



Sport: Flag Football
Hometown: Naperville, IL
Age: 24

1. How long have you been with Special Olympics?

Lou has been involved in Special Olympics since he was eight, starting with basketball. When Lou was 11, his family moved to Montreal, Quebec for his dad's job where he continued with basketball and started Alpine skiing and continued with those sports for the four years his family lived in Canada. When the family moved back to Naperville, he competed in Special Olympics with his high school SRA. His family started DuPage Valley Special Athletes (DVSA), modeling a ski team after his ski team in Quebec. Since then, Lou has competed in soccer, Unified soccer, track, bowling, tennis, Unified tennis, softball, volleyball, floor hockey, golf, Unified golf, and of course flag football. He's also a Global Messenger.

2. How has Special Olympics changed your life?

Special Olympics is an important part of Lou's life as sports have always been a major part of his life. But Special Olympics has also become a center point for the Pisani family. When the family started DVSA, it was for a ski team and flag football. It's become so much more as more sports have been added. But more importantly, we've become a community of volunteers, peers, and lifelong friends. Three of those teammates are sharing the experience together at the USA Games.

3. What has been your biggest obstacle to overcome?

Lou's biggest obstacle has always been his speech. People assume he doesn't understand what's going on because he's not verbal at first or doesn't talk with people he doesn't know. That's part of his disability. It's a huge obstacle. But somehow, when on the field, he can communicate with his teammates and they understand him via verbal and nonverbal communication. He comes off as shy or not friendly or non-attentive, but he's listening and watching everything around him.

4. What makes you most proud?

Working so hard with flag football. The team started when flag football wasn't even an official sport in Illinois. There were no games, it was just a bunch of athletes and peers getting together to play. Then it became official and has grown since then. Lou is on this team with two other teammates who have worked really hard too. Being part of a team of friends is what makes him proud.



5. What are some other accomplishments you are proud of?

The last year Louis was in Montreal competing in Special Olympics, he won the Athlete of the year Award in the area right before moving back to the states. For the past several years (other than 2020) Louis has attended a ski race camp called Spectrum Race Camp in Mount Hood, Oregon for a week in June, where he works at ski racing with other athletes from around the country. He has made wonderful friends. This year he will miss it because of the USA Games and his campmates are planning to watch the USA Games from Mount Hood.

6. What other interests or hobbies do you have?

Lou plays Chicago Blackhawks Special Hockey. He does Young Life, travels, and skis with his family. Lou loves being with his two chocolate labs, Chief Mahomes and Gracie D-Rose. He rock climbs with Coach Phil, and he has a microbusiness called Logs by Lou.

7. Who do you admire most and why?

As a younger kid, Lou admired Brian Urlacher. Now, he admires Patrick Mahomes - which is why he named his dog Chief Mahomes.

8. What does attending USA Games mean to you?

It means competing with great teams from across the country at ESPN. He's looking forward to experiencing this with teammates who are also good friends from DVSA.

9. How are you preparing/training for USA Games?

Wearing the Fitbit, flag football practice, healthy eating, rock climbing with Coach Phil and fellow teammate Ryan Gronowski, trying to stay active with special recreation sports, and walking his chocolate lab, Chief Mahomes.

10. Have you been to a World Games or USA Games before?

None. Louis was nominated for the World Winter games for Alpine Skiing.

11. Are you employed? If so, where at and what's your role?

Louis is a service attendant at Planet Fitness in Naperville where he has been for over two years. He got the job after attending Project Search.

12. Are you a currently a student? If so, where and is it a Unified Champion School?

Louis graduated from Naperville North High School in 2016 and then did a transition program.

