

Saints defender O'Connell signs to play D1 hockey



By Jake Courtepatte

The St. Andrew's College Saints are sending yet another graduate to a top NCAA hockey program.

Ryan O'Connell joins a long list of Saints Old Boys to play D1 hockey, signing last month to suit up for the Boston University Terriers in the 2018-19 season.

The senior from Manotick, ON was picked up with the 53rd overall pick by the Des Moines Buccaneers in the 2015 USHL draft. The tall, offensive-minded defenceman was the first 1999-born Canadian taken in the draft, having joined the Saints program in the summer of 2015.

In 55 games with the Saints in the 2015-16 season, he scored four goals and 27 assists to finish third in defensive scoring on the team.

He was also taken in the eighth round of the 2015 OHL draft, by the Mississauga Steelheads.

"We are so excited and proud of Ryan," said varsity Saints Head Coach David Manning. "He's an outstanding student-athlete and is deserving of such an honour."

The Boston University program is one of the most storied in men's college hockey, winning five national championships and making 22 appearances in the Frozen Four. The school averaged almost 5,000 fans per home game in 2015-16.

He previously played for the Ottawa Junior 67's AAA club for three seasons.

"Ryan is a dynamic player who is only beginning to reach his potential," said Manning. "To continue that growth as a member of one of the NCAA's top programs like Boston University is quite special for him."

O'Connell will see some familiar faces in the powerhouse Eastern College Athletic Conference (ECAC), including Saints teammate

Mitch Martan, who will suit up for Boston College ? the Terriers' main rival.

The 2015-16 Saints are already off to a successful start after winning the CISAA Championship last season, kicking it off with an international tournament win last month. They defeated Finland's Ilves Tampere in the championship match of the DEL Junior Cup in Mannheim, Germany, the only North American team in a showcase of European talent.

Pre-season action for the Saints begins in a couple weeks against other Canadian and American independent schools, while CISAA league games kick off in early November.