you know, a poor season into, you know, something that I can at least look back on with fond memories. But there's still some work to be done and I'm excited to keep working and get better.

THE MODERATOR: All right, we'll take some questions.

Q. You mentioned 2023. Can you describe just how special the BMW Championship was to you, what memories come to mind even three or four years later?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, I mean, I can't believe it's already gone three years, but, yeah, I really enjoy playing this tournament. Obviously it's the tournament leading into



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the TOUR Championship, and it's a very important week, but I really enjoy a lot of the courses that the BMW Championship has gone to. It's a very discontinuing kind of style of golf course. I think from what it seems like I've only seen half of the golf course but I generally feel like this championship rewards guys that are playing really well. If you hit the ball long and straight, if your iron game is on point, you're going to go pretty far in this event. And then it kind of comes down to how many putts you make. But I do really like that there's a certain discontinuing style of golf that we're playing at this tournament.

Q. Scottie Scheffler's really good. What makes him next level against all these other superstar golfers?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Well, he's just so consistent. He hits the ball so well. I think in 2023 he was maybe struggling, if you can use that word, on the greens. He seems to have rectified that problem. Now it seems like putting and the rest of the game, like it doesn't have a weakness. I mean, last week, I feel like I was a little surprised to see the second place being, you know, 9-under I think it ended up being. So no one really pushed him either last week, but for him to go out there and shoot 17-under, I mean that's, yeah, very impressive. That's just kind of how he's been playing the last few years. It's really cool to watch. But I would really like to get some of my form back from 2023, so could at least make it a little bit more interesting.

Q. A few hours north of Memphis this week, but a much different grass type than we saw last week in Memphis. Talk about the additional forgiveness and/or difficulty you expect to face particularly out of the rough?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, I actually didn't hit too many shots out of the rough yesterday. But it looks pretty thick. There's quite a few long par-4s, so if you miss the fairway you're going to have a hard time even hitting it on the green. You might get close to the green, but with the way all the greens are generally built up it's hard to just make a putt for birdie. So as soon as you miss the fairway you're going to be scrambling.

Even like the short par-4, 11, I thought it was fantastic hole. I missed it right in the rough and, I mean, just basically had no shot. So off the tee is going to be very important this week. Obviously we still played Zoysia fairways last



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week, but I don't know the differences. That seemed to be a slightly tighter, maybe a newer Zoysia. This is maybe an older one, maybe a little more robust, so the ball really sits up. There's some crazy green complexes around here, but if you miss the green the ball sits up so nicely that you can really spin it. So that might make it a little bit easier around the green, which will help because some of those shots around there are pretty crazy. It's just a big golf course.

Q. Some St. Louis golf fans might be surprised to know you have a little bit of a connection through your dad buying clubs here. Would you mind just telling that story for the fans that might be unaware?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, my dad, when I was three, four years old, he lived in the area. I don't know exactly where he lived and which golf course that he drove by to work every day. But, yeah, just got introduced to the game here and bought some clubs. Brought it home back home to Norway and that's how I got started playing golf. So pretty cool.

Q. When you first got on TOUR you were incredible tee to green but you had room to grow around the greens. Talk about the process of going from a liability to an asset in that part of your game and is there one area that you're still working hard at?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, I mean, it's a challenging game and I would say like my blueprint is definitely being a good ball-striker and I felt like tee to green I made it very easy. But just there would be so many times where I just wouldn't get the max out of my game in a given round. I worked really hard on the short game stuff, trying to find some answers. Obviously three years ago working with Joe I felt like we really made some big strides. Ever since then I feel like, you know, fast forward it to now, I feel like I've become a lot better chipper, just understanding what to do, what not to do. Yeah, it's nice to see results on the stuff that you're working on.

But right now the focus is kind of going back to the long stuff because my driver has not, now that's been a liability for me this year and even past few years. My game is largely dependent on being in the fairway.

Q. Do the greens here present an unusual challenge?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, different. I kind of alluded to it earlier. Just with the grass type the ball really sits up. Maybe they will be a little bit tighter because of all the rain. Maybe the mowers didn't cut it as tight as they would like to. But it seems like you're going to be able to put a lot of spin around the greens. But at the same time they're so elevated and if you miss the green the ball's going to roll

down quite a bit and you might have to hit it straight up to a shelf or even if you hit it over the green, now you're coming back down the slope. So there's some really tricky shots around the greens. You're going to have to be able to open that face and throw some speed into the shot if you want to stop it.

Q. You've alluded to this a little bit a few times, but the level you were playing at at the BMW Championship three years ago and then in the TOUR Championship, is that a level you have not gotten back to ever or is it just that what you were doing then wasn't the same things that are going on now, and maybe you even weren't satisfied then. Because you are always sort of talking about searching, even when you played really well, you've told us at times you've not been that happy.

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, I mean, now especially looking back I would say that it was more I was content with my game up until, you know, my whole career up until 2023 in terms of my ball striking. But it was always trying to nitpick and trying to find places where I can improve. Now with kind of the struggles that I've had the last I would say three years, where my ball striking has just been drastically worse, you know, you take a little bit for granted how good it was before. But I do think like without having that mindset of trying to improve, I wouldn't have gotten out here. I wouldn't have had the career that I've had up to this point.

So that's definitely not been the problem, it's just, you know, sometimes you make a couple bad decisions or you go down maybe a path that you shouldn't have gone down, or I mean, we all, you know, obviously I would like to play like I played in 2023 every single year, but it's not like you can just put it in neutral and keep playing like that the rest of your life. Like you're always fighting entropy, there's always stuff that's going to be tossed at you and you got to deal with those problems. And sometimes you take a turn that you wouldn't like to go down, but that, you know, there's always a solution, there's always a path back to where you wants to be. So I'm feeling pretty confident that we're going to get to that point, it's just I need to also give myself some time to work on the right things and then get back to playing the golf that I know I can.

Q. Have you ever had anybody in your circle or family or coach say, Hey, you're too hard on yourself, or have you even sat back when maybe you're taking time off and said, Okay, maybe I should give myself more credit, that type of thing, for what I've done, and not stress over stuff. Obviously easy to say from the outside, right?

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VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, no, I've heard that a few times. I think it comes from a good place. I really appreciate hearing, especially from people around me. One thing is watching on social media or people that you don't know, I don't really tend to take that with that much value. But when it comes from people in my closest circle, I really listen and pay attention to that. I think, yeah, it's just one of those things, it's interesting because I think being really hard on myself is one of the reasons why I'm here. It's just I'm always pushing like I remember even in junior tournaments in Norway I would win and like shoot 1-under par and win, be super exciting, but I would always think like, okay, if I played an amateur tournament would I have won? What would I have needed to do better today in order to win the next time around. So it's like you're always thinking like how can this get better and better and better. And if I hit a terrible shot and get lucky and make a birdie, it's like, Okay, well the next time, if I'm not lucky, you know. You always got to think that way. Especially when I know how good it can be, it's even more frustrating when you don't execute the way you want to. So, yeah, I don't know, that's just kind of how I solve through this. It's like I have to be hard on myself to wanting to get up the next day and solve these problems. If everything is just happy go lucky and everything's all right, which it is, my life's good, but I have still got problems, I've still got things to solve. I think if you don't want to solve them, then I feel like you're kind of wasting your time.

Q. Talking about the fans, you had so many people backing you up at the Travelers when you beat Scheffler in the playoff. I was just wondering if you could talk about that support and how the fans have impacted or maybe changed throughout the season. I know, you know, Wyndham's treatment at the U.S. Open and stuff like that, but they seem to have really backed you up at the Travelers and I was just wondering if you could talk about that, maybe.

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, it was cool having some Norwegian fans there, especially for the World Cup. It was a big deal for us Norwegians to reach as far as we've ever reached in the World Cup. You kind of felt that as a nation. It was a very unifying thing for us culturally. So that was really cool, just to have them there in support. It was a very one-sided crowd, just because they were all rooting for Scottie. We were in the United States and they were wanting for him to win. But very respectful fans. But it was also nice to have some Norwegians in there to add to that. But, yeah, I think all the different places that we go and play, I think the crowds are awesome, they're very respectful, and they really bring good intensity to every single tournament going down the stretch and, yeah, just want to make a putt and make it go pretty loud.

Q. Last week you were hanging around there with Scottie in the early portions of Saturday. Then things kind of got away from you. Do you look at that? How do you process it? Do you look at it as you were close, pretty close or do you feel like, oh, I still have a lot of work to do?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, you can kind of look at it both ways. I think at the same time for me to be up there 8-under after two days, it is really close. And, I mean, I won Travelers not too long ago, so there's a lot of good golf there. But at the same time I do feel like I had a few of those instances where I'm having to overcome too many things to be in that position. Versus before, let's say 2023, things were a little bit more effortless. Sure, we all have bad day, we all have bad weekends. But I feel like I'm having to fight it a little bit too much. Obviously Southwind is a tough place when things starting to haywire. I've had that right miss for quite a long time, and it just kind of popped back in there and started plaguing me. I know where it comes from, it's just I didn't have a mechanism right then and there to deal with it. That's kind of what we're working on. I feel like we had a really positive day yesterday. I'm excited about where things are headed. It's just, I've always had that under pressure if I'm under stress, like I have one shot that I know exactly what it's going to do. I just haven't had that. So, yeah, when things kind of fall off the rails, that's what you see happen on the weekend there. But I'm very confident that if I can still win, I can still be up there in contention with what I've been doing, if I can just make things a little bit easier for myself, just get back to that shot that I'm talking about, that level of predictability, I'll be starting to play a lot better golf going forward.

Q. What is that one shot you want it to be?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Well, I do like to start the ball left and curve to the right. The thing is just the way that I've been doing that causes me to also miss it really far to the right sometimes. So it's just in the way that I'm going about it that takes a way that push slice, essentially. That I can just continually start the ball left without obviously double crossing it, and if the miss is just an over curve to the right, that's fine. But I just can't have the one that starts way right and then slices. I feel like -- I know exactly where it comes from an, yeah, just dealing with, I think we found a really good strategy to get rid of that.

Q. There's some stiff competition this year for the Player of the Year Award. What do you value when making your personal decision?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, that's a tough question. Yeah, I don't know. There's no right or wrong answer. I think do



you vote for the person that's been the best statistically and produced the most consistent results over the whole season. Or do you pick the guy that's maybe achieved more historical things, more highlights throughout the year. I think, I don't know, I don't really have a perspective on which one I weigh the most. I do think, you know, winning majors, they should definitely have higher weighting. But at the same time if you're the best player and you played the best throughout the year, you know, that obviously carries some weight as well. So I really don't know, to be honest with you.

Q. Did you go to Oklahoma State for the golf or the education?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: (Laughing). Golf. Yeah. But it's a great education.

Q. Nice recovery. Curious, did you get your degree? Did you not finish?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: I did not.

Q. How did you pick a major?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: How did I pick a major? Well I really, actually really liked philosophy, that was one of my favorite classes. But I think when you're, hopefully my goal was to play professional golf, and you are in a way running your own business, so I just got a general business, or I was attempting to get a general business degree. So at least you're taking classes that are pretty relevant to what you're going to be doing hopefully in a few years.

Q. No plans to go back and finish it up?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: No, no.

Q. Do you look forward at all, in 2028, to a post-season that rotates to various courses and do you have any thoughts on what that should look like. I'm not talking about the format and how they do it, but just based on regions of moving parts of the country, do you have anything you would like to see?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: I don't really know. I don't really know what it's going to look like. Obviously we switched a lot of things around, so it's always just kind of trying to adapt to the new thing. But it sounds promising. There's some really cool ideas out there. I think for me it's just like I'm excited about being here at Bellerive, just at a new place. I like traveling to new places we don't go to. That's kind of one of the reasons why I went to India last year, I went to South Africa last year. I don't want to be a professional golfer for 25 years and go to the same places

every single year. I think it's cool that we mix it up a little bit. Especially some iconic venues that maybe normally don't get tournaments, I think that would be really cool. Especially for the people at home but also us players, I think there's a little bit extra excitement maybe when you're on-site. So, yeah, just like to see some new places.

Q. What do you consider the best course you've never played?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Best course I've never played? Like in a tournament or?

Q. Tournament wise.

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Putting me on the spot. I feel like there's still a lot of major championship golf courses that was kind of played before I turned pro that hasn't been in the rotation. Like this would be one of them. I can't really name any other ones that come to mind. But I'm sure there's multiple courses like this that I think would be really cool to play tournaments at. I don't know if you have any that comes to mind that would fit that criteria. Putting you on the spot now.

Q. I mean, you've never been Hazeltine, have you?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Hazeltine would be kind of cool. Yeah. I watched it on Ryder Cup. It looks sweet. I think they redid it as well.

Q. Yeah, a lot of Norwegians there, too, I think, like a home game for you.

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, home game, I love it.

THE MODERATOR: All right, Viktor. We appreciate your time. Best of luck this week.

VIKTOR HOVLAND: You got it.

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