

Foote(s) don't fail me now

Cal Foote is the latest in a long line of sons of former NHL players with a potential NHL career on tap down the line.

Cal's father, Adam Foote, won two Stanley Cups with Colorado as part of a 19-year run in the NHL, while Cal just completed his rookie season with the WHL's Kelowna Rockets in 2015-16 and has a shot to be drafted higher than his father, who went in the second round (22nd overall) to Quebec in 1989.

Foote, who tallied eight goals and 26 points in 71 games on the Kelowna blue line last season before adding nine more points in 18 playoff games, spoke highly of his first year in the WHL.

"I thought it went pretty great, both

second round in 2013.

"I think when you look at the organization that Kelowna has built and the players they've brought through, especially on the defensive side, it's pretty amazing, so I thought it would be a good opportunity for me to go up there and keep learning as a player," explained Foote. "From the defencemen coming out of Kelowna, definitely Shea Weber and Duncan Keith – you can't go wrong with how they play. They both play a solid game and make it easy for me to watch those guys."

In addition to the level of hockey changing, Foote also had to adapt to Canadian schooling and living away from home.

"School was a little different, but

Foote Report Card

Size/Strength	A
Skating	B-
Shot/Scoring ability	B
Puckhandling	B
Hockey Sense	A-
Competitiveness	A
Physical play	B+
Composure/Poise	B+
Defence	A-

helped me, as well as all my teammates [with the Thunderbirds], and he's done a lot for youth hockey in Colorado."

And while Colorado isn't exactly a hocey hotbed on the level of Detroit, Minnesota or Boston, it's getting there.

"It's unbelievable how much hockey has grown in Colorado, especially with Angelo Ricci and all he's done with the Thunderbirds," Foote said. "When I first went in there when I was 11, you weren't really thinking about juniors or anything. You're thinking about being on a AAA travel team and you just go year by year playing hockey and you keep getting better and better. Once you get to midgets, you look to move on to junior and the Thunderbirds do a really good job of helping you move on."

Next year in Kelowna, Foote will not only have to get used to a new head coach in former NHL defenceman Jason Smith, but in also having his brother on the team.

"I've only heard great things about [Smith], so I'm really excited and I think it will be a good year," said Foote. "I've actually never played on the same team with Nolan in hockey. It'll be a little different to have him in the locker room and to be around us every day, but he's going to love it and I'm going to love it, so I'm looking forward to it."

Once the 2016-17 season ends, that's when Foote said he'll start to push next summer's NHL Draft to the front of his mind.

"I try not to think about the draft, especially going into the season," he said. "I just want to go back up there to Kelowna and play and see what happens. There's nothing you can control, except how you play, so I just want to go out and play. I want to be more of a leader for our team. It's my second year and we'll have a strong team, so I'm really excited to be a big part of our team."

Cal Foote File

- ◆ **Ht/Wt:** 6-4/198
- ◆ **Position:** Defenceman
- ◆ **Shoots:** Right
- ◆ **Birthdate:** December 13, 1998
- ◆ **Team:** Kelowna Rockets
- ◆ **Scouting Report:** Big, strong young bull on the blue line. Has pretty good agility for such a big kid, but footwork could be quicker on his pivots. Gets great torque on his long stick and has a powerful shot that can either beat goaltenders clean or make it difficult for them to control dangerous rebounds. Has decent puck skills and good vision. Competes very well, as you would expect from the son of Adam Foote. Wins battles down low. Just beginning to fill in huge frame and will be a monster.

for me and for our team," said Foote, a native of Englewood, Colo. "It was kind of a bummer our team lost in four straight in the Western Conference finals (to Seattle and fellow Colorado native Scott Eansor), but we were a strong team and worked well together. It was easy for me to come in with all the veterans that were there before and those guys really helped me out."

Going from AAA hockey in 2014-15 with the esteemed Colorado Thunderbirds program to the WHL was "definitely a huge jump" for Foote, who skated two games with Omaha of the USHL in 2014-15.

"The preseason helps," Foote said. "It gets you adjusted to the speed and things like that, and it took me a little while to get used to it, but once you get used to it, you just go out and play your best."

Like most Americans, Foote, who turns 18 in December, was forced to make a decision at an early age – NCAA hockey or CHL hockey. And he's happy with his choice to head north of the border and play for the Rockets, who drafted him in the

I got through it – it's something you have to do," Foote said. "I had amazing billets that treated me so well and were very welcoming, bringing me into their house, and I really appreciated that."

At this past June's NHL Draft, Matthew Tkachuk, Logan Brown, Kieffer Bellows, Jakob Chychrun, Alexander Nylander and Max Jones were drafted and brought an NHL pedigree and flavour to the first round. Foote said having a father in the NHL was a unique experience.

"I loved always having my dad on my side – I took it as an advantage," said Foote. "He was always there to help and he would always tell me a lot of tricks that you don't really hear around anyone else. He was just always there to help me and I really benefited from that. He was always really good at letting us make our own decisions and for my brother [Nolan] and I, it was always hockey. He always said that it didn't matter what we did, but that we always had to give a full effort and try our best."

"He was a great coach. I think it