

U.S. Amateur Championship

Quick Quotes

Thursday August 16, 2018

Viktor Hovland



Q. How do you feel about making the quarterfinals?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: It feels pretty cool. Obviously there's still three more matches to go, and that's kind of what I'm thinking about, but I've never gotten this far before, and obviously I'd like to go the whole way. But just being in the quarterfinals is pretty cool.

Q. What have all your experiences -- you played in the World Amateur Team, you've played on Junior Amateurs, you've played in the NCAA championships, all those things that have happened to you, has that helped you prepare for what you're doing right now?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Oh, for sure, for sure. Yeah, I mean, just definitely all that just kind of adds up to me being more comfortable in situations like that. I'd say just kind of how the course is set up. In Norway, all the courses are -- like they have very soft greens. They're slow, not too sloped. It's just not championship golf. And when you play all the big tournaments like that, they're all going to look like this, firm and fast, so yeah, if I didn't play in all those tournaments, I would be way behind, I think.

Q. What was your mental approach today? You were playing someone who you basically grew up and played juniors with. Do you have a different mentality when you're going up against somebody like that?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: I mean, not really. I knew I was -- I knew if we both won our first matches, we would have faced off. But then I almost got way too far ahead of myself just thinking, oh, we're going to be playing against each other, oh, that's going to suck, and I had to tell myself, okay, first I need to win against my first opponent, and luckily we both beat our opponent earlier in the day and faced off. But then I didn't really -- since I was so focused on the first match, I didn't really have time to think about that scenario all that much and just kind of got off right away just trying to make birdies.

Q. And you made a lot of them early.

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yep.

Q. Tell me about some of those and what you thought were some of the better ones.

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Well, I started off in the second match against Chris, birdieing the first. Chris hit it over the green on No. 1 and hit just an amazing flop shot to maybe seven, eight feet for par, and he's a very good putter, so I knew that there was a really good chance he was going to make his, and I had kind of a downhill right to left, and I poured it in center cup. So that was a good start. I just kind of kept the hammer down, birdieing No. 4, 6, 8. 8 was probably the best one of the day.

Q. What did you hit in there and what was your yardage?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: I hit a 4-iron off the tee kind of on the left side, and I had about 180 meters, so just under 200 yards. I think it was 198 yards, and I just hit a solid 8-iron just left of the green, or aimed it left of the green, and the wind took it in, got a nice hop to the right maybe to 10 feet down the hill and poured it in. So that was nice.

Q. And considering how tough that stretch of holes can be and then you birdie 10 --

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah. We both hit drivers. He hit one -- or he hit his in the ocean and took a drop, but he still ended up making a par, and I had another tough downhill left to righter from maybe 12 feet for birdie to win the hole, and I just kind of trickled it down there and just kind of fed in right away, so that was nice.

Q. Is that the part of your game that's really been working here, the putter?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Not really. The first two rounds of stroke play, I didn't make any putts at all. And then I didn't really putt that great against Hayden in my first match. I just kind of kept two-putting, and I hit a few approach shots just really close for birdie. And then not really this morning, either, I didn't really make anything. It was just this round really got it together, not just the birdie putts, but I made some nice par saves, too. So hopefully that's going to be just a little taste of what's to come.

Q. I wanted to ask you about your coach, Alan Bratton. He has a lot of USGA experience, but how does he help you being your caddie this week?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Well, he knows my game very well, and especially since I'm somewhat executing the shots that I want to, he knows, okay, you want to stay

on this side of the green, the ball is going to bounce so and so far because earlier you had this shot and it bounced so and so far. He does a really good job of just kind of writing things down and just kind of comforting me about, okay, this is going to react this way, because sometimes I think too much and try, okay, I need to hit a high cut 5-iron, and then it's just, no, just hit a 6, just hit it normal or something like that, and it kind of comforts me, and I just kind of trust that. Yeah, it just makes it easier.

Q. How about the mental side of the game? Does he talk to you much or is he quiet?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, it was funny, against Hayden, the first match, No. 13, he hit it over the green right, and that pin was really tough from that chip, and I hit mine to maybe 15 feet, just short of 15 feet, and I was, I believe, 3-up, I think, and Coach told me, all right, be prepared, he's going to make this. Just be prepared to make yours, too. I mean, he just like flops this thing straight up in the air, lands softly, and just goes in. I ended up making the putt on top of that, which was huge in that match. But it was just like things like that, how to -- he knows what things to say when you're over the ball or when you're in a position -- yeah, let's say if you need to make an up-and-down or whatever, he kind of says the right things, and that's helped me.