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Duo calls Olympic hockey in Inuktitut

Madalyn Howitt

For lifelong hockey fan Pujjuut Kusugak, doing live commentary for Olympic hockey games has been nothing short of exciting.

"The whole experience ofdoing play-by-play and colour commentating is one of the most absolute fun jobs I've ever done," Kusugak said in a phone interview on his way to the commentators' booth at CBC's Olympic headquarters in Toronto.

Even more rewarding? Being able to call the games in his own lan-— Inuktitut, he guage said.

Kusugak and fellow Rankin Inlet man David Ningeongan have joined CBC's 2022 Beijing Winter Olympic Games coverage team to provide Inuktitutlanguage commentary for the women's and men's hockey games.

The pair, who used to coach minor league hockey together in their hometown, are part of a larger team providing coverage of the Games in Indigenous languages, such



David Ningeongan (right) and Pujjuut Kusugak (left) in the commentators' booth at CBC headquarters in Toronto. The pair split up duties during games, with Ningeongan doing live play-by-play Inuktitut commentary and Kusugak adding colour commentary after the whistle blows. (Photo courtesy of CBC/Evan Graf)

as Cree.

Ningeongan said so far his experience doing Olympic commentary has been "excellent."

"This is phenomenal. It's a great experience for a newcomer like me to be part of the team," he said. Ningeongan typically

takes on the live play-byplay while the action is happening on the ice, he said. After the whistle blows, Kusugak takes over

with colour commentating, sharing info about the players and helping with transitions between breaks. Ningeongan got his

NEWS

start doing hockey commentary at local games in Rankin Inlet, while Kusugak, who served as the hamlet's mayor from 2011 to 2013, started with the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympic Games.

"It was so much fun. I thought I'd never get a chance to do something like that again, but this opportunity came up and I had to go for it again," Kusugak said.

Getting used to the commentators' booth and the buzz of the CBC studio has been a fun challenge for Ningeongan, he said, and as a hockey fan he's enjoying seeing what the players bring to the arena.

"Covering the women's hockey has been exciting for me because they are one of the greatest hockey teams in the world right now," Ningeongan said of Team Canada, adding he admires the dedication the athletes give to their sport.

"I know they've committed so much of their own time to get ready for the Olympics and stayed

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Freedom Convoy puts Inuit students in Ottawa on edge

Nunavut Sivuniksavut students say noise, aggressive behaviour

blockaded since Jan. 28 by calling demonstrators themselves the Freedom mental health. Convoy.

school and said the noise has affected her sleep and

Labrador, said it's been "scary" leaving her house in Ottawa's Sandy Hill "It was driving me neighbourhood.

town near the centre of it," Pilgrim said. "It's been in my neighbourhood there's been truckers driving around with the flags and honking at all hours of the night."

from protesters is affecting their mental health

Madalyn Howitt

Shelby Angalik, Nunavut Sivuniksavut student, says it has been hard to study for more than a week, with the blare of truck horns and shouts of protesters infiltrating her downtown Ottawa home. She says the "incessant" noise is like having a train going past her window.

"Having to focus on doing schoolwork and just anything around the

house has been difficult unless I'm wearing earphones or trying to drown it out with something else like a show," Angalik said. Angalik, who is from

Arviat, is a first-year student at Nunavut Sivuniksavut, an Ottawa school in Ottawa for Inuit youth studying an Inuitfocused post-secondary curriculum.

The school is on Rideau Street, one of several streets in the capital's downtown that have been

Initially billed as a convoy led by truck drivers protesting vaccine mandates for cross-border travel, the demonstration has grown to include people demanding an end to all pandemic vaccine mandates and health restrictions.

demonstrations The have blocked off streets near Parliament Hill, forcing many businesses to close and residents to endure days of seemingly non-stop noise and disruption. Some city officials call the protest an "occupation."

Angalik lives near the

crazy because it's so loud, basically it went on nonstop for three days," she said. "It would start early in the morning and then they would continue honking till maybe 3 a.m."

Though classes are still being taught remotely, Angalik said she and other students in Ottawa had been visiting the school for group study sessions. When the Freedom Convoy arrived, though, they could no longer access the school.

Angalik's classmate Kim Pilgrim, from the Nunatsiavut region of Newfoundland and

"It's definitely taken a toll on my mental health, being afraid of what could happen if I go out down-

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Supporters of the Freedom Convoy gather near Parliament Hill in Ottawa on Jan. 29 protesting government vaccine and health mandates. (Photo by Madalyn Howitt)