

HOCKEY: Andrew Doyle commits to U of T

Spirit captain happy to stay, play in Canada

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Andrew Doyle could easily have gone to play his collegiate hockey south of the border this fall at a National Collegiate Athletic Association Division Three school.

In fact, he fielded some inquiries from small colleges in the United States.

But the 20-year-old Richmond Hill native who captained the Stouffville Spirit this past Ontario Junior Hockey League season politely declined.

Earlier this week, Doyle opted to remain north of the 49th parallel after being accepted by the University of Toronto.

Intending to earn a bachelor's degree in physical education and kinesiology, the six-foot, three-inch, 197-pound forward will also play hockey with the Varsity Blues.

"I didn't think I would get into the University of Toronto because of some of my marks (from high school)," Doyle said. "But it's a prestigious school and it was my first choice of Canadian schools."

U.S. OFFERS

Amassing 17 goals and 28 assists in 47 games, fifth-highest this past regular season for the Spirit and adding another 10 goals and nine assists during the postseason, Doyle elected to remain in Canada for several reasons.

From an athletic perspective, he felt playing in the Canadian Interuniversity Sport circuit would be a better fit.

In the case of playing for the Varsity Blues,

Doyle sees their program as one that's moving in a positive direction after they finished fourth in the 10-team Ontario University Athletics' East Division this past season.

And it's one he wants to be a part of, similar to his time in playing with the Spirit when they rose from the cellar four years ago to winning the Ontario Junior Hockey League title this past season.

TOUGH TRANSITION

"The coaches told me if I work hard and do what I did this past year I could be playing on a regular basis," he said. "That was another factor in deciding to go there."

"It should be exciting and fun."

U of T head coach Darren Lowe took in part of the Stouffville-Whitby OJHL final.

From a financial perspective, Doyle pointed out if he were to attend a Division Three program, it would likely be far more expensive despite what financial help he might receive.

In attending the University of Toronto, Doyle said he will receive some financial assistance.

He says the quality of education at a Canadian university is better than what he might receive if he went to the United States.

And in the event he decides to go to teacher's college, earning a degree in Canada would require him to do one less test than in the U.S.

Being three years removed from high school where he was working full time and playing with the Spirit, Doyle doesn't feel the layoff from the classroom will be an adjust-



SUN-TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO

Andrew Doyle heads up ice during last month's OJHL championship series against Whitby.

ment for him when he returns to class this fall.

"It'll be tough for sure," he said. "But I feel I'm the type of person who can manage my time well. I'm not much of a procrastinator."

"I know that during the first few weeks of school you're not playing much hockey and hopefully that will give me time to get used to things and do whatever homework I might have."

Craig Donovan, former Spirit head coach

who had the good fortune of working with Doyle, felt his decision to play for the University of Toronto will be a good fit.

"It is difficult for players from our league to make the jump direct to the U.S., but I think Andrew will do fine, as he is a great skater and a very smart hockey player. His coaches and teammates at U of T will appreciate how hard he competes every night to do whatever is needed for his team to be successful," he said.

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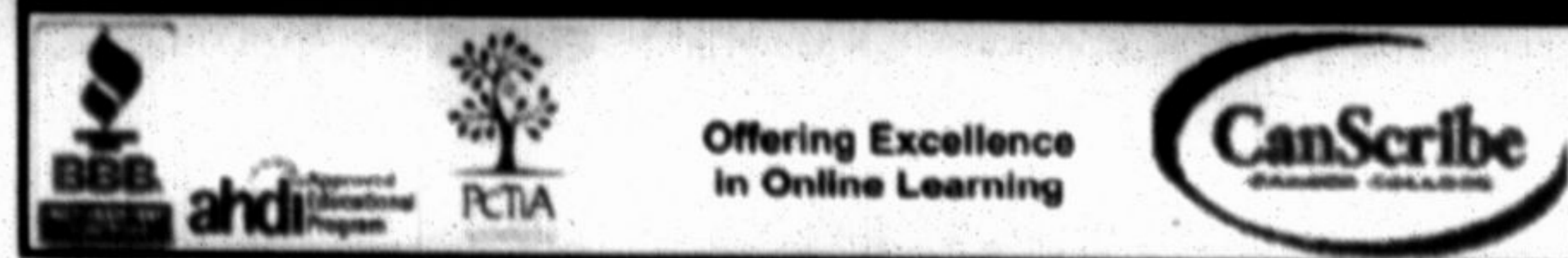


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