

# U.S. Amateur Championship

Press Conference

Saturday August 18, 2018

## Viktor Hovland

**Q. We'd like to welcome Viktor Hovland, the first of our U.S. Amateur finalists, 3 & 2 winner over Cole Hammer. That was quite a match, really spectacular golf. Birdies were going to win holes, pars were not going to help. Tell us about it.**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, I don't know. First of all, the wind, it wasn't blowing as hard, and the greens were a little softer, so the conditions were definitely conducive to making birdies. But still, you've got to hit the shots, and you've got to make the putts. I think we just kind of fed off each other a little bit. He made a putt and then I answered, if not the same hole making a putt, I'd make a putt on the next hole, and we just went back and forth. Yeah, it was a really good match.

**Q. Looks like your putter remained the place it was yesterday.**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yep. The front nine I kind of missed some putts, but after seeing that one on No. 10 go in, and obviously I missed the one on 11 to tie, but then after making the one on 12 and 13, yeah, it just kept on going. Yeah, without the putter, it would have been a very tough match.

**Q. Cole said he's played a lot of match play this summer. He said you were by far the toughest opponent he's faced. What about you kind of helped you get in the zone and stick iron shot after iron shot to six, ten feet every single time on that back nine?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, I don't know. I just tried to do what I do when I practice. I've always kind of been that way. When there's pressure on the line and I need to hit a good shot, I tend to perform better than I do if I'm just slapping balls on the range. But I just try to stick to my game plan and execute the shots that I knew I could, and the ball just came out the way I wanted it to.

**Q. You're going to be playing in the U.S. Open and also hopefully the Masters, or likely the Masters next year. What's that mean to you?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, I mean, I've been watching, obviously, the Masters on TV every year since I've been a little kid, and obviously the U.S. Open out here next year is going to be unreal. I mean, I don't know. Hopefully I can do well or just not -- not just participate,



but hopefully I can play some good golf and make the weeks even better.

**Q. Is that going to change some plans for you? Were you planning on going to Q-school --**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: No, I was not planning on playing Q-school. Plans are still the same. Just going to stay in school and -- yep.

**Q. Last two matches you kind of ran away a little bit. What was it like going into the back nine here knowing things were as tight as they were today?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, I hadn't played 13 and 14 and 15 in a few days, but I knew what to do. It wasn't like I was taken off guard. I knew that most likely I was going to do that.

Yeah, I mean, I just stuck to my game plan, and yeah, just let it all happen.

**Q. Can you talk a little bit more about kind of the 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, kind of when the fog was moving in? I think Cole hit a really good shot from near the hazard on 9, and then you make that putt on 10, was that kind of the turning point of the match where you really felt like you got back control of it?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, I would say so. We were all square there, and I gave away No. 9 with a bogey. I was still comfortable. I was still feeling confident. But definitely the putt on 10 really just made me ease up a little bit more, and then obviously hit a good approach shot on 11. I missed the putt, but then after that I just made the putts. I'd definitely say the putt on No. 10 was just the turning point in the match.

**Q. Also, I noticed you didn't hit driver on No. 4 today and you ended up finding the bunker. Were you kicking yourself a little bit after that?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Not really. It was just a really bad shot. I felt pretty confident out of that bunker. The lip wasn't too high, and I had a pretty good lie. I've been pretty good with the fairway bunker shots with kind of wedges. I clipped the ball really well out of those, so I didn't really think it was that tough of a shot. I didn't think I could gain much from hitting a driver there because it wasn't blowing that far or it wasn't blowing much downwind, and it would kind of be an awkward wedge shot, and maybe take that kind of left bunker

into play a little bit. If I hit it in there, then I would be kicking myself. But yeah, I just hit a really bad tee ball.

**Q. Also, just to kind of double check, you didn't miss a fairway or a green on the back nine, did you?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Not on the back nine, no.

**Q. Going back a couple years, how did you end up in still water all the way from Norway? I know Christopher Ventura was already there, but just what ultimately made you decide to want to play college golf and do it at Oklahoma State?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, being in high school in Norway, I always -- like my plan was set, I was going to go to college and play. A few of my friends, they turned pro right after, played Q-school, and then if they didn't make it, they'd play like ECCO Tour, the Scandinavian mini tour, which is pretty easy because you know all the different places. But I just didn't think I was good enough. I probably could have done well on the ECCO Tour and maybe gotten on to the Challenge Tour, but I just didn't think I was good enough. The plan was always to go to college, and I started playing good my senior year, I'd say, and some coaches were recruiting me and ended up visiting Texas Tech, TCU, Tennessee, and then Oklahoma State, the last, and when I just came to Karsten and just saw all the trophies and kind of how they talk about the program and the history, and obviously, yeah, just the guys on the team were really nice, Chris really helped me just kind of understand what was going on at Oklahoma State, so that just made the decision for me pretty easy.

**Q. When you were a junior golfer before really your senior year, you were kind of overshadowed by a lot of the kids on the national team. Did you always kind of feel like the underdog because you were a little smaller than everybody else and obviously now it's a different story --**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Shorter but not smaller, yeah. Well, yeah, I'd say I definitely was an underdog a little bit early on, but up to a certain point. I started playing some good golf. I just didn't really have the finishes that I'd like to. I never won tournaments, but like every week I'd get like a top 20 or top 10. So I'd start to build confidence. But I was definitely a little underdog. I wasn't the heaviest recruited out of all the kids in Europe.

**Q. Also, how tough has it been being from Norway and not really having that pro golfer to kind of look up to? I guess Suzann Pettersen is probably the best example, but how tough is that, and then winning something like this and going on and having a good pro career, how much does that**

**inspire you because you want to be that first male Norwegian star?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, well, I'd say first that it's not so much having one guy that you kind of look up to, it's more of having a lot of other kids around you, which when I was 11, I moved into -- I started to -- I made the decision to go into a club near my home, and they had a lot of junior players. So kind of the culture and the environment was really good for us to improve. But then it all kind of dwindled away. So that's kind of the hardest part is that it doesn't really do you that much good if there's just one guy doing well on the PGA or European Tour. You've got to have guys around you that you can practice with and compete against so that you can get better and have more fun practicing and playing, which I didn't really have that much of that. If you go to Sweden and look, like there's juniors all over the place at different clubs. It's just so much easier for them to pop up because they feed off of each other.

And then to your question about rising star, I'm just trying to do the best I can. It would be sweet to kind of be the front man for Norway, but I'm just -- I'm still an amateur playing amateur golf, and I probably will do that for a little longer, so I'm not really stressing too much about it.

**Q. Speaking of Norway, have you heard from anybody of note besides your family about your success here at Pebble Beach? Has anybody texted you or reached out on social media?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah. There's quite a few people from -- I've kind of moved around home clubs in Norway, so I know a few just kind of hobby golfers around the club, different places in Norway that have texted me, some old coaches. Yeah, I mean, it's been a bunch of people, so that's been great.

**Q. What club do you belong to now in Norway?**

VIKTOR HOVLAND: It's called Miklagard.