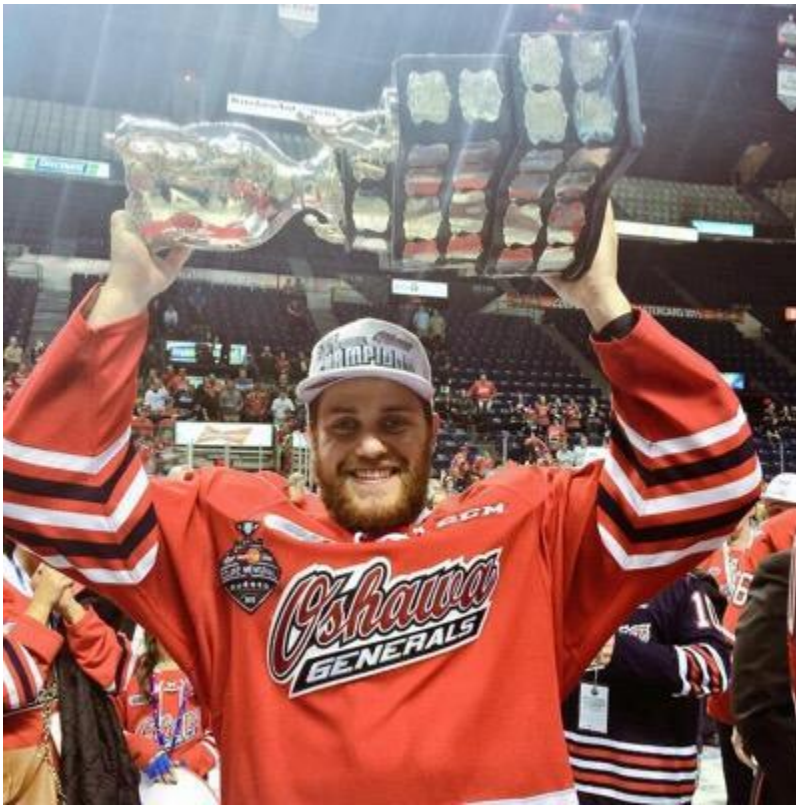


Alton native Dakota Mermis signs NHL contract with Arizona

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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Dakota Mermis created some hockey excitement on the Metro side of St. Louis today by signing a contract with the Arizona Coyotes in the National Hockey League.

Arizona Coyotes General Manager Don Maloney announced today that the Coyotes have signed defenseman Mermis, 21, to a three-year entry-level contract. As per club policy, terms of the contract were not disclosed. Mermis is a defense man.



An Alton High School graduate, Mermis said he may be the first from Alton to sign a National Hockey League contract.

“I am extremely proud of signing,” he said. “The Illinois side of hockey is growing quite a bit. I still come back during the summer to Alton and I train over in St. Louis. I will be here most of the summer until training camp.”

Mermis describes signing the NHL contract “a dream come true.”

“I think it is something I dreamed about as a kid playing mini sticks in the basement with my brothers,” he said. “I dreamed of scoring a Stanley Cup goal and the first step is to sign a NHL contract. I am so excited.”

During his childhood, Mermis played club hockey in St. Louis where he developed his skills. Mermis’ older brother played Division I hockey for Denver University, so he said he grew up around hockey rinks watching him play.

Mermis said NHL teams do not sign players unless they believe they have a legitimate shot at playing in the NHL.

“Every NHL team has a farm team and the NHL is good about not rushing young players,” he said. “If I go to the farm team I will work to keep developing.”

There has been rumors of the Arizona team moving, but Mermis said the team has been straightforward about continuing there.

He said he would love to play in Arizona because of family ties to the state.

“My mom and dad went to Northern Arizona to school and I have aunts, uncles and my grandpa lived there,” he said. “I would love to settle down there and enjoy playing golf in February.”

Mermis registered 6-24-30 and 86 penalty minutes (PIM) in 66 games with the Oshawa Generals and London Knights (OHL) last season. The 6-foot, 190-pound native of Alton, IL added 1-14-15 and a plus-12 rating in 21 postseason games with the Generals.

Mermis has totaled 13-53-66 and 196 PIM in 159 career OHL games.

For now, Mermis said he will continue with his high intensity training in St. Louis and look forward to training camp in the fall.

“Hockey was something I always loved to do and obviously it is great to continue my career,” he said.