

# The Ryder Cup

Tuesday, September 21, 2021

## Viktor Hovland

Media Conference



THE MODERATOR: Welcome back to the 43rd Ryder Cup here at Whistling Straits. We are very pleased to be joined by Viktor Hovland. Welcome to your first Ryder Cup. As a first-time Ryder Cupper, how comfortable is it to be in a team room with so much vast experience, not only in golf but especially in this competition?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, obviously it's a very big stage and you know kind of what it means to people. That's why I think it's extra comforting when you get into a team room and you have not only veteran players, but also vice captains and captains.

I feel like just the whole support team and the players and everyone around it just have so much experience that they're having fun, but at the same time they're very at ease. I think that kind of rubs on not only me but also the rookies, and just makes everyone feel a lot better.

**Q. How do you see your role in the team room specifically this week? Is it watch and listen, or are you actively trying to contribute something in particular there?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: That's a good question. I haven't really thought much about that. This is my first Ryder Cup, and I'm only 24 years old, and kind of -- what I'm trying to do this week is just play as well as I can and try to be myself. I'm not trying to be anyone else. Just try to get to know the people on the team well.

I think we're already off to a good start. We've only been here for 24 hours and our chemistry is good, so I just try to learn as much as I can from the guys that have been here five, six, seven times. They have so much experience, and I'm just trying to be around it.

**Q. Do you have any childhood memories of watching this event on TV and thinking, Yeah, I want to be a part of that, that's cool, that kind of --**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, the first Ryder Cup that I actually sat down and watched to the end essentially was at Medinah. I wasn't too young, but I remember a lot of those final putts coming down the stretch very vividly, and I

was sitting there watching with my dad, and I remember just going nuts.

There's a lot of really good memories from then, and every single Ryder Cup after that I've been paying close attention. As well as just playing college golf in the United States, being a part of a team and playing for something bigger than yourself, I don't think it gets any better than that.

**Q. Was it an eye-opening moment for you when you first linked up with the team, something that took you completely by surprise?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Not really. I'd say kind of when we just created the group text that we have together, that was just one of the first things that made everything kind of sink in. Wow, we're playing the Ryder Cup next week. I just remember just really looking forward to meeting up with the guys here and just spending a lot of time together. It's not what we do but just being together and just talking about nothing and anything, I think that's really, really cool.

I'm being around players that I've watched compete in the Ryder Cup since I was very, very young, and it's an honor to be a part and on the team.

**Q. You said that it is a bit of an eye-opener for you at 24. Can you imagine what it was like for Sergio at 19? And then at the other end of the scale you've got Lee Westwood at twice your age.**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, it's crazy. They bring so much history into this event. You know, those guys are -- a couple of the guys are the reason why this tournament is what it is, because they've brought so much passion and blood, sweat, and tears into this event that it makes it so much more special to be on the team and even the same team as them.

Yeah, when you put it into perspective like that, it's really cool.

**Q. You'll be listed as a rookie this year but you have some nice success in match play. What do you like**

**about the format? And secondly, if you were to pair with Rory this week, do you feel you'd mesh pretty well with him?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: I'd think so. I think we've got a lot of the same strengths and kind of personality-wise we think a lot alike. I've grown up in Europe. We play tons of match play and we play tons of foursomes in miscellaneous events. I have some experience doing that, and I very much like it. I like to compete with someone and be on a team.

For me when you get a person that you mesh well with, it's a lot of fun. Obviously playing in the NAAs in college and U.S. Amateur, I've got some experience playing match play, and I'd say some of my best golf has been played in that format.

It's all about getting comfortable. You get a couple putts going and you get momentum, nothing is much more fun than doing that in match play.

**Q. I know you can't name names, but I'm curious, do you feel like right now you know who you're going to play with and maybe when you're going to play on Friday, or is that still something that you feel like is to be determined?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: It's still to be determined. As we all do, we say who we want to play with, and then we just kind of use these days to figure out, Okay, is this a good fit or not, do we work together, and then we kind of go from there.

Other than that, I don't really know.

**Q. I just wonder if you could expand on your level of respect for the veteran guys, the particular guys, Lee, Sergio and Poults, in terms of what these guys have done over the years in this competition, and you being in your first, thinking about Lee in his 11th.**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, it's crazy. I probably don't have enough respect as I should have. You know, you look at their records, how many events they've won, not just in Europe, not just in the United States, worldwide they've won so many events.

Obviously time and time again when they show up to this week they deliver every single time. I sat a couple weeks ago and just watched highlights of Poults and Sergio and Westy on YouTube in the Ryder Cup, and it was just so cool to see all the clutch moments they've had and just kind of how they handled everything, because it's a big pressure. Just to see how they go about their business

and handle all that.

I think that's also why it's cool to be behind the scenes with them when there's no cameras and they're not playing golf to see why they've been able to do all those things.

**Q. Seems like the European Ryder Cup competitors, whether they're rookies or veterans, they seem to have this in their blood from an early age. What's your earliest recollection of the Ryder Cup? When did it become something that you paid attention to and that was important to you?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, the 2012 Ryder Cup was kind of the first one that I watched the whole thing essentially. I mean, just watching that as a European, that gets your heart going. I think that was kind of the big part of making the Ryder Cup one of my dreams to play in.

You know, it was just -- it's just all in all, they're obviously great players that play on these teams, but they're also great people. I think as soon as you're just in that environment you just want to be part of it. It's easier to play for something bigger than yourself when you all like who you're with.

I think that's a big part of it, and obviously just the tradition of it.

**Q. You've been playing in the U.S. for a while, in college and then PGA TOUR. You kind of have a fan base, people that root for you. You are not the only one on your team that will be in that situation this week, but you're going to have a lot of people rooting against you. How do you prepare yourself for that? Do you have mental exercises that you do?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: No, I mean, I'd like to think I have some fans out there that maybe won't necessarily boo against us, but if they do end up doing that, that's what they're going to do. We're still going to play golf, and if they do end up doing that, that means we're doing something good.

I'm not going to take anything too personally. I can take a punch to the face. I've definitely gotten my beating so far in the group text. I think I'm prepared for some yells here and there.

**Q. I'm curious who other than Pádraig is the most active voice on that group text, and what kind of things are you all talking about on there?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Probably shouldn't disclose too much, but no, it could be anything. Could be logistical

stuff. Could just be, Hey, you're hitting balls and your TrackMan numbers. It could be anything. What are you cooking, what are you eating. Just to kind of get to know each other better.

I'd say we're all pretty vocal in it. It's not just one or two people just firing off and annoying the rest of the bunch. We're all pretty active in it. So that's good. Yeah.

**Q. What kind of a beating have you taken?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Well, there's been some team members that have gotten a hold of some old pictures of me and had some fun with them. But it's all good banter, and again, just bringing us closer together.

THE MODERATOR: Viktor, thank you for finding us. Have a terrific day and a great week in Wisconsin.

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