

# Valspar Championship

Sunday, March 23, 2025

Palm Harbor, Florida, USA

Innisbrook Resort (Copperhead)

## Viktor Hovland

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome the winner of the 2025 Valspar Championship Viktor Hovland to the interview room. Viktor, congratulations on capturing your 7th PGA TOUR victory. Want to start off with what it's like it capture the win today?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, it feels unbelievable. It's been quite the struggle the past year and a half, so for me to come back and win this tournament is quite incredible because, yeah, I was not very hopeful with my game leading into this week and, yeah, just goes to show this game is pretty crazy.

THE MODERATOR: As someone who is the biggest critic of your game, entering today's round what was the mindset or was there a certain number in mind of what would get the job done?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: I didn't really know. I just tried to go out there and play my game and I knew I didn't feel super comfortable or confident, but I was really patient and just tried to play really smart and I think that's a credit kind of to myself this week is that I almost felt like I played this week like a veteran, like I've been out here for 20 years. Just really plotted my way around the course really nicely. I hit a bad shot and it didn't really faze me all at that much. I leaned on my putting, hit a lot of great iron shots, so, yeah, it was awesome.

THE MODERATOR: Prior to this week when did this get added on your schedule?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: (Laughing). Yeah, I entered last, yeah, the last week, and wasn't really sure if I was going to play or not until I got here Tuesday afternoon and played a late nine holes. I played nine holes in the pro-am the next morning and we were here ready to go. But, yeah, wasn't sure I was going to show up, but I'm glad I did.

THE MODERATOR: Perfect. Questions, please.

**Q. Could you just talk about where you were mentally a week ago today, were you even here yet and what**



**was sort of going through your mind, I mean I'm guessing you're not thing you're going to be winning a week later, but were you pretty low?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, I mean, shooting 80 is never fun, especially at THE PLAYERS Championship. I love that golf course, I love that place, and I generally play pretty well in Florida. I just like these golf courses because when I'm striking the ball well I'm hitting a lot of fairways and greens and that's how you can really separate yourself just because there's so much trouble off the tee. Conversely, it's a lot more stressful when you don't know where the ball's going to go. Because now you're getting even more punished that you normally would have. Yeah, I was just very frustrated. Obviously missing cuts is never fun, but just I mean I missed cuts before and felt like my game has been okay and I still feel like the next week I could win the tournament. But the last year and a half has been, okay, I know my golf game is not very good, I know I have some issue, and just because you have one bad round of golf or one bad tournament you would like to think that, oh, okay, next week is another week, you'll figure it out. But when the problems remain and linger it doesn't really give you -- you don't become more hopeful, it's like you keep drowning and you're running out of air. Yeah, it's tough to get excited to go and play because you just don't feel like you have the confidence to succeed.

**Q. Was there a moment on Tuesday or Wednesday where something clicked that made you feel a lot better about things?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: I mean, I've been taking a lot of videos and sending it to Grant and Grant was here early in the week and we did some good work. I feel like we pushed things in the right direction. It didn't fix anything by any means, but it definitely mitigated some of the stuff that I was already doing. So I did get a little bit more comfortable because of that. But, yeah, still the occurring issues are still the same there. But obviously when you can push it in the right direction it at least gives you something when you're out there on the golf course.

**Q. The last four or five holes it became a two-man race with you and Justin. Was it an advantage or a**



### **disadvantage seeing it play out in front of you?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Don't really know. I don't know if it's an advantage or a disadvantage. Obviously he was setting the pace and when he was 3-up there and I had my putt on 14 it definitely put a lot of pressure on some of the putts that I had to make. So from that standpoint it was a lot more stressful, maybe, but at least I knew kind of what I had to do. Yeah, every time my back was up against the wall I performed and hit a great iron shot and hit a nice putt. So it was, yeah, it all worked out.

### **Q. Sitting there with the trophy how happy are you with your swing right now?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: (Laughing). Yeah, it's still not great. I'm still hitting the same shots that I have been the whole year, really. But it's just I was able to time it extremely well this week. It felt like every single good shot that I hit I just saved it really well. Because the club is just not in a great place for me coming down. It's just not what it used to be. So I can't really rely on my old feels anymore because the club is in a different spot and I have to change my release pattern to make that work. Now, incredibly, I did make it work and was able to win and I think that is something that I'm extremely proud of that I can show up at a PGA TOUR event at one of the hardest golf courses we play all year and still win with not my best stuff. So I think that's really cool, that's something that I'm extremely proud of, but at the same time it makes this game a lot more stressful than I think it should be.

### **Q. Could you take this game and compete at Augusta and accomplish what you want to accomplish there?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: I mean, if you would have asked me if I was going to win this week with what I had I probably would have said no, so, but here we are. So it's kind of the same question. I probably shouldn't doubt myself to that extent, I still need to be honest so I can attack the problems that I have and we can improve, but at the same time I got to give myself some credit and even no matter how bad it feels or how many poor shots I'm hitting I can still, I'm still capable of shooting good scores with it, so I kind of have to keep that in the back of my head.

### **Q. Your caddie mentioned that you're kind of a perfectionist. Do you feel like you're a perfectionist?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: I guess you can use that word to describe it. I just view it as if you put your heart and soul into doing something, you might as well do it right. I've swung the club extremely well and I think my ball striking has been really, really good over a long period of time, and then when it's not doing that I, you know, I'm going to work

on that, I'm going to figure it out. I think it's -- I find it kind of weird that we're professional athletes and the people that are wanting to improve are somewhat looked at as, oh he's a perfectionist, he's out on the perimeter searching too much. It's like, that's what we do, we are here to get better and we are here to win tournaments. So if you're not going to try to get better, what are you doing? So it's like, especially when I know there's issues there, it's not like I'm inventing stuff. I have data that can show that what I used to do was objectively better than what I'm doing now. So why shouldn't I try to go back to what I used to do?

### **Q. Is there anything outside of golf that you feel that way about or is it mostly just golf?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, I don't care too much about other things outside of golf. Because I don't have time or energy to put the same amount into other things, so naturally when you only get to do certain things just a few times here and there, you can't have a perfectionist mindset, if that makes sense. So I just try to do 80 percent, just do good enough and then hopefully overtime -- I mean, you do the best you can with the limited resources that you have, but overtime you would like to see an improvement, just get a little bit better all the time. But I'm not super hard on myself if I'm not really good at something when I haven't put the effort into it. But golf is, it's been my life for a long time, it's what consumes my thoughts and my time, so if I'm not spending that time to do it correctly, then what am I doing?

### **Q. What was the last hour on the course like for you? It was pretty interesting in here, seeing the drama unfold. What was it like for you, I guess, emotionally or, you know, what was it like going through that kind of roller coaster?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: I actually felt extremely calm. Even though I was, as I mentioned earlier, three back on 14 over my putt and J.T. just kept making birdie on every hole, but I still just felt like, okay, we still got a shot here. I knew a lot of things can happen coming down the stretch. If I make a couple birdies, can you easily make a couple of bogeys coming in. When I made the putt there on 14, I felt really good and I was only two shots back. Yeah, I just believed that I had a chance and there's a lot of golf left and just kept hitting good shots and making putts and suddenly we were there with a two-shot lead playing 18. That's when I really got nervous. That's when, yeah, I was happy that -- man, I duffed that chip so bad on 18, so I'm happy, yeah, I'm happy it worked out.

### **Q. This tournament has had a history of two-time champions. There have been four of 'em and Sam Burns went back-to-back in 2022, 2023. Are you**

**looking forward to try to do an encore, which happens to be the Valspar official color of the year next year?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, cool, that will be awesome. Yeah just seeing in here and seeing all the banners, Paul Casey, K.J. Choi, no --

**Q. K.J. Choi was.**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: But a two-time champion and yeah, Sam Burns, obviously.

**Q. Retief Goosen.**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, so it's cool. This is an awesome tournament and a great golf course and I think it fits my game really well, so I look forward to being back here next year and having to, giving it a good shot.

**Q. Obviously we've asked you about this a lot, you've been very honest about your own struggles and what you're looking for and why you've been disappointed in your own game at times. Do you ever get any perspective that makes you feel any better, like maybe when you're playing in a pro-am and you're seeing guys not hitting it as well and you think to yourself, okay, it's not as bad as I'm making it out to be. Does it ever help?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: No, no. (Laughing.) No, it's like the first thing when I talk to my mom, and after I've played poorly, she will always say it, and I tell her to not say it, but she always does, Oh, but there was a lot of people that played poorly today. I'm like, it never consoles me. (Laughing). So, yeah, that's it. There you go.

**Q. On a serious note, could I ask you about 16, J.T. bogeyed it, I'm guessing you know that ahead of you when you're playing, but it is the hardest hole, it was the hardest hole today, I think you hit it the closest of anybody. What are you thinking even just teeing off on that hole and what you're trying to do there?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, that's probably the toughest tee shot for me right now. Because it should fit my game really well, I should just kind of stand up there and I can hit a low pull cut that's kind of curving with the fairway. But my miss right now is a push fade, a big push fade and that's obviously going in the water. So over the ball I've been just really uncomfortable and I've hit 3-wood, because I couldn't really hit the 3-iron and comfortably cover the water, so I hit a 3-wood and just pulled it two of the three days. Except for one of the days where the wind was hard off the left and the wind just brought it in the fairway. But, yeah, it's just a really uncomfortable tee shot for me, but luckily today it

was down wind, the tee box was a little bit up, so I could hit the 3-iron and I still pushed it slightly, but it still went far enough to where it covered the water and I was in the middle of the fairway, so I was in a perfect position there to hit a good 7-iron into that back pin.

**Q. There's a little soiree coming down in Augusta, Georgia in a couple week, how nice is it to go in with this kind of momentum?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Definitely helps. Kind of goes back to what I'm saying about being hard on myself and being sure you could call it a perfectionist, it's like some of the shots that I'm hitting, it's going to make it really difficult for me to be in contention at Augusta if I don't rectify that problem, if I don't see the improvements there. It's just a different golf course. You're going to hit so many long irons into par-4s and you got drive it pretty far because the fairways are pretty wide, it's more of a bomber's paradise versus this place it's more just about being precise off the tee. So there's still some things that I need to improve, but luckily we got two weeks and this is certainly nice to kind of have in the back of my mind leading up to Augusta.

**Q. So you mentioned that you weren't sure you were going to come or stay or, so what was your plan if you decided to not play, where would you have been this weekend or over the last four days, and what sort of convinced you to give it a shot?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, I would have been in Orlando and working with Grant. Just to kind of continue to push the golf swing in the right direction so I feel more and more comfortable. We got together before the tournament a couple of days and I think it was on the Monday I, we just found a little bit of a feel that at least I started to hit some better shots and I just thought okay, I might as well, I'm only two hours away from Tampa I might as well just go over there and play, because I really like the golf course and he said on very short notice that he could come and spend Tuesday and Wednesday and Thursday with me. So that made it easier for me to come and play.

THE MODERATOR: Going off of working with Grant, how crucial has that been to your game and what have you really been working on with him?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, Grant is really smart. He's looked at a lot of golf swings, he's very knowledgeable, and he's obviously played at the highest level himself. So I think that's really cool to be working with a person like that. He works really hard. He's definitely put his heart and soul into looking at all the different golf swings that I've sent him. It's challenging because I have a very unique pattern and it's unconventional and I would say most coaches

probably would like to make my swing more conventional and hopefully try to fix the problem. But that's not really how my golf swing works. And I really trust Grant, because he can, he sees it and knows what kind of matchups need to be there for it to work. So, yeah, it was obviously a good first week together, so hopefully just build on that.

THE MODERATOR: Finally, for the winner, Valspar donates a mural for the winner, choosing of where it would go or what would it be about. Initial thoughts what would a mural for Viktor Hovland be like or where would you want a mural to be?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: What does that mean?

THE MODERATOR: A painting. They do like a painting.

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Wow. Okay. I'll, I don't know, I'll donate it to the golf club and they can put it wherever they want. (Laughing).

THE MODERATOR: All right, that's all the questions we have. Viktor, again, congratulations.

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Thank you.

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