

SHUNNED NFL FOR ALS

Doug Scott was tried at both defensive tackle and end in '80. "I enjoy playing either position. One's a sirloin tip and the other is a T-bone. They're both steaks . . ."



Scott, a native Montrealer, in defensive stance.

The Alouettes knew they had a good one when they made Doug Scott their No. 1 territorial protected draft choice in the winter of 1980. The strapping defensive lineman had completed a standout career at Boise State University, which was climaxed

by his being named the No. 1 defensive player in the Big Sky Conference.

While the Alouettes knew no one else in Canada could sign the native Montrealer, there was considerable anxiety over the fact that at least four NFL teams had

shown persistent interest in him — the Dallas Cowboys, Houston Oilers, Chicago Bears and the Seattle Seahawks.

Scott opted for the CFL and the Alouettes.

"Actually, it's always been my dream to come back home and



play for the Alouettes," he said after signing a five-year contract with the Als that included a \$40,000 signing bonus.

When he returned to Boise after his signing press conference, Scott said "I must have had at

least eight phone calls from Bum Phillips. He told me they were going to draft me in the sixth round."

The other three NFL teams hadn't bothered because Scott already had phoned and informed

them he definitely planned to stay in Canada. "I didn't call Phillips because they hadn't shown any interest in a long time."

If that wasn't enough to convince the Alouettes they had a diamond in the rough, they were

faced with similar evidence in the CFL.

"Everytime we talked to someone about a trade," said GM Bob Geary, "he was the first guy they would mention. It was like that all year long and during the winter as well."

The Alouettes thought enough of Scott's potential that they were willing to pay him the supreme compliment: They dealt with him not as a Canadian but as an import.

"That's one thing we established right from the start," said agent Gerry Petrie, "that he would be treated just like an American player." It's common knowledge there is a double standard pay scale in the CFL — one for Americans and a distressingly lower one for homebrews.

It would be nice to report that Scott was an instant standout in his rookie year. The fact is, Scott's freshman season was, at time, traumatic and laborious. The adjustment for a defensive lineman from college to pro football is difficult, especially where two different systems are involved.

Defensive line coach Joe Pascale, since elevated to defensive co-ordinator, recalls that his first opinion of the 6 foot 3 inch, 245-pound athlete was that "he ran well, he was a conscientious kid, very intent on making the team and knew why he was there."

"In a way it was a disadvantage for him. He was very, very tight and it hurt his early performance. He was a little too cautious, not as aggressive as he should have been."

"In college he had been taught to be a sit-back-and-read type lineman and then go to the ball. Here, because there is so much passing, we attack and then read the block on the run. If it's a pass, you keep on going for the quarterback. If it's a run, you look for the ball carrier."

The soft-spoken Scott agreed completely. "It was a big adjustment. The defensive strategy was just the opposite to what I had been taught in school. By the end of the year I began to figure it out. I was feeling much more comfortable and wasn't making as many mistakes."

Pascale admits that using Scott at both tackle and end, dictated by injuries to Gordon Judges and Gabriel Gregoire, "hurt his progress a little because he had to learn two positions right through until the end of the season."

The easy going Scott, who continued to pursue his business major at Boise in the off-season, didn't know what Pascale had in mind for him this season.

"It really doesn't matter. I enjoy playing either position. One's a sirloin tip and the other is a T-Bone. They're both steaks as far as I'm concerned."

Pascale said the Als plan to use him at both positions during the exhibition season and then play him at tackle.

"He has the physical tools to play end as well," Pascale says. "I think he'll be more confident this year. He now knows what it's all about, knows what to expect and will improve his day-to-day performance."

"If he stays as conscientious as he is, Doug should be one of the best defensive tackles in the CFL," Pascale predicts. "He's got good running ability, agility, good strength and he's both intense and intelligent."

Scott says he had time during the off-season to reflect on his weaknesses and his chief goal is to "constantly improve because if you don't, then you're getting worse."

"Now I know what to expect and what they expect of me."

While veteran tackle Gordon Judges had been Scott's idol since boyhood, even to the point of choosing No. 75, it was Glen Weir who provided the on-field coaching Scott needed.

"Glen was a real great help to me. I guess the biggest thing was he helped me to relax more and to understand more the way they play in Canada. The college stuff wasn't working for me."

Despite the ballyhoo that preceded him, Scott took nothing for granted when he joined the team.

"I was really nervous the first week or so in training camp. I hardly ate at all the last few days before I reported. I just pushed the food around on my plate. And I didn't get much sleep either."

"Ever since I was a kid I wanted to play pro ball and all of a sudden you're lying in bed the night before camp and saying to yourself: 'Hey, this is it. This is your chance. You worked hard to get here and you're just at the bottom of another level and you've got to try the best you can at this new level.'"

If anything, Pascale recalled, Doug might have tried too hard. "It was obvious he was afraid to make a mistake."

Scott also was in awe of his soon to be peers, people like Judges, Weir and 37-year-old Fred Biletnikoff, who had just joined the Als after a 14-year career in the NFL.

"I wanted to ask them for their autographs."

As part of their campaign to persuade him to sign an Alouette contract, the club brought Scott in from Boise as their guest at the 1979 Grey Cup Game at Olympic Stadium. It was only natural that one of the players he zeroed in on was Dave (Dr. Death) Fennell, the Edmonton Eskimos' great defensive tackle.

"I knew he had won the Schenley as the best defensive lineman in the league and I wanted to see what he was like. After all, who else was I going to watch — he played my position."

By Dick Bacon