

**PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
NOVEMBER 2, 2021**

VIKTOR HOVLAND



DOUG MILNE: We would like to welcome the defending champion of the Worldwide Technology Championship at Mayakoba, Viktor, Hovland.

Viktor, thanks for joining us for a few minutes. We appreciate you joining us.

Just a few opening comments on the enthusiasm and excitement you have coming into the week, especially on the weekend. You played so incredibly well last week, following your 63 with a 65 on Sunday. Just some overall thoughts on being back.

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, it's cool for the first time to be able to defend. Didn't get to do that at Puerto Rico last time, so happy to be here.

This is my fourth time playing a PGA TOUR event here and I also played the World Amateur here a few years back, so it's going to be my fifth time at this property, so it's kind of weird coming to a place where I almost feel like a veteran since I haven't been out here very long.

But I love everything about this place. The golf course is great, the weather's great, it's in really good shape and the resort's amazing. It's kind of like a vacation from our bad weather in Oklahoma right now. Yeah, just get to go out and have fun.

DOUG MILNE: I may be going out on a little bit of a stretch here. If we look at your first two PGA TOUR wins, we've got Puerto Rico and we've got Mayakoba, pretty exotic first two titles to have on your resume there.

Is there something about? Again, it may be a stretch, but maybe just a little bit more of a relaxed setting with Puerto Rico and Mexico that could give you maybe some good vibes?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, there could be, for sure. You have plenty of things where you can kind of not think about golf. You go to the beach and you eat good food. There's plenty of other people to hang out with. Yeah, it's a good setup.

I think it's also too with the green types out here, the Paspalum grass I've seemed to putt well at. It's a bit slower usually than what we see on every other week on Tour and I think that's helped me just with where I kind of have grown up in Norway. We have flatter and slower greens and that just kind of sets up better for me here this week.

DOUG MILNE: One final question from me and we'll take a few questions from folks. Just some thoughts on your game coming into the week, what you're feeling good about. You're making your third start this season coming off a top-20 at THE CJ CUP, so just kind of

assess the state of your game heading into the week.

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, I feel like I've been playing well the last few months. Played really well at TPC Summerlin, but had some struggles around the greens and that carried over to Summit as well the week after. So I felt like I played a lot better than my results showed those two weeks, but that's kind of how this game goes. I feel like I'm putting really well and I made some strides around the greens, so yeah, if I can just kind of keep hitting the ball like I usually do, I should be able to make some birdies this week.

Q. What's the biggest difference between you now and you leaving here a year ago?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Wow, that's a good question.

I'd say I'm a bit more seasoned. I've got a bit more experience, played a few more major championships, being part of a Ryder Cup. I just feel like I have a better understanding of myself and my own game and just being kind of comfortable doing what I'm doing. Even though I haven't maybe put myself in as many places to win tournaments since then as I maybe would have liked, but I feel like I'm definitely handling the pressure in the moment a lot better. I remember last year I was so nervous coming down the stretch. Now, I was still able to pull it off, but I was really nervous and I feel like now I'm handling that a lot better.

Q. Was there a time in the last year that that gave you that realization, where you realized you were less nervous than you would have been earlier in your career?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: I can't remember the exact moment. I think it's -- I think it's an evolving kind of process. Some weeks you feel more nervous, other weeks you feel less nervous. I think it's all dependent on your game. It's easy to think well and feel good when you're on top of your game and you can kind of -- when you have confidence, you don't fear the results or the consequences, you just go up and try to perform. I feel like that's something that I have tried to adopt, that mindset of instead of being concerned of the results, it's more stepping up with the intent to hit a good shot, and if that doesn't work, I'm still going to be fine.

Q. Fernanda Vazquez, reporter at El Economista newspaper, media focused in economy, brands, sponsors. With that in mind, I would like to ask you, who do you admire in golf or in sports for the way they manage their careers? And second, how you see your difficult is getting sponsors that support golfers in your country. Thank you.

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Wow, that's a good question.

I'd say there's a bunch of guys out here that I look up to in terms of their careers. Played a bunch of practice rounds with Charles Howell. He's been out here for 20 years and has been successful it seems like every single year. He's been so consistent, and just kind of how he manages his game and goes about his business is pretty impressive.

I'll also say Adam Scott is up there just with the longevity of his career as well and how he's still super competitive. I think that's stuff that's pretty admirable.

When it comes to getting sponsors in from my home country and stuff, that's why I have a management team and I can kind of let those guys do that for me. I just try to focus on playing golf and, yeah, take care of the easy or hard part, if you will.

Q. Viktor, a couple of questions. One, what do you remember about your victory last year at specific moment, something that you said before was nervous trying to but you were able to pull it off, what do you remember exactly? And since 2020 you have won three times, twice on the PGA TOUR, once in Europe. Your confidence is growing. You were the low amateur at the Masters in '19. How do you see your career progressing with each victory, every big moment you've got so far in your career?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, so I remember I was feeling pretty good throughout the tournament last year. On the back nine, it was until -- I remember a big moment was the 16th hole where I had a 3-iron into the green there and I hit a terrible shot. I hit it way right and I thought it was actually going to be in the trees and make a drop and probably make a double bogey. That was kind of going to be the end of that tournament, I thought.

But as I come up there I see the ball in kind of the bunker there and I had about a 40-yard bunker shot, which is a very hard shot. I was able to hit a really nice bunker shot to maybe four, five feet and make the putt. I think that was kind of the biggest moment for me for that tournament. Even though I still ended up having to birdie the last hole to win, that at least made me feel way more relaxed, so that was a big moment.

Yeah, to already have three worldwide victories as a pro is pretty crazy. I feel like I played some great golf throughout my career so far, but it's still hard to win, and you've got to make the right putts at the right time. Been very pleased with how I've finished off certain events. If I've had to make a putt, I've done it on the last hole to win, which has been very special. Hopefully I can keep doing that and maybe even win a bit more. Always trying to improve and, yeah, hopefully keep improving.

Q. If I may, one more question. What do you think about this tournament? At this time every time more big-time players are coming here, major champions, players who have been at the top of the world rankings, what makes this tournament in its 15th year here at Mayakoba every time? Is it the destination? Is it the golf course? What do you think that every time more big-time players are coming here to this tournament?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Yeah, I think it's a combination of everything. The course is great. I think it's -- even though it's a resort course, it still challenges a lot of parts of your game. If you're off, you're going to be punished and if you play well, you're going to be rewarded. So I think the golf course is a huge bonus.

Obviously the destination, being in Cancun and the weather is amazing. It's hot and most of the guys that play this week probably live in warmer places, but being in Oklahoma, it's sort of getting pretty cold. So for me to get out of that and go to a place where it's warm for a week, that's always pretty nice.

Food's great, people are great. It's just a combination of everything. It's always a good time coming here and I think the more players talk about it, I think it's going to entice other players to come and see for themselves.

DOUG MILNE: Viktor, we appreciate your time very much as always and wish you the best of luck this week. Thank you.

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Thank you.