

... with JIM NANTZ

THE VOICE OF CBS SPORTS MARKS A MILESTONE

Jim Nantz has covered virtually all of the network's major sporting events including the Super Bowl, the Masters, and the Final Four since 1985.

By Mark Pazdur, Publisher

PEBBLE BEACH, CALIFORNIA: This year's Super Bowl at Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara, California, marks a milestone in Jim Nantz's broadcasting career.

He will have called the 50th Masters (1986), Final Four (1988), and now Super Bowl (2016).

"It's my personal triple crown," beamed Nantz. "My heart is filled with appreciation."

Affectionately called the "Voice of CBS Sports," Jim joined the network 31 years ago as a studio host for its football and basketball coverage. His calming voice, dedication to research, and command of the situation, cemented him as the go-to veteran broadcaster for sport's most important moments.



Jim Nantz in California for historic Super Bowl 50 on CBS Sports, February 7, 2016 from Levi's Stadium.

THE GOLDEN VOICE

Jim has always been an athlete. "I enjoy *playing* sports, but I am absolutely obsessed with *following* them," said Nantz. "I grew up before the Internet age. On weekends, I was glued to the television listening to the magnificent sports commentators and storytellers of the time. I was mesmerized by their cadences and phrasings and recorded their broadcasts and played them back over and over."

After graduating the University of Houston, Jim honed his broadcasting skills at a CBS affiliate in Salt Lake City, Utah. "My big break was when the executive

producer of CBS Sports had seen my demo tape and flew me to New York City for an audition. With the college football season fast approaching, the network had to quickly find a new anchor for its studio show and, fortunately, I won the audition," recalled Nantz.

A BUNDLE OF NERVES

Jim, at age 26, was a freshman sports announcer when he was placed in the 16th hole tower at the 50th Masters in 1986.

"I was just a kid when Frank Chirkinian, legendary CBS Sports producer and director, handed me the microphone to cover the strategically important hole," said Nantz. "I was a bundle of nerves, struck with fear, and tried to contain my anxiety.

"On the morning of the final round, I walked out to the 16th hole and thought the pin was in a vulnerable position. I knew there would be a lot of aggressive action by the field and 'my hole' may be the pivotal turning point of the day. I went to Mr. Chirkinian's office for advice. In public, Frank could be a bear. In private, he was nurturing and encouraging. That day, with an audience in his office, he exclaimed, 'What are you concerned about Jimmy?'"

"How do I make the call if a big moment happens?" said Nantz.

"Jim is the consummate professional and the best at what he does."

— SEAN MCMANUS, CHAIRMAN, CBS SPORTS

MY HERO AND INSPIRATION

"My dad and I were as close as any father and son could be. He encouraged me to dream big dreams and inspired me to pursue them. For 13 years, he battled the devastating effects of Alzheimer's. There is nothing that can stop the inevitable. For those now faced with caring for a family member with Alzheimer's, I know the constant torture you go through. I have the utmost compassion for your efforts to try to preserve the dignity of your loved one.

"My wife Courtney and I have made a lifetime commitment to aggressively pursue a cure for Alzheimer's. We have created the Nantz National Alzheimer Center at the Texas Medical Center in Houston, Texas. Our goal is to be one of the preeminent Alzheimer's research centers in the world, focusing on clinical care, translational research, and education." — JIM NANTZ

For more information on the Nantz National Alzheimer Center in Houston, Texas, visit NantzFriends.org.

"Let me tell you something," said Chirkinian. "You work in a visual medium. You don't say anything and don't be late. Now, get the hell out of my office!"

Several hours later, when Jack Nicklaus's tee shot curled toward the hole, Nantz took Chirkinian's cue and remained silent.

"I said nothing and let the moment speak for itself. My first comment was, 'the bear has come out of hibernation.' Nicklaus won the tournament and I had a front row seat to one of the greatest moments in golf's history," said Nantz.

"My dear friend, Ken Venturi, patted me on the back and congratulated me on my poise. Ken said, 'if you work another 50 Masters, you will never see one as great as this.'"

DANNY AND THE MIRACLES

Calling the NCAA Championships is an exhilarating and immersive process.

"When the brackets are formed, my real work starts," said Nantz. "It requires intense research on my part, but it is a labor of love. I call 12 separate games before we crown the national champions."

The 50th NCAA Championship in Kansas City, in 1988, was particularly exciting.

"The final game pitted Kansas versus Oklahoma," reported Nantz. "Kansas head coach, Danny Manning, started the season with an unimpressive 12-8 start and then embarked on a miracle, six-game post season run.

"At halftime in the 50th NCAA Championship, the game was tied 50 to 50!" remarked Nantz. "Ultimately, Kansas prevailed with a 83-79 victory.

"I have a real connection to college basketball. The players are kids, not professionals," said Nantz. "To most, this is the pinnacle of their athletic career. From the first tip to the last basket, their energy and passion is clear.



Jim Nantz's daughters, Caroline and Finley.

"I am excited to be returning to Houston for my 31st Final Four," said Nantz.

COMING HOME

Arguably, Jim's highest profile assignment will be the Super Bowl in February.

"I live exactly 77.4 miles from the stadium, so it really is in my backyard," said Nantz.

CBS Sports lost the NFL, NFC franchise to Fox Sports in 1993. "It was painful," cringed Nantz. "It was a hit to our prestige and we lost great talent including Pat Summerall and John Madden."

Four years later, during the next cycle of network bidding, CBS Sports won the NFL, AFC package.

"We were whole again," said Nantz. "I was dumbstruck when I heard the news. I quickly counted the years and realized we would be on the world's stage to air the biggest sports event in history on its 50th anniversary." ■