

Saints tackle commits to play top-level NCAA football



By Jake Courtepatte

Gregor MacKellar can already add a number of career highlights to his football resume: the offensive tackle was the MVP of his club team in Nova Scotia at the bantam level, won a championship with the province in 2009, competed for Team Canada at the U18 level in Dallas earlier this year, and last week, signed a commitment to play for the NCAA's Rice University Owls.

And the St. Andrew's College student is only just finishing his Grade Eleven year.

MacKellar, who was already turning heads at Sir John A. MacDonald High School in Nova Scotia as rookie of the year in Grade Nine, moved to Aurora to play for the Saints the following season. The next year, he was named team captain for the 2016 season.

SAC 1st football head coach Len Gurr said the entire program is "immensely proud" of MacKellar's achievements.

"He possesses an ideal combination of size, athleticism, toughness, desire, and humility," said Gurr. "These traits have enabled him to become arguably the top high school offensive lineman in the country. His character and work ethic are second-to-none."

Obviously Gurr's sentiments are shared by American scouts, as only a handful of Canadian high schoolers receive D1 offers each year. The 6'4", 310-lb MacKellar joins the Houston, Texas-based football program that is on the rise, having won its first conference title in 2013 when they defeated Marshall University in the Conference USA championship game.

MacKellar follows in the footsteps of two Saints old boys who followed a path to the NCAA D1, in Eddie Meredith (Boston College) and Peter Godber (Rice University), something Gurr calls "quite a challenge."

"Yet Gregor not only carried on the legacy left by those two, he has made his own distinct mark on our program's history. Receiving a full NCAA D1 football scholarship is an incredible achievement for any Canadian student athlete."

Godber, a similarly-sized junior for the Owls who moved into the starting spot at right guard last spring, led St. Andrew's to the CISAA championship in his high school senior year.

"Rice University is an ideal fit for Gregor," said Gurr. "The fact that SAC alum Peter Godber is already there starting on the offensive line will help a great deal. Peter has already been a great mentor and role model for Gregor throughout this process. Simply put, Rice's combination of exceptional academics and NCAA D1 football offers him everything he was looking for."

He added that SAC enjoys a strong relationship with the Rice University coaching staff, which should ease MacKellar's transition in

his second monumental move in only a few short years.

?Being a proud Maritimer makes this moment even more special. Very few football players from the Maritimes have ever been offered an opportunity like this. Without question, he is blazing a trail for other young men from the East Coast to try to follow. The jump from Halifax to Aurora to Houston is an exciting journey to say the least.?