



VIKTOR HOVLAND (-13)

Q. Viktor, how would you characterize your round today?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, it was really solid. Obviously got off to a great start birdieing the first two holes and then making a few pars. But the front nine was really good, just hit a bunch of fairways and greens and even a couple tap-in birdies. Wasn't quite able to keep it going during kind of the middle stretch of the back nine, but all in all, a pretty good round of golf.

Q. What was your mentality coming out today knowing how far back you were of Joaquin?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, I'm trying to make as many birdies as possible, but at the same time can get a little greedy and short-side yourself, you're just dead. So you kind of have to be smart out there. I felt like I did a good job of being aggressive but at the same time not reckless. Yeah, made a bunch of birdies today.

Q. When you're playing as well as you were playing especially in the middle of the round and you see how far back you are, what's going on inside, saying I'm playing great but what is this guy doing?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, it's a little frustrating because 7 under through 11 holes and I had hardly gained any momentum, or I was peeking a little closer but I was still pretty far behind. If they just keep playing the way they do, there's not much I can do. Should have played better the first day. All I can do is just keep playing like I am and we'll see what happens tomorrow.

Q. How much does this course really suit your eye because it seems like you've taken to it almost immediately since you played here?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, no, I played well here last year and I guess like it fits my game tee to green. The thing is that the greens are so small that you're going to end up in some tricky spots, but I feel like my short game's gotten better and I've been able to maneuver some of the hard shots that you get around here. You're going to hit some good shots and you're going to miss some greens, so you're going to have to rely on your short game. I don't know. The poa annua greens are similar to what I grew up on back home and other than that, I don't know. I've just been hitting my irons great here so that helps a lot.

Q. What's the biggest work you've done on your short game, maybe like a tactical point that you and Jeff have worked on?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: It's mainly just not leaning shafts too much. That doesn't mean that there's any excessive wrist movements or that you have to throw the hands at the ball, it's just keeping it very, very simple. So that works for 90 percent of the shots that I'm going to have. The tricky part about short game is you can make improvements but you never have the same shot every time you miss a green. It just takes time to, okay, we've got the basics down, but now there's getting comfortable on every single shot that I have and just getting more reps in.

Q. Sorry if I missed this maybe yesterday, your explanation of your taking 15 down the 17th hole, just your thought process?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, it's just the bunker on 15 is such a severe penalty, so basically I'm taking that bunker out of play by going to the right. That's about it.

Q. And just what's your mentality tomorrow? Again, tough golf course, right now you're six back. How do you manage knowing you need to make some birdies and make some headway but not getting maybe too aggressive?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, I mean, there's a fine balance between being aggressive and pushing for birdies but not being reckless at the same time because there's some pins out there that are kind of tucked but they're kind of tempting to go for. Sometimes you can hit a great shot, land by the pin and you bounce over the green, you're in a tough spot. You definitely have to get some things going for you, make a couple putts here and there. If you can just kind of hit fairways and greens, you're never too far away because the greens are pretty small. It's just kind of hitting good shots and hope for the best.

Q. At the beginning of the week did you think 13 under, if you were 13 under, did you think you would be leading going into the final day?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Not necessarily leading, but I was thinking I would be up there. Just not that much wind and I feel like, I might be wrong, but maybe the greens were a hair firmer last year when I played. I mean, you don't really get any better conditions as we've had this week. The golf course is still hard, but it's doable if you play really, really well.