

Arnold Palmer Invitational

Thursday, March 4, 2021

Bay Hill, Florida, USA

Bay Hill Club and Lodge

Viktor Hovland

Quick Quotes

Q. What was the key to your round today, do you believe?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Got off to a nice start, birdieing No. 2 and No. 3. Those are pretty tough holes. Just kind of hung on from there. Like even the gettable holes are just, you still got to put it in the fairway and you got to wedge it close. So I was just able to kind of not give too much away, I made the putts that I needed to make and when I was in trouble I got out of there pretty nicely.

Q. You said that you didn't hit a lot of fairways today but you didn't hit your driver poorly. Is it tough when you're not hitting the fairways to keep believing like, hey, I'm still hitting it well?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, I mean it's just, you know, it's just the beast of this course. It's going to be -- you got to be patient -- that word is very overused -- but it really is important this week because, for example, on 1, I hit a great drive, because I can't really cover the whole corner on left and it just runs out in the bunker and then you got a pretty tough shot. But just kind of knowing that and picking your spots of, okay, half of these holes I'm just going to try to make a par and then on the other half you can hopefully you can make some birdies on those and hopefully that's enough to kind of be in the 60s or in just a couple under par.

Q. Can you describe the confidence you're playing with right now?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, playing very solid. Just kind of nothing magical, but I just know what each area of my game is doing, so if it's -- I have a little fade off the tee, I'm not trying to mess around with it too much. I'm not trying to hit shots that I can't hit. I just stick to my game plan and take my medicine when I'm out of the spots that I needed to be in.

Q. How much -- you've been working with Jeff Smith, how long have you been working with him for?



VIKTOR HOVLAND: We started just before the playoffs, I think in the summer. So it's been a good probably six months or so.

Q. How much has he helped your swing and your game and that confidence to have that go-to shot that you have?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, he's helped me a lot. I'm happy we're, we have been together and we're a very good fit, we kind of think a lot of the same way. We play a lot of poker together and we like to talk poker, there's a lot of take from poker and talk about with golf as well, because a lot of it is math and kind of stats. And I like a guy that's versatile, that can still talk about swing mechanics, but also talk about course management and stats and all that stuff. So it's been great so far.

Q. Was there one like big thing that he changed in your swing or you just kind of work with what you have and hone that maybe a little better?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, I mean just I would call it more tweaks, just knowing what I do when I'm hitting it poorly and what I do differently when I'm hitting it well. So just one little thing is that I'm not swaying as much off the ball anymore. My pressure is still going right, but my upper body is kind of, it's more stacked on top, if you can use that word. So that's just one thing. And then just kind of managing my alignments and just very simple stuff, but at least I've got it nailed down to I know what I'm doing when I'm not playing good and I know what I'm doing when I am playing good.

Q. Obviously Mr. Palmer's legacy is always felt here every year and you obviously playing here, what does it mean to kind of be able to play in this tournament and kind of honor his legacy by playing here?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, I mean growing up I didn't really watch too much of Arnold Palmer, everything that I kind of learned about him has been in recent years and just watching old highlights. He had a, just an unreal charisma and people were very drawn towards him. So that's cool to play in his tournament and also playing here as an amateur



and I played in two Palmer Cups as well in college, so it's just kind of cool to continue to play in those events.

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