

SAC students find success Stateside in soccer and football



By Jeff Doner

Two St. Andrew's College students have made it to the next step in their young athletic careers after inking commitments to US universities during NCAA signing day last week.

Michael Marcantognini, 17, and Chris Merchant, 18, both accepted scholarships to pursue athletics and academics south of the border.

Last Wednesday, Marcantognini officially accepted an offer from Michigan State to play division 1 soccer with the Spartans by signing a letter of intent at SAC.

‘Once I got down to the official at Michigan State, I kind of just knew that it felt like home,’ Marcantognini said. ‘I loved the experience, loved the coaches and just kind of had this sense of relief, because this process has gone on for a while, so now that it's decided I'm just really looking forward to the next six months and working hard. Once I get there I'll just do the best I can to make an impact on the team and help the team improve and get better.’

Originally from Sudbury, Marcantognini came to SAC three years ago when he was in Grade 10. Throughout those years, he said SAC gave him the opportunity to focus on both his academic and athletic goals.

‘Honestly, I couldn't have done it without St. Andrew's College,’ he said without hesitation. ‘I came down here as a part of the Team Ontario provincial team and boarded here at St. Andrew's College and Mr. Manning and all the coaching staff, all the teachers here at the school, I couldn't have done it without them. I'm so grateful to them and everything that they've helped me with academically and on the field has got me to this point for sure.’

Aside from playing soccer, Marcantognini also carried an impressive 85 per cent average this term and is looking to study business at Michigan State, which is another area of interest that developed during his time at SAC. Although he also admitted he's truly eyeing a profession career in soccer.

‘Once I came to St. Andrew's College, I was a part of the McEwan business program [a program to instill leadership qualities in its students] and that's where I really fell in love with it,’ he said. ‘So hopefully I can either major in finance or marketing, but for sure I want to pursue a career in soccer hopefully MLS or a career beyond that.’

Marcantognini will be heading to high ranked soccer club that has some clout in the NCAA circuit and he said he will relish the

chance to get to be a part of it.

"I loved the school and coaches and they also have a great school and soccer program there," he said. "Once I was there I kind of just fell in love with it right away. I sort of knew right when I got back from the visit that that was where I'd like to be."

While he signed his commitment, his parents proudly looked with pride.

His soccer coach, David Manning, also sang the praises of the young athlete.

"He's the best soccer player I have ever coached and quite possibly one of the best soccer players ever to play at SAC," he said. As for Merchant, he signed and sent a letter of intent to the Buffalo Bulls on a full scholarship.

SAC varsity football coach Len Gurr said the 18-year-old excels in every task he is given on and off the field.

"Whether it's his remarkable performance as the lead in *Lord of the Flies*, his 4.0 GPA in the classroom, or his tremendous leadership of our football program over the past two seasons, he has accomplished so many remarkable feats at St. Andrew's," said Gurr in a statement.