

LA KINGS REGULAR-SEASON PREVIEW: GAME 37 @ CALGARY

👤 Ryan Cowley 🕒 December 31, 2015



Image credit: Chris Thomas

Los Angeles Kings 2015-16 Regular Season:

Game 37 @ Calgary, December 31, 2015, 6pm PST

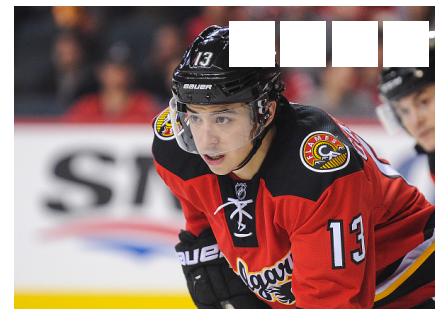
Some may suggest that it is only fitting for the **Los Angeles Kings** to end 2015 facing the team who had officially eliminated them from playoff contention last spring. Of course, most would suggest that this is simply just another game to focus on the past and they would be correct. On New Year's Eve, the Kings close out the calendar year — and their four-game road trip — in Cowtown against the 17-17-2 **Calgary Flames** for the first time this season.

The Kings will hope for better luck against the Flames this season. Last year, they lost four of five games to Calgary with **Johnny Gaudreau** leading the way with eight points (four goals, four assists). It doesn't help Los Angeles's cause that the one they call "**Johnny Hockey**" is leading the Flames this season in goals (17), assists (22) and points (39). There is clearly no sophomore jinx here.

While they lost on Tuesday night to Anaheim, the Flames had reeled off 11-straight home wins before that making the **Saddledome** an unfriendly place for many opponents. The Kings will look to reverse this trend, but the Flames have started to catch fire after their slow start to the season so a win for the silver-and-black will be a tall task.

Veteran **Jiri Hudler**, who has five goals and 20 assists for the Flames thus far, was also successful against the Kings last season, netting two goals and five

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assists, while defenseman **Dennis Wideman** had a goal and six assists against the silver-and-black in 2014-15.

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For the Kings, and **Tyler Toffoli** specifically, meeting the Flames could not come at a better time. Last season, Toffoli led all Kings with four goals and an assist against Calgary and entering Thursday's tilt, No. 73 is riding a hot streak that has seen him score six goals in his last seven games, including a hat-trick on Monday in **Vancouver**. To make matters even better, Toffoli and the Kings may even get **Jeff Carter** back in the lineup who has missed the last two games with an upper-body injury. His status for Thursday night's game is questionable and will most likely be a game-time decision.

While the Kings are not notorious for putting on offensive clinics, they are coming off 10 goals in their last two games. Last game in **Edmonton**, they skated to a 5-2 victory thanks to support from, among others, **Dwight King** and **Michael Mersch**, who each scored their first of the year. The former made his season debut that night while the latter's goal was the first of his NHL career.

Jonathan Quick is riding high as well. The Kings netminder played both of Los Angeles's back-to-back games this week, earning a shutout in Vancouver before making 42 saves in Edmonton. He will be in tough, though, as Calgary's **Jonas Hiller** won three games against the Kings last season.

While this rivalry has lacked in recent years, it is picking up great momentum and Thursday night should promise to be a clear example of that. We will see which club ends 2015 on a high note.

Enjoy the game!