

Zurich Classic of New Orleans

Thursday, April 22, 2021

Avondale, Louisiana, USA

TPC Louisiana

Viktor Hovland

Kris Ventura

Quick Quotes

Q. Kris and Viktor, good playing out there. A little slow start, 1-under through 6 but then nine out of the last 12. What was the key for the turnaround out there?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Kris decided to heat up his putter. That really helped. But I felt like we really played solid golf all 18 holes. It was hard to get really close to some of those pins, and that's where you've just got to hit it to 20 feet and you make the putt, then that's great.

We basically had two birdie chances on every single hole, and towards the middle to back end of the round, Kris's putter heated up, and it was cool to watch. We just played really solid golf.

Q. Kris, you guys were teammates at Oklahoma State. Obviously played a lot of golf together. How big of a factor was that for you guys out there? Obviously not only a comfort level but kind of knowing what each guy is doing out on the golf course?

KRIS VENTURA: I think just the mindset overall is just that we know each other pretty well and we're comfortable around each other, so it was going to be a fun day no matter what. Obviously we played well today, but it's always fun to play together, and we don't get to do that very often in a tournament especially. It definitely brings back some memories to national teams in Norway and college golf for sure.

Q. It looks like the breeze is blowing out there pretty good. How big of a factor was it out there today?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, some of those pins are -- they're pretty well tucked on the right side and the wind is blowing off the right, it's easy to get tricked into trying to hit a perfect shot to get it close, but sometimes you've just got to hit it in the middle of the green and just play smart.

But it's an awesome golf course, and when it blows like



this, it's a lot of fun to play.

Q. Viktor, what sort of got you guys going on your last stretch of holes?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: That's a good question we played pretty similar the first six, seven holes I'd say. Maybe we weren't as close to the pin as we were on the back end of the round. Kris certainly hit some shots pretty close and I hit some shots pretty close and made some easy birdies, but yeah, towards the back nine there, Kris really started making some putts, and that's just kind of -- you know, it's not a big difference between how we play the front and the back, it's just kind of you get it going and you try to take advantage of it.

Q. Kris, you guys have known each other such a long time. You guys have been college teammates. How nice is it for you as you're starting your PGA TOUR career with Viktor to have somebody like him who's won a couple of times out here already to kind of look up to and be inspired by?

KRIS VENTURA: It's great. I mean, obviously we know each other pretty well, so it's been fun to see the good play that he's had in the last year, year and a half. Obviously motivating, just more motivation to play better and practice harder, and today was fun, and I think my mindset into this week was we're going to have fun no matter what. We don't get to play with each other very often, so this is certainly a treat.

Q. 13th hole with the tree in the middle of the fairway, what kind of strategy do you have with that hole?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: I think it just kind of depends on the wind a little bit. Today was more off the right, and I must have caught a gust where it was more off the right than hurt, and I was able to blow it past the tree. But yesterday in the practice round it was straight in, and we both hit good drives that were kind of almost right behind it. So you can't -- I think the mistake is there to overstrategize the tree and try to play away from it. You just kind of have to hit a normal good drive and then just deal with whatever comes into play on the second shot.



Q. Can you guys refresh my memory the year, the tournament that Coach Bratton came over really to see Kris and then discovered Viktor, you, as well, right?

VICTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, I guess we played the European boys team championships in Scotland, and that was Kris's last year as a junior playing that tournament, and Coach Bratton came over to basically watch Kris, and I happened to play a singles match just right behind him, and that's kind of when Coach Bratton became more familiar with the Norwegian team, and yeah, we just started a good kind of relationship.

Q. Viktor, how surprised are you that Kris hasn't won yet?

VICTOR HOVLAND: I mean, it's really hard to win, but you have to obviously play really good golf, but you can play really good golf and still not win.

I think from what I've seen the last couple days in Kris's game, I've been really impressed. I mean, I know he's capable of it. He has a lot of talent. I think it's just to kind of get more comfortable around here and just seeing more of what he did today, just to get that confidence and get the ball rolling, it won't be too long I don't think.

Q. How many rounds do you think you guys have played together?

KRIS VENTURA: It's a lot.

VICTOR HOVLAND: A couple hundred probably.

KRIS VENTURA: Yeah, it's a lot.

Q. How many as a team like this?

KRIS VENTURA: Still a lot.

VICTOR HOVLAND: Probably still a lot, yeah. We do those national team stuff. We've got some experience, Palmer Cup.

Q. Did you feel a round like this coming for you, Kris, and what was the best shot you had today?

KRIS VENTURA: I mean, it was obviously a good day, and we gave ourselves a lot of chances, so it was either going to be a really low one or something in the middle of the pack if the putter wasn't hot, but I think the big thing is just giving yourself a lot of chances, and when you have two birdie putts, it certainly makes it a lot easier to shoot a low score.

And as far as the best shot, probably one of the par-3s where I maybe might have pulled it slightly and it ended up really close or something like that.

VICTOR HOVLAND: You're talking about my shot or your shot?

KRIS VENTURA: My shot. But your shot, too. I'm terrible at remembering holes. It was just solid today. I can't pick one shot.

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