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Edinboro native Isaac Petkac building impressive career in broadcasting

FEB 10 WRITTEN BY NATE STEIS



ERIE — For as long as he can remember, speaking and showmanship were always strengths to Edinboro native Isaac Petkac. It would only make sense this would lead him to a career in broadcasting.

When asking Petkac how he knew a career in broadcasting was for him, he recalled fond memories from his childhood that included trips to the Erie Zoo.



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am qualified to be doing.”

Growing up, Petkac was involved in band, musicals, and choir, which were some of his first public performance opportunities. Prior to this, he also assisted in broadcasts of Little League All-Star games, which helped him find a true passion for sports broadcasting in particular.

His first true breakthrough in broadcasting would happen when he was a student at General McLane High School as he helped kick-start the district’s radio station to broadcast sporting and community events in Edinboro. It was something that Petkac says helped him find his true passion.

“My junior year, I had a good idea of what I wanted to do after high school,” said Petkac. “I wanted to be on the radio and television, so I went to our principal at General McLane to see what could be done. Two months later, we went from nothing to our first football broadcast. I was thrilled with it because it was something for the community to latch onto. In our first broadcast, we had around 750 to 1,000 listeners, with the largest number of listeners we ever got being around 3,000.”

From there, he also earned opportunities to become a public address announcer at Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA) state level contests. These opportunities were predominantly in football and would serve him well.

After graduation from General McLane, Petkac made his way to Toledo, Ohio and to the University of Toledo. Almost from the start, he jumped right into the Sports Director role at WXUT Radio as the lead play-by-play announcer for various sports. The first game he was on the call for was Toledo Rockets football, with him taking over play-by-play duties in the fourth quarter of the team’s first game of the season.

“I was awful,” Petkac said with a laugh. “Our sports director at the time Zach Harig must have seen something in me because it didn’t take me long to fully immerse myself in it.”

Not long after, Petkac would add being the lead broadcaster for baseball, basketball, softball, and volleyball to his responsibilities while also broadcasting games for ESPN3 along the way. Opportunities continued to come his way as he paired improvement with a solid work ethic. After a successful first-year at Toledo, he returned to Erie County to work for his



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“It was a different type of job for me with the production aspects and learning the cameras and equipment. The first two weeks were not good. I didn’t push myself and I was worried I would overstep. I eventually had a moment of realization to put myself out there and bet on myself. It was worth it to go the extra mile and do the little things on my own to improve.”

Petkac returned to Toledo for the fall semester in 2018 and completed another successful year of broadcasting on WXUT Radio, while adding opportunities to become a Public Address Announcer for Toledo Athletics as well as with BCSN, a local sports broadcasting company to Toledo that features a variety of sports.

After his second year of college, he would get a taste of minor league baseball with the Pierre Trappers of the Expedition League in Pierre, South Dakota. This meant calling 64 games in just 62 days while continuing to keep up with statistics, previews, and recaps for the organization.

It was a summer that pushed growth as he was halfway across the country pursuing a dream of calling sports at the professional level.

After a busy but successful summer of 2019, he went back to Toledo for his junior year and became a fill in Public Address Announcer for USA Hockey in Plymouth, Michigan, while also then adding another internship, but this time in professional sports. This role was with the Columbus Blue Jackets of the National Hockey League (NHL), a role that he prepared himself for by broadcasting Toledo Rockets club hockey.

Unfortunately, his opportunities with the Blue Jackets and assisting USA Hockey came to a premature end as about half a year into each role, the world was shocked with the news that COVID-19 was being classified as a pandemic and the world we once knew was about to change. Sporting events from March Madness to the Olympics were quickly canceled for 2020, but the pandemic allowed Petkac to return to Erie to finish his degree online while also beginning his career full-time at Erie News Now as a Sports Reporter/Anchor/Multimedia Journalist.

It was a role that saw him get a start in news while also assisting in sports before moving into a sports role full time as time went on. March 2022 will mark two years of full-time work for Erie News Now as Petkac, something the Edinboro native is shocked by.



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Communication and Media Studies courses as an underclassman instead of late in his college career. This allowed him to take easier classes on average later in his college career and spend more time working on his craft.

It also may seem that Petkac worked a great deal through his time at Toledo, something he certainly did. However, he set certain rules for himself, which included not working past 9:00 p.m. on school work and, most times, his television and radio broadcasts. It was something that allowed him to get to sleep earlier and feel fresh throughout long days of class and work.

Something else Petkac has managed while working on his craft and career is that he and his wife, Ali, began a relationship in high school which has lasted to this day. This summer, they will welcome their first child to their family.

“I think something we both loved about each other very early on is we were both down-to-earth people,” he said. “We never faked how we were around each other and we were honest. We are who we are, and I think that is one thing we loved about each other very early on. We had similar interests in music and sports, which was key too.”

“I think what was key for us lasting through college was understanding we had responsibilities, but that did not take away how much we cared about each other. The toughest year of my life was the year I was still in high school as a senior and she was a freshman in college. I didn’t see her very much, but I always believed we weren’t losing anything between us despite being in different places”

Today, Isaac Petkac is back in his home area sharing the stories in sports that the people of Erie want to hear. He is thankful to have a loving, supportive wife who has been there for him. Truly, he is thankful for all of those people who care about him or have taken an interest in his career. All of those people made his dream of working in the media industry a possibility.

While he may bring the stories to your television or social media accounts right now, being a play-by-play announcer is still very much an important part of who he is. Regardless, he’s a multifaceted 22-year-old media veteran who continues to up his game and remains the humble young man who hails from the town of Edinboro.



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