

# LA KINGS REGULAR-SEASON PREVIEW: GAME 34 @ ARIZONA

👤 Ryan Cowley 🕒 December 26, 2015



*Image credit: Chris Thomas*

## Los Angeles Kings 2015-16 Regular Season:

### Game 34 @ Arizona, December 26, 2015, 6pm PST

The **Los Angeles Kings** — and the entire **National Hockey League** for that matter — are back from their Christmas break. The silver-and-black exploded out of the gate entering December but have since cooled off having lost two-in-a-row and three of their last four. Still, they hold a six-point lead in the **Pacific** when they travel to the desert on Saturday to take on the 16-15-2 **Arizona Coyotes**.

The Kings are hoping that the third time will be the charm on Saturday. They lost their first two games against the **Desert Dogs** this season — both at **STAPLES Center** by respective scores of 4-1 and 3-2. The **latter defeat** came on Nov. 10 on **Legends Night** when the Kings honoured newly-enshrined Hall-of-Famer **Nick Nickson**. In said game, it was former King Brad Richardson who scored the game-winner for Arizona with 8:13 remaining in regulation. Martin Hanzal also had a big night with two goals adding to his personal success against the Kings. In 35 career games against Los Angeles, **Hanzal has** 10 goals and 16 assists. Hanzal also had a pair of assists in Los Angeles back on Oct. 9.

Another Coyote who has had great career success against the Kings is **Shane Doan**.

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Doan, who is been a notorious agitator in this rivalry, has 36 goals and 78 points **in 103 games** against the Kings. Despite being at the tail-end of his career at 39, Doan is still effective enough to antagonize the silver-and-black.



He even assisted on **Brad Richardson's** aforementioned game-winner last month.

Goaltender **Mike Smith** had both Arizona wins against Los Angeles thus far. After his 40-save performance in the first meeting and his 33-save show on Nov. 10, he had proven that he was, for those nights at least, better than his adversary, **Jonathan Quick**. The latter statement should do nothing less than make the blood of Kings fans boil, and hopefully do the same for the Kings players. Quick will look to be the better netminder on Saturday and you can be sure that his defense, which has been suspect as of late, will do whatever they can to help him out. The Kings will also look to give Quick some offensive support. Of their three goals this season against Arizona, two have been scored by Tyler Toffoli — so expect the Desert Dogs to keep a few bodies on No. 73.

The Coyotes enter Saturday on a two-game winning streak but sit out of the playoff picture. Still, they are just one point out of third in the Pacific and two out of second. A third win against the Kings will do wonders for the Coyotes' confidence. That third win, though, will have to be earned, and you can bet the Kings will not be rolling over for, of all opponents, a bitter divisional rival.

Enjoy the game!