

Dallas Stars' Modano: 'Gretzky Ownership Story Is Bull***!'

Contributed by Mike Fisher
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I just finished a phone conversation with Mike Modano. He was leaving the room to head to the ice … as he considers soon leaving the ice for an ownership position with his Dallas Stars. The conversation was peppered with expletives.

“Are you part of an ownership group with Wayne Gretzky that could buy the Stars?’’ I asked him.

“I've talked with a lot of groups who are potential buyers and they all seem interested in having me involved,’’ Modano told me. “But I haven’t talked to Gretzky about it. I don’t know where that came from. That one’s bullshit.’’

This is a tricky deal for your humble DallasBlog and DallasBasketball.com correspondent. The author of the Monday morning story on a Gretzky-Modano ownership team is a close friend of mine and one of DFW’s best reporters, Richie Whitt of the Dallas Observer. But I’ve been friends with Modano for 18 years and I’m still waiting for him to tell me his first lie.

Here’s what I believe to be the truth:

*Modano – the face of the franchise since its move to Texas in 1993 – is in his way the Troy Aikman or Dirk Nowitzki of his sport in this town. Given his charisma and commitment, any ownership group would be wise to include him, in some capacity.

*Modano is in the final year of his contract. He’s played professionally since being drafted in 1988. He’s been a U.S. Olympian, a Stanley Cup champion and is arguably the finest U.S.-born player ever. After all that, he is seriously contemplating retirement.

*Gretzky – inarguably the greatest player in the history of sport and one of the greatest icons in any sport – recently sold his minority piece of the Phoenix Coyotes and may want to get back into NHL ownership.

*Tom Hicks is in the midst of selling the Stars … and he and Modano are close friends. Once upon a time, even as Modano and Hicks were engaged in a contract dispute, Modano made an appearance at the elementary school of Hicks’ kid for “Show-and-Tell.’’

*The Observer is right, I think, in suggesting that Modano would like to work with fellow legend Brett Hull. And as Modano tells me this morning:

“It’s no secret that I want to be a part of the Stars in the future, in ownership or management or whatever. I love Dallas and I want to be a part of the city and be a part of hockey here. I think that’s why (potential ownership) groups try to touch base with me. They know that I want to help.’’

I think this: Whitt's story may have come from sources (and I believe he has two) who anticipate a connection here. If other groups have all visited with Mo, maybe it's sensible to assume that a Gretzky's group will. And it's possible there is a semantic issue here; what if, for example (and this is only a hypothetical), the Gretzky group has met with Hully ... and Hully felt he was essentially representing Mo's interests as well as his own?

But as of this morning, anything factual about Modano's plans of working with fellow legend Wayne Gretzky?

“That just sounds like somebody speculating by sticking (Gretzky’s name) in there,’’ Modano tells me. “I’ve never said that, never had that conversation, never heard of anything like that until this bullshit story. It’s no big deal; I’m sure somebody (media) is just trying to do their job. But it’s bullshit.’’