

# Sharks picks help London win Memorial Cup; Is this first-rounder NHL-ready?

*San Jose Sharks prospects Sam Dickinson and Kasper Halttunen help London Knights win Memorial Cup in Rimouski, Quebec*



*San Jose Sharks defense prospect Sam Dickinson prepares to play for the London Knights in a Memorial Cup semifinal game against the Moncton Wildcats on May 30 in Rimouski, Quebec. London won the game and beat the Medicine Hat Tigers on Sunday, June 1, to capture the Memorial Cup. Dickinson had a combined four assists in the two games. (Photo by Vincent Ethier/CHL)*

If this was Sam Dickinson's [last game in junior hockey](#), the [San Jose Sharks prospect defenseman](#) helped make sure he and his team went out on top.

Dickinson had three assists, including two in a dominant second period, to [lead the London Knights to a 4-1 win](#) over the Medicine Hat Tigers in the final of the Memorial Cup – major junior hockey's championship tournament – on Sunday night in Rimouski, Quebec.

Dickinson, taken [11th overall by the Sharks](#) in the 2024 NHL Draft in Las Vegas, [had six assists](#) in five Memorial Cup games and was an all-tournament selection, as he and his teammates earned redemption after losing in the final by one goal to the Saginaw Spirit a year ago.

"It's my family. These guys are my brothers," Dickins on [told reporters afterward](#). "We've been together, for me, three years now, some guys four years together. It feels like it's a perfect ending for this group. It's (how we) should have gone out."

Dickinson probably had a strong case to be the Memorial Cup's MVP, but that honor went to Knights forward and Toronto Maple Leafs prospect Easton Cowan.

But the Knights were deep, and Dickinson's teammate and fellow [Sharks prospect Kasper Halttunen](#) had two goals and two assists in five games at the Memorial Cup.

The Finnish-born Halttunen, [selected 36th overall by the Sharks](#) in 2023, was named the Ontario Hockey League's playoff MVP this year as he had 21 points, including 15 goals, in 17 postseason games to help London win the league title and advance to play in Rimouski. Halttunen had nine goals in five games in London's OHL championship series win over the Oshawa Generals.

"That's his game. He scores big goals. He's always done it for us," Dickinson said of Halttunen. "It's so exciting that I get a guy like that to hopefully play with for a lot longer."

Halttunen, [who turns 20 on June 7](#), will no doubt be in San Jose next season, either with the Sharks or in the AHL with the Barracuda.

Dickinson, though, will play next season with the Sharks or return to London for another year in the OHL, as he turns 19 on June 7. Canadian or American-born players coming from major junior hockey need to be at least 20 years old by Dec. 31 in any given year to be eligible to play in the AHL.

Dickinson, though, appears ready to begin his NHL career.

Dickinson, listed at a sturdy 6-foot-3 and 210 pounds, played on London's top defense pair and was used in all situations as the Knights tore through the OHL in the regular season and playoffs.

"Don't worry. Turn on your TV next year, he will be playing for the San Jose Sharks," TSN hockey analyst Craig Button [said on the network after Sunday's game](#). "I have no doubt about that. He's that good. He's that advanced."

Dickinson, [the OHL's Defenseman of the Year](#), is an elite skater with tremendous offensive skills, having recorded 91 points in 55 regular-season games and 31 points in 17 OHL playoff games with a deep London team that featured 12 NHL draft picks, went 55-11-2 in the regular season, and lost only once in the playoffs.

"I think (Dickinson is) the closest player I've seen in this tournament to the NHL," said former NHL goalie Marc Denis, an analyst for French-Canadian sports network RDS, on Sunday's broadcast on TSN. "And usually when a defenseman is on the attack, consistently like he is, you think he's a free spirit, right? A lone wolf. He's so mature in his game, says the right things, does the right things, and that's important for a defenseman."

"He's got a flashing green light, I've said it all along the tournament. But he's (been) really smart."

The Sharks have six defensemen signed to one-way contracts for next season, including Shakir Mukhamadullin, who was inked to a one-year, \$1 million deal last week.

Others signed include Marc-Edouard Vlasic, Mario Ferraro, Henry Thrun, Timothy Liljegren, and Vincent Desharnais. Other defensemen like Luca Cagnoni, Jack Thompson, and Lucas Carlsson also saw some time with the Sharks this season.

Still, no one among the Sharks' cadre of blueliners has the same combination of size and offensive skill as Dickinson, who probably needs to show he can be a capable defender to help stick on the NHL roster. The Sharks will likely start the season with seven or eight defensemen.

Although Dickinson has another year of eligibility left in junior hockey, TSN analyst Frankie Corrado, who had a seven-year professional career, said during the broadcast, "I'm not sure he's going to need it. He's going to look pretty good and teal and white next year in San Jose."

"We knew coming into this year that it was a lot of guys' last year. So it was really a last dance kind of thing," Dickinson said. "We knew that this was kind of the end for the core that we've built for three years. So it's unbelievable to finish it like this."