

A CONVERSATION WITH KINGS' OWN SEAN O'DONNELL

👤 Ryan Cowley 🕒 December 23, 2014



A collage of Sean O'Donnell (Image credit: Chris Thomas)

By the time he arrived in Los Angeles in 1994, the Kings, who had been perennial championship contenders as few as two seasons earlier, began to decline in success and popularity. Years later, however, he returned to help push a long-suffering franchise on the rise again and now, as a member of the team's hockey development department, Sean O'Donnell has been fortunate enough to witness the Los Angeles Kings reach the highest peak on the hockey mountain, so to speak.

Now serving as the team's Manager of Hockey Development and Alumni Relations, O'Donnell is also an analyst, alongside Patrick O'Neal, for FoxSports West during Kings' television broadcasts. From the latter alone, fans know the wealth of hockey knowledge the former defenseman possesses.

From his experiences in Los Angeles as a player to winning a Stanley Cup as a member of the cross-town Anaheim Ducks to his current role with the Kings, I asked Sean O'Donnell about these experiences.

RC: The Kings have had their ups and downs so far this season but seem to look more comfortable together with each passing game. How do you feel about the team's performance so far? What do you feel is working and what could use improvement?

SO: The team is playing well so far. They've been great on home ice and need to get better on road, but it's a long season and they'll get rounded into form.

RC: In addition to your role with FS West, you are also the Kings' Manager of Hockey Development and Alumni Relations. Could you touch on what you do in said position on a regular basis?

SO: I reach out to the community in ways possible to help expand the Kings' brand and get kids involved in



game of hockey.

Kings Alumni is something that each organization is looking for ways to improve. It is a combination of honoring precious players, to doing what you can to help give back to local community. I am on the alumni board and give my input/opinion on how best we can accomplish these objectives.

RC: After leaving Los Angeles in 2000, you returned to the Kings in 2008. What gave you the desire to return to the team?

SO: I was traded and had no choice (laughs). I lived in LA and the Ducks moved me to a place that worked for me so I was excited to join young Kings team, especially getting to play alongside a rookie named Drew Doughty.

RC: During Game 3 of LA's first-round series in 1998 vs. St. Louis, your team was up 3-0 when you started punching Geoff Courtnall. That incident lead to a major penalty where the Blues scored four times to win the game and ultimately the series.

Do you remember what prompted your reaction? Does anyone give you a hard time about the incident?

SO: Courtnall ran our goalie (Jamie Storr) who ended up being concussed. I still get teased by fans.

RC: To the dismay of Kings' fans, you won your Stanley Cup as a player with Anaheim. Regardless, how did it feel winning that first Cup, and celebrating in your hometown of Ottawa – home of the team you beat in the Final?

SO: I think after last two Cups, Kings fans are over the Ducks' 2007 win. It was a thrill of lifetime raising the Cup over your head. At the time, I didn't care it was Ottawa, but looking back, it would've been nice if it was a different year because I was always cheering for Ottawa when playoffs rolled around. Just obviously not that year.

Over the course of his 18-year playing career, Sean O'Donnell has made stops with eight different teams – but not have been more significant than with the Kings, which he spent eight years with over the course of two separate tours of duty.

In the 47 years of the Los Angeles Kings' existence, there have been many names that have become synonymous with the organization. Sean O'Donnell is one of those players. Fans may have been more hard-pressed to find his name on the scoresheet – 15 goals and 83 assists for 98 points in 541 games with the club – but the 43-year-old made his mark with the silver-and-black as a leader.

After holding the distinction of being the first captain in Minnesota Wild history, O'Donnell has been valued as a veteran leader above all else. In fact, each of the teams he has suited up for have benefited from his influence in one way or another.



As he stated earlier, O'Donnell returned to Los Angeles in 2008 where he worked with a rookie defenseman by the name of Drew Doughty. We all know what Doughty has contributed not only to the Kings but to hockey overall since entering the NHL as an 18-year-old but it goes without saying that O'Donnell's presence and wisdom was a guiding force in making the defenseman what he is today.

As a player, Sean O'Donnell has proven himself an asset and today, he proves that in his role not only with the Kings organization in a management role but as an analyst with FoxSports West.

It would be stating the obvious to suggest that 2014's championship win was very special to the Los Angeles Kings and their fans. Adding to the significance, however, was the inclusion of Sean O'Donnell to the team who is – and always has been – a fan favourite amongst the most avid of Kings' supporters.