

# WM Phoenix Open

Saturday, February 7, 2026

Scottsdale, Arizona, USA

TPC Scottsdale

## Viktor Hovland

### Quick Quotes

**Q. Viktor, pretty solid day all round. Last I checked, leading in the field in strokes gained putting today. Did it feel that way on greens for you?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, definitely made a lot of putts today. Made a grip change on my putter. Not how I hold it, but the actual grip itself. I feel way more stability over the ball and my speed control has been really good this week.

So, yes, it's awesome. I need to putt well with the way I'm hitting it off the tee. It's nice.

**Q. You did that this morning?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: No, this week. Yeah, I did it last week, yeah.

**Q. Okay. You said you're hitting it well, so must be feeling pretty good to be coming from the other side the golf course to now being --**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: I said I was putting it well. I didn't say I was hitting it well. We're getting there slowly but surely.

**Q. But, again, feeling good about it. You probably were thinking you really had to turn it on because you're starting on the back, few shots back.**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, yeah. No, it's nice to make some birdies early and make some putts early and then just kind of roll with it from there.

**Q. Obviously this tournament always ignites the debate about golf etiquette in general. Curious from your perspective coming up through the game, how would your experience with etiquette compare to what you see on a daily basis out here?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: I mean, compared to a couple years I feel like it's a lot more tame this year. I don't really think it's too crazy at all. 16 is just fun. I think to get booed every now and again or cheered for if you make a putt is



completely fine. It's fun. It's reasonable. There is not beer all over the green. No one has made a hole-in-one yet, so not going to jinx that.

I think it's been fine. It's nice to have. Every tournament is a little bit different. This is definitely a unique tournament and that's not overboard, so I like it.

**Q. This is kind of been a hard environment for you previously. How did you change your approach going into this weekend?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, just haven't played very well here in the past. Struggled with my driving off the tee, and this tournament, it's -- you can kind of drive it awful and be okay in spots, but you can miss by a little bit and hit it in water and now you're making bogeys and doubles.

It's a tricky course. Felt like I played okay, played fine, and just couldn't score the at all. I will say my short game has been a lot better this week compared to previous weeks or previous times I've played here.

Because you're going to hit a lot of good shots and miss the greens, and I think everyone has been seeing how many bad chip shots around the greens there are.

So definitely improved that aspect this time around.

**Q. Do you think being able to break through that history that you have here and put up kind of the performance that you did today, do you think that sets a good tone for 2026?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, it's kind of double edged. I do feel like it's nice to see -- not that I delved super deep into the stats, but I think I've gained a decent amount of strokes around the greens the last five, six, seven tournaments, which is really cool to be able to do that.

Yeah, my putting has been very up and down, very so-so, but I do feel like with the new grip change that will give me a bit more stability. So if I can continue to chip and putt well, my iron game is still good considering how poorly it feels to hit a golf ball, but the driver has really got to be



figured out. I got to put the ball in play.

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When the ball is going so far left and right it's going to get me in the end.

**Q. Can you be aggressive on this golf course? We don't know what the lead will be at the end. Can you be?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: More my own sake I cannot be aggressive off the tee. For me I just have to put the ball in play. I'm short and crooked right now. I just have to find something to put it in play. From there, I can put the ball in the hole in a pretty few strokes.

Just a matter of doing what I can to put it in a decent spot off the tee, and from there being feel like I can get after it.

**Q. As someone who has had quite the short game journey can you just explain why the short game shots on kind of those tight lies are so difficult and how you attack them?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, first of all, they're firm and fast greens. That makes it tricky. There a lot of slope, especially where they put the pins at. They're all elevated greens and this turf is very tight.

At the same time some spots are kind of wet and there is not a whole lot of grass sometimes, and other times it looks tight but there is long pieces of grass, and if it's into the grain it's very tricky. So you have to be able to harness a lot of different shots. The low bump and runs, the low spinner, but also the high soft pitches.

So you can't have a one dimensional short game around here. Certain places you have to -- there is only one shot and you have to clip it absolutely perfect and spin it. If you don't you're going to look like a fool. Just that type of golf course.

**Q. You came into today minus-3. Obviously finished minus-6 today. What was different on the course?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: It was very similar to be honest with you. Just a few different hole locations. There was hardly any wind when we first tee'd off and for the majority of the day was hardly any wind. I felt like it was pretty gettable, but at the same time, if you short side yourself and misses a few putts, it's tough to shoot low.

Felt like I played pretty prudent. Just the second shot where I hit it in the water on 15, that was kind of a bummer for me. Other than that about the same as the other days.