



LOU NANNE CALLS IT A CAREER AFTER 60 YEARS OF BROADCASTING THE STATE TOURNAMENT

Continued from previous page

Instead, he remembers a lesson from Mel Jass, a TV personality from WTCN years ago.

"He said, 'when the red light comes on, you talk to the person sitting in the living room that you're talking with,'" Nanne said. "So, I visualize talking to people that like hockey and enjoy it but aren't extremely technical in it. Try and make it so that they can understand what I see in real layman's terms."

Even though he would keep it simple, Nanne would still provide information like no one else, Rosen said. Whether that's a team sending its third line over the boards or a team pinching in on the power play.

"He would give you nuggets that would really focus on the game, and without being too technical," Rosen said.

Erickson always learns something from Nanne every tournament as well.

"I think there's always something to learn," Erickson said. "And Lou is there to teach us."

Nanne has seen so much change in hockey in these 60 years, an "unbelievable amount" of change, he said. In the 1960s, teams played two lines and three defensemen, and periods were five minutes shorter. Now, teams roll four lines and rotate six on the blue line with deeper talent pools. Fourth-line players today could be first-line players back then, Nanne said.

FAMILY & MEMORABLE MOMENTS

Not only is Nanne hanging up his headset from the state tournament after 60 years, but it's also a pair of round-number anniversaries of state titles for his son and grandsons.

His son, Marty Nanne, scored the game-winning goal in a 4-2 win over Bloomington Kennedy for the state championship 40 years ago in 1984. Rosen noted Nanne's ability to maintain his objectivity and normalcy throughout that broadcast, even though it was his son on the ice.

"That was a moment that will stand the test of time," Rosen said. "I mean, what a moment."

Then 10 years ago, when Edina defeated Lakeville North for the state championship, Louie's grandson, Tyler Nanne, was on that Hornets team.

Those games were the first couple that Louie mentioned when recalling memorable moments from the tournaments.

"Anytime your family's able to compete and you're doing a game, that's very unusual," Louie said. "It's got to be exciting and something you'll never forget."

Family first, but Nanne also has other tournament games that stand out from the hundreds he's called. There's the lengthy classic, Apple Valley versus Duluth East, a semifinal from the 1996 tournament that took five overtime periods to decide a winner. And this one wasn't just notable because of the time of game before Apple Valley finally won, 5-4.

"It was incredible because once they got to overtime, it was like they both forgot to play defense," Nanne said. "And I've never seen so many good chances in my life."

"It was just mind-boggling that these teams were having the opportunities they were having and nobody could score."

Of course, Apple Valley then came back to win the championship game as well, a 3-2 decision over Edina.

Other feats – and players – that boggled Nanne's mind? Centennial's three shutouts to win the 2004 Class 2A championship. There was also Dave Spehar's trio of hat tricks on Duluth East's 1995 championship team. Grant Beese scoring all five goals for Benilde-St. Margaret's in the 2012 title game against Hill-Murray. Ryan McDonagh, who played his 900th career NHL game this winter, dominated in 2006 for Cretin-Derham Hall and "put that team on his back to win a championship," Nanne said.

There was Elk River's Paul Martin. The Broten brothers from Roseau. Phil Housley's domination. The Michelettis from Hibbing. Tim Sheehy from International Falls in the 1960s.

Nanne recalled Kyle Rau's effort, "on his belly," to score the overtime, championship-winning goal for Eden Prairie in 2011. Nanne was also impressed with the Duluth East teams led by legendary coach Mike Randolph, teams that "competed like crazy," Nanne said.

Even a couple of years ago, the double-overtime title game between northwest-metro foes Maple Grove and Andover, a back-and-forth affair that ended with a 6-5 Andover victory for its first state title.

"Lou Nanne came and talked to the boys," said Andover coach Mark Manney, after that 2022 game. "He said it's the best hockey game he's seen here at the state tournament since I think '69."

Yes, that 1969 title game was a doozy, too, with Edina defeating Warroad 5-4 in overtime. The legendary Henry Boucha, who played for Warroad, was injured in that game.

POST-BROADCAST TRADITIONS

Some of those overtime affairs made for great games, sure. But Rosen recalls Nanne's reasoning for wanting games to finish up in regulation.

"I would, through the headset during the commercial break, say 'man, Louie, what a game.' He said, 'yeah, it's a great game. Let's just somebody win it because I've got reservations over at Mancini's here in a half hour, and I don't want to be late,'" Rosen said. "You'd just crack up."

Years ago, Nanne started the tradition of heading to Mancini's Char House on West Seventh Street in St. Paul after games with some of the broadcast crew. Rosen recalls those meals fondly, always with Louie "holding court," telling stories.

Another Mancini's outing is likely to occur this year, too, as Nanne and the team celebrate what is sure to be a special state tournament.

Erickson has been part of the recent visits to Mancini's, hearing Nanne tell stories from tournaments past, or even his NHL or general manager days.

Erickson has developed a good rapport with Nanne and will miss that flow and camaraderie during future tournaments. He'll also miss Nanne's sense of humor.

"I always try to, once a game, get him to chuckle a little bit at something," Erickson said. "That was always good. I think he appreciated that."

It's not going to be the same without him, that's for sure. You just expect to hear that voice during the state high school hockey tournament."

— Mark Rosen

Similarly to others who step away from a job, Nanne will miss the crew and people he works with on the tournament broadcasts. So many people always want to stop by the booth and see Nanne during the tournament, too, according to Erickson, "and he always has time for people."

Nanne said he'll also miss the excitement in the building and contributing to that excitement for fans watching at home.

Rosen is happy for Nanne, and that he's picked the right time to step aside.

"To say he's earned it is a massive understatement," Rosen said. "But it's never going to be the same without – it's not going to be the same without him, that's for sure. You just expect to hear that voice during the state high school hockey tournament." ●