

Zurich Classic of New Orleans

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TPC Louisiana

Collin Morikawa

Viktor Hovland

Press Conference

JOHN BUSH: We'll get started. We'd like to welcome Viktor Hovland and Collin Morikawa into the interview room here at the Zurich Classic of New Orleans. Making their first appearance as a team.

Collin, we'll start with you. You look like you're busy down there, but we'll start with you. Just talk a little bit about how the team came together this year and how excited you are for the week.

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Look, Viktor's been someone I watched and we turned pro at the same time. Obviously our success, and we played really well to grow that rank since we turned pro in 2019.

I didn't really know Viktor that well in college. I kind of knew who he was. I knew a bunch of other guys. Our caddies were really good friends. They started staying together. We'd show up and have dinner together and kind of grew a friendship. I'd say we're pretty good friends now.

I asked him -- oh, man, Bahamas maybe? I don't know, it was either Bahamas or Hawaii, and Viktor likes to put things off to the last minute, and I hate that.

(Laughter).

Then I kind of circled him right before he won in Dubai on the DP World, right before his playoff, and I was like, so are we doing this? And he looked at me, and he was kind of questioning what was going on. Then that came to be. I solidified that and signed us up.

JOHN BUSH: Awesome. Viktor, how excited are you for the week here with Collin?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Really excited. When he first asked me in Bahamas, I was really excited. You kind of have to play hard-to-get a little bit and had to make him kind of work for it a bit.



No, I'm happy we're teammates this week. We've already had two fun days, and I look forward to the rest of the week being a good week, and hopefully we can make some birdies.

JOHN BUSH: Collin, we'll get you to talk a little bit about the state of your game, six top tens this year, a couple of runner-up finishes. If you can just talk about your season up to this point.

COLLIN MORIKAWA: I think overall the consistency has been there. I've been happy to see that. I just haven't been able to win. That's a whole other part of how you kind of judge a season so far. The wins haven't been there, but overall the game has felt a little more consistent, which is great because, when you show up to events, hopefully you're putting yourself in contention a little more come Sunday.

We've kind of had some late charges, just not putting together three good rounds to put yourself to be ready by Sunday. Overall, things are kind of trending in the right direction, which is nice.

Obviously this is a really busy stretch of golf to kind of finish up the season.

JOHN BUSH: Viktor, four top tens for you, including the win at Mayakoba. Just talk about your season as well.

VIKTOR HOVLAND: It's been good, I think. Obviously had a busy schedule traveling across the pond and coming back and forth, but I feel like I've played some really good golf. I've won some, but at the same time, I feel like I've been in contention somewhere my short game probably hasn't held up and gotten the job done.

But I feel like the tools are there, and if I just keep progressing every single week, I feel like my game is in a good spot. So, yeah, should be good.

Q. If I just could, the 11th hole, I know both of you played here last year, there's a tree missing on the left-hand side. Does it change fundamentally how the hole plays?



COLLIN MORIKAWA: I think so for sure. To be honest, I don't remember exactly where it was. Okay, but it affects the second shot, I think, going for it because now anywhere on the fairway, I think the wind this week will kind of be in off the left. You can still play left, and if you push it a little right, you're going to be up next to the green.

You won't have that tree in your way, and I think it pushed guys to aim even more left and kind of hit a draw away from it sometimes.

So, yes, absolutely. If you hit a good drive, you can hit a good second shot and kind of get right around that green. The tree visually it makes a big difference.

Q. Have you gotten as far as picking your walk-up song for Saturday?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: That's great. I have our list we're supposed to fill out that I believe the deadline's tomorrow. So if you have any recommendations, we're taking answers right now. I think we need to finish this right now.

Q. Is there such a thing as N-pop, Norwegian pop or something?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: I can pick something, but I mean -- I have no problem picking something, but we've got to walk up there together. So trying to figure something out that's going to work. Either way, we'll figure it out.

COLLIN MORIKAWA: It will be great no matter what. That's what we're kind of coming down to.

Q. It's clear this week is obviously serious but a bit of fun, you can have fun. What's the key for you guys to actually contend and be there at the end on Sunday? You're obviously great ball strikers. You'll probably be in regulation a lot. Is it just making enough putts? Is it as simple as that to contend?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Obviously you have to get the putts going to win any tournament. So it's not like you just show up and expect to make eight birdies. You've got to put the ball in play and put it in good spots, but then you've also got to make the putts.

I feel like our games are in good position. So we're going to give ourselves a lot of looks. But this course is tricky too. There's some tough par-3s. I don't think we need to get super greedy and try to push the edges. I think we'll just stick to our normal game plan and give ourselves a lot of looks. I think we're going to be looking pretty good.

Q. How important is the relationship between the players this week, do you think? Like being mates or having some sort of connection prior?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: I think it's huge where you touch upon like the balance of tournament golf versus having a good time and enjoying it. I think we're very, very competitive people, and like we want to beat everyone. Like at the end of the day, even though we're here to have fun, like we're trying to win this tournament. So we're doing all our prep, we're doing everything we need to do to not just -- you know the second word of that -- and just show up and have a good time.

The thing is we're going to have a good time. We smile a lot. Our caddies are easy to talk to. Like J.J. could talk to Shay, or J.J. could talk to Viktor, I can talk to Shay. It's just easy in nature. It's not uncomfortable saying anything or asking a question. For us, it's just go out and play some good golf.

Q. Do you think there's any particular teams that you'd like to beat that little bit more than others, just with the banter and the fun? Some of the higher profile teams would be more fun to beat than others?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Can you repeat that?

Q. Any other teams with the banter and the fun you have that you'd maybe like to beat just a little bit more than others?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: That we would rather beat?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: I'm sure Cam and Leish should have a pretty good banter going back and forth. They've done this a few times and obviously won. They're pretty funny guys. We'll try to keep up.

Q. I'm sure it wasn't on your minds last year at the Ryder Cup on Sunday when you two played each other in singles, but did you see anything in each other's game -- you tied. It was a very good match. That led you -- I can imagine why you'd want to have him as a teammate or vice versa, but did you see anything in that match that you thought would play well in this?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: I don't think that was in our heads when we were playing that match.

COLLIN MORIKAWA: I was doing some early recruiting. Everyone knows what our games are. We're not hiding anything. It's out there. You can see all our stats. You can see how we play. They are very similar games.

But at the end of the day, I think just what we've done, I think each of us has six wins maybe through the three years, just under three years that we've turned pro. It just shows that, when times are under pressure or you're put on a stage like alternate shot, you show up, and you're ready to hit some good shots and you're ready to perform.

I remember the Ryder Cup. First match out was alternate shot. There's no sorry. There's none of that. But it's just you're prepared to hit good shots, and you're prepared to just play and play for your team.

I think hopefully we can kind of dig that out of, yeah, he's from Norway, I'm from California, but just pull it out for the team and just grind until we're able to kind of pull out a good score and post four good numbers.

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