

Stouffville Sun-Tribune

# SPORTS

## Year at prep school pays off with NCAA scholarship

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To be the best at your craft you have to play against the best.

That's what Trey Rutherford discovered in his quest to play U.S. college football.

While the six-foot, five-inch, 290-pound Stouffville native excelled in protecting the quarterback and paved holes for running backs while attending high school at Villanova College in King City, U.S. collegiate coaches were skeptical of how he could handle himself against far superior players.

So, Rutherford transferred to a prep school in the United States last year.

The move to Kent School in Kent, Ct. paid off for the 17-year-old when he gave a verbal commitment to a scholarship offer from the University of Connecticut for 2014.

"I feel really blessed, grateful, thankful, and very proud to receive a scholarship from an excellent academic institution," the Glad Park Public School graduate said.

The game in the U.S., he said, is far more competitive.

"I was attending a great school

here in Canada at Villanova College in King City. But the (National Collegiate Athletic Association) Division One coaches who came for visits all said the same thing, that they would like to see me play against better American competition," Rutherford said. "My dad was in talks with a few (prep or high schools) schools down south, but Kent really recruited hard and a decision was made. It's a different game, much faster."

Rutherford thanked Kent coach Todd Marble who sent out highlight film late last year to schools.

*'But to get a degree while playing a sport is huge. Not many Canadian kids get this opportunity.'*

Although Boston College, Rutgers, Minnesota and Pittsburgh were interested, Rutherford said Connecticut was always his first choice.

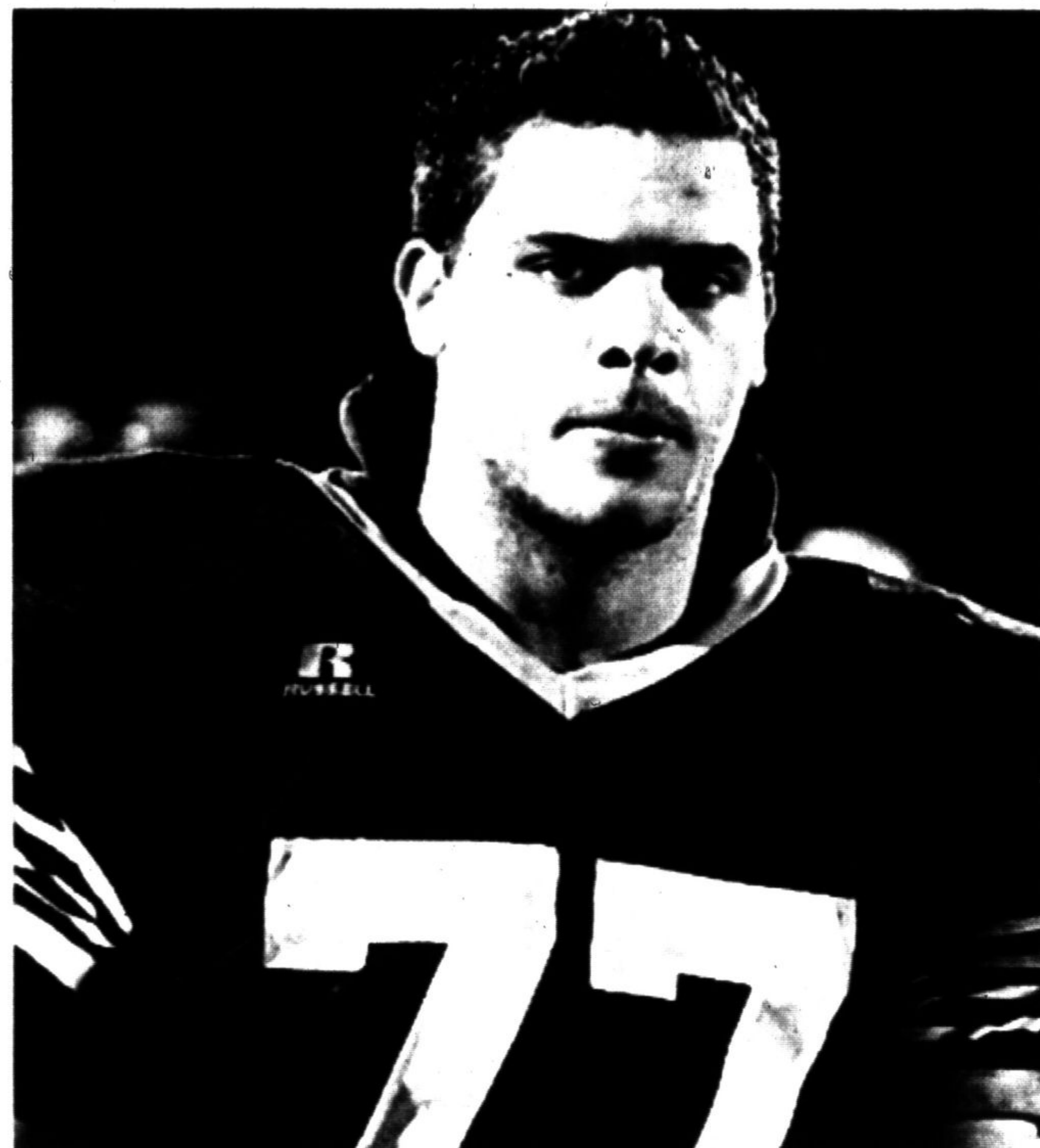
"UConn's coaches, especially their recruiting coach George DeLeone, came to Kent many times over the last few months before school ended and we had

lunch and when we spoke he indicated that I was their No. 1 recruit on their board and how I could make an impact right away," he said. "I will be getting the first install of the offence soon so I will be ready to compete for a starting role."

"Also, the facilities are unbelievable. The weight room is rated No. 3 by the NFL coaches and within the same facility we practise in the indoor field. We also eat and are fed well by the chef and we have access to full time football academic counsellors — all the support in one building. It's unbelievable."

Launching his football career with the Markham Raiders minor organization when he was eight years old through the encouragement of his father Fred, Rutherford said his decision to give the University of Connecticut an early verbal commitment will enable him to divert his full attention to having what he hopes will be a successful senior campaign.

"I really want to be a technician of the game and master the tackle position and take the sport as far as I can," he said. "But to get a degree while playing a sport is huge. Not many Canadian kids get this opportunity."



Stouffville's Trey Rutherford earned a scholarship to the University of Connecticut after a year playing at prep school south of the border.



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