

2. San Jose Sharks

Prospect System Ranking – 2nd (Last Year - 1st)

GM: Mike Grier Hired: July 2022

COACH: Ryan Warsofsky Hired: June 2024

Could the 2024-25 San Jose Sharks be the first team to make a last-place finish enjoyable? Despite winning just 20 games in 2024-25, the Sharks, which housed young and electrifying youngsters such as Macklin Celebrini, Will Smith, William Eklund, and a plethora of others, brought fast-paced entertainment on a nightly basis.

Even with two of the league's top prospects graduated, the Sharks' pipeline remains a juggernaut. Their top 15 holds several elite talents, some poised to join the professional ranks as soon as next season.

Defenseman Sam Dickinson leads the charge. The 19-year-old is fresh off another dominant OHL season with the London Knights, which resulted in back-to-back OHL Championships and yet another trip to the Memorial Cup.

This year, he took home some personal hardware, to boot. With 90 points and the league's best plus/minus (plus-64), he took home the Max Kaminsky Trophy, awarded to the league's top defenseman. Still too young for the AHL, it will be interesting to see what plays out for his draft-plus-two season.

Beyond Dickinson, there are a handful of intriguing OHL contributors. Quentin Musty, Kasper Halttunen, and Igor Chernyshov all had tremendous seasons with their respective teams, and all three should suit up for the Barracuda (at least) for 2025-26.

They'd join an exciting American League team, which housed several young players as they broke out of their shells. That list includes Luca Cagnoni, Collin Graf, Thomas Bordeleau, Shakir Mukhamadullin, Filip Bystedt, Daniil Gushchin and Jack Thompson, who are all progressing nicely, with some already having enjoyed their first taste of NHL action.

Meanwhile, their prospect pool stems from more than just drafting. Mike Grier managed to add our (McKeen's) top-ranked goaltending prospect, Yaroslav Askarov. He's already enjoyed 13 games with the Sharks, and that workload should increase in 2025-26.

Of course, the adding won't stop there. With seven picks slated in the first four rounds in 2025 – two first-round picks, including this year's second overall – and four first-round picks over the next two drafts, the pipeline is about to be injected with even further potency.

The time to sell assets for win-now players may be approaching, and the standings could swiftly turn over for the better over the next few seasons.

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
1	Sam Dickinson	SJ	D	18	6-3/205
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
`24(11th)	SJ	2024	11	7-Jun-06	Canada
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
London (OHL)	55	29	62	91	39

The Sharks have to be ecstatic about how Dickinson's draft plus one year went in London, as he found yet another level, emerging as one of, if not the top blueliner in the OHL. If not for missed time due to the World Juniors, he would have unquestionably hit the 30-goal plateau, which is thanks to his booming point shot and ability to join the rush. He's such an impressive skater for a bigger defender which allows him to be everywhere on the ice. He can take liberties with the puck because he recovers well. However, his off-puck decision making really improved this year; he was picking better times to jump up or pinch to make things happen offensively. So, what are the next steps? Firstly, there's a need for Dickinson to continue to improve his physical intensity level in the defensive end; he needs to use his size to clear the crease and win those 50/50 battles more consistently. Secondly, he still needs to clean up his puck play under pressure; his skating won't consistently get him out of trouble the way that it does in the OHL. Given his progression and fantastic physical tools, Dickinson has the chance to be a top pairing defender for the Sharks. He also has a chance of cracking their roster next season, as he may have outgrown the OHL.

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
2	Yaroslav Askarov	SJ	G	22	6-3/175
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
T(Nsh-8/24)	Nsh	2020	11	16-Jun-02	Russia
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
San Jose (AHL)	22	11	9	2.45	0.923

Askarov is undoubtedly one of the most talented goalies seen in the past decade. His athleticism is on a world-class level, and one would be hard-pressed to find five who are more athletic. His agility, flexibility, explosiveness, and mobility from his knees are truly as good as it gets. It has led Askarov to play a very flashy, aggressive, and high-octane style of play. This has its benefits and weaknesses. Often, it means there's a lack of composure and control of the body, leading to excessive movement. This is an area Askarov has struggled in for some time, but he is showing improvement. His great improvement in AHL play and overall solid demonstration that he can hang in the NHL on the league's worst team are representative of this fact. He can make incredible saves consistently and, in doing so, generate a lot of momentum for himself and his team. He's hard to beat laterally and even backdoor, and the

value in that is immeasurable. With how his progression has been, Askarov likely will be a full-time NHL goalie next year, and his potential to be a future Vezina winner is obvious.

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
3	Quentin Musty	SJ	LW	19	6-2/200
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
` 23(26th)	SJ	2023	26	6-Jul-05	USA
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
Sudbury (OHL)	33	30	29	59	14

Things haven't really gone according to plan for Musty this year and the Sharks can't be happy about how his final year of junior played out. He started the season holding out from the Sudbury Wolves in hopes of forcing a trade. That did not occur. Then, when the holdout ended, he broke his hand and missed a significant chunk of time. These two occurrences kept Musty to only 33 games. Offensively, he was a difference maker when he did play. He has the skill and touch to be a high scoring NHL player. However, his off puck play and physical intensity returned to being inconsistent this season after some growth last year. Was this a lost year of development? You could probably make that argument. However, Musty remains a top prospect for the Sharks. If they can harness his talent and improve the finer details in his game, he can be a key part of their rebuild. At this point, he will probably need at least a season in the AHL before he's NHL ready.

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
4	Luca Cagnoni	SJ	D	20	5-9/180
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
` 23(123rd)	SJ	2023	123	21-Dec-04	Canada
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
San Jose (AHL)	64	16	36	52	28

Sometimes you just have to admit that you were wrong on a prospect and that's looking like something we'll have to do at McKeen's. We were skeptical of his ability to translate his skill set to the pro game, but thankfully for the Sharks organization, he has proven us wrong. After a tremendous first professional season, no prospect in the game has seen their star rise more. Similar to the likes of Lane Hutson or Olen Zellweger, Cagnoni is so effective offensively because of his ability to blend strong four-way mobility with quick hands. He routinely escapes pressure inside the offensive zone and helps breakdown coverage; he is a top shelf play creator. However, his defensive game hasn't been as poor as some (including us) expected it to be as a pro. He's been more than adequate in his own end and, when combined with his outstanding on puck play, it has altered Cagnoni's projection to make him a possible top four defender and first unit powerplay quarterback. Look for him to crack the Sharks next season.

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
5	Igor Chernyshov	SJ	LW	19	6-2/190
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
` 24(33rd)	SJ	2024	33	30-Nov-05	Russia
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
Saginaw (OHL)	23	19	36	55	6

Simply put, Chernyshov tore apart the OHL this year upon returning from a shoulder injury at the end of January. His 2.39 points per game were by far the best in the league as he formed a dynamic partnership with potential 2025 top three selection Michael Misa. Chernyshov is a dynamic attacker in transition. With his size, skill, and speed, OHL defenders truly couldn't slow him down. His playmaking ability really stood out in his limited OHL time. He shows poise with the puck and is more than just a head down, straight line attacker. His off puck play also stood out positively in his time with Saginaw; he is hungry for the puck and works hard to earn his touches. Next year, he will turn pro and play in the AHL and it will be interesting to compare and contrast rookie pro years of Musty and Chernyshov. They have similar projections as top six power wingers, but an argument could be made that Chernyshov's game is more refined and pro ready.

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
6	Shakir Mukhamadullin	SJ	D	23	6-3/180
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
T(NJ-2/23)	NJ	2020	20	10-Jan-02	Russia
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
San Jose (NHL)	30	2	7	9	8

A somewhat controversial first round selection among scouting circles back in 2020, and subsequently acquired by the Sharks, Mukhamadullin has developed just fine through two professional seasons in North America. The big defender has shown promise at both ends and has played well for San Jose this year, leading one to believe that he could be a full time NHL defender next year. His decision making, with and without the puck, has improved greatly since being drafted. He has simplified his approach and learned to make quicker decisions with the puck. Yet, his high-end mobility and flashes of skill suggest that he does still possess offensive potential for the NHL level. The true scope of his NHL capabilities is not yet known. In that sense, he's still a project that is developing. However, San Jose has to be quite happy with the results thus far.

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
7	Filip Bystedt	SJ	C	21	6-4/205
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
` 22(27th)	SJ	2022	27	4-Feb-04	Sweden
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
San Jose (AHL)	50	12	19	31	26

Bystedt's first full season in North America is probably best categorized as average. He flashed some ability to be a competent middle six forward for San Jose in the future, but he also struggled with injuries and consistency at the AHL level with the Barracuda. Bystedt's speed can play on North American ice. He can play that North/South game with effectiveness. One of the hallmarks of his game has previously been his ability to control the wall and work as a playmaker coming off the cycle, but he needs to bulk up further to be consistently successful in that regard at the AHL and NHL levels. The good news is that with San Jose's prospect depth, there's no reason or need to rush Bystedt. They can allow him to fill out and slowly gain confidence, with a look to 2026 as a possible arrival time, depending on how his development goes.

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
8	Collin Graf	SJ	RW	22	6-1/195
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
FA(4/24)				21-Sep-02	USA
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
San Jose (AHL)	40	8	27	35	12

A prized undrafted college signing out of Quinnipiac University and former two-time Hobey Baker finalist, Graf split his first pro season between the Sharks and the Barracuda. In the AHL, Graf was a true difference maker, excelling in all roles and as a play driving pivot who could elevate those around him thanks to his awareness and vision. As a Shark, Graf settled into more of a depth role, working as more of a high energy role player who saw key minutes on the penalty kill. Graf's true NHL potential likely falls somewhere in between. The key for him is to improve his strength and conditioning further. He's already a strong two-way player, but he needs to get stronger on/off the puck and add a little more jam to his game to excel in higher traffic areas and really take his game to the next level as a two-way player. Not all NCAA free agent signings work out, even higher scale ones, but thus far Graf does look the part of an NHL player and someone who can be a part of this San Jose Sharks rebuild.

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
9	Kasper Halttunen	SJ	RW	19	6-3/205
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
` 23(36th)	SJ	2023	36	7-Jun-05	Finland
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
London (OHL)	38	21	20	41	38

After last year's terrific play in the postseason for London, helping them capture an OHL title while leading the league in postseason goals, it was a bit shocking to see him sent back to London for another year. That's not to say that he didn't have things that he could work on (consistency, quickness, decision making), but it was surprising nonetheless. This year in London, Halttunen saw his offensive production dip considerably too, which has drawn criticism. His physical engagement improved this year. So did his skating. However, his decision making and playmaking ability remain a weak spot and could limit his upside as a pro. He still projects as an offensive weapon in the top six because of his scoring ability. His shot is among the best of any prospect outside of the NHL. He's a weapon on the powerplay. As an NHL player, the best-case scenario is probably someone similar to Dany Heatley, or even someone Sharks fans are super familiar with; Jonathan Cheechoo.

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
10	Jack Thompson	SJ	D	23	6-0/180
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
T(TB-3/24)	TB	2020	93	19-Mar-02	Canada
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
San Jose (NHL)	31	4	6	10	10

An underrated player in the Sharks system who was acquired in the Anthony Duclair trade with Tampa Bay, Thompson has worked hard to become a part of San Jose's long-term plans on the back end. A well-rounded right shot defender; Thompson is the kind of player who can be useful in a variety of roles. His mobility and awareness make him a solid defensive presence, especially as a rush defender. His ability to get point shots through traffic and make clean exits makes him a solid offensive contributor. He's not elite in any one area, but he's good enough in a variety of them for him to be a fixture in San Jose's defensive group for years to come. He'll eventually be pushed down the lineup due to the arrival of some higher skilled players, but he should settle into a solid third pairing role in the future and become a reliable

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
11	Danil Gushchin	SJ	RW	23	5-8/165
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
` 20(76th)	SJ	2020	76	6-Feb-02	Russia
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
San Jose (AHL)	56	28	23	51	34

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
12	Eric Pohlkamp	SJ	D	21	5-10/200
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
` 23(132nd)	SJ	2023	132	23-Mar-04	USA
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
Denver (NCHC)	44	11	24	35	22

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
13	Cameron Lund	SJ	RW	20	6-2/190
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
` 22(34th)	SJ	2022	34	7-Jun-04	USA
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
Northeastern (HE)	37	18	22	40	14

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
14	Thomas Bordeleau	SJ	C	23	5-9/180
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
` 20(38th)	SJ	2020	38	3-Jan-02	USA
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
San Jose (AHL)	59	14	24	38	39

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RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
15	Leo Sahlin Wallenius	SJ	D	19	6-0/180
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
` 24(53rd)	SJ	2024	53	10-Apr-06	Sweden
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
Vaxjo Lakers (SHL)	16	1	4	5	0