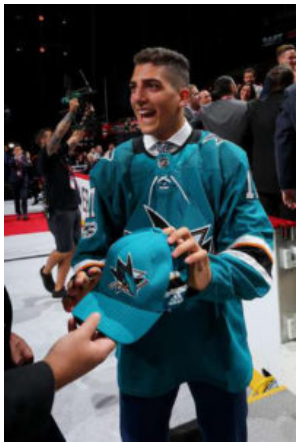
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King City native looks towards NHL future with Sharks

By Jake Courtepatte



Mario Ferraro is hoping his deadly mixture of speed and physical play will one day land him on the ice with the NHL's San Jose Sharks.

The 5'11,? 180-pound King City native was selected by the Sharks in June's NHL Entry Draft, the 49th-overall pick in the second round and San Jose's second pick overall.

When asked to describe his style of play, Ferraro called himself ?an offensive defenceman ... in the D-zone.?

?Of course I like to get involved offensively, transition the puck up-ice quick, but I also like to be very physical in the defensive zone as well.?

On paper, the offensive defenceman's game certainly holds up, having notched eight goals and 33 assists last season with the United States Hockey League's Des Moines Buccaneers.

Prior to that, he was one of the OJHL's highest scoring defenceman while in his second year with the Toronto Patriots, putting up 40 points in 51 games.

The Sharks, whose blue line includes the likes of 2016-17 highest-scoring defenceman Brent Burns, may have found their man of the future when it comes to putting up points from the blue line.

Ferraro took to the ice wearing the San Jose teal for the first time in July, where he impressed coach Roy Sommer, who ran the development camp.

?Just a ton of energy," said Sommer in an NHL press release. ?He plays with a lot of juice. A guy like that looks like he loves the game. I could see why they drafted him. I think he's going to be a good one. He's big and intense and a hockey rat.?

Ferraro called his first NHL training camp ?a really cool experience.?

?There's guys from all over the world, all different ages, and it's a good challenge for me as well, being pushed by all these great players.?

As for the present, Ferraro has begun his first year at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, where he is lacing them up for the Minutemen of the NCAA D1's Hockey East Conference. Ex-Minutemen alumni include the likes of the Los Angeles Kings' Jonathon Quick and the Pittsburgh Penguins' Conor Sheary.

?I'm hoping to just get better,? said Ferraro. ?And learn what I can work on in the future to achieve my goal of playing for San Jose one day.?