

KOPITAR'S HIGHLIGHT-REEL GOAL LIFTS LA KINGS OVER COYOTES IN OT

👤 Ryan Cowley 🕒 December 27, 2015



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Game 34; 21-11-2

GLENDAL, Ariz. — The third time was indeed the charm for the **Los Angeles Kings** as they halted their two-game losing streak by defeating the **Arizona Coyotes** in overtime by a 4-3 count. Conversely, the loss ends Arizona's two-game winning streak and gives them just their second divisional defeat and their first against the Kings this season.

Back from the Christmas break, both clubs were looking to get off on the right foot. For the Coyotes, they entered this contest at a mark of 7-1-0 against the **Pacific Division** while the Kings entered the game with a not-so-stellar 4-5-0 against division rivals. On this night, it was the the Coyotes who drew first blood.

Coming into Saturday, the **Desert Dogs** were 28th-overall on the power play while the Kings were sixth-overall on the penalty-kill. That didn't matter early on as, with Arizona on the man-advantage, **Oliver Ekman-Larsson** slapped his eighth past **Jonathan Quick** at 9:43 of the first.

In the second, the Kings picked up their game, but could not solve netminder **Louis Domingue**, who faced 33 shots in total on this night.

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Quick, while he wasn't as busy, was just as effective in goal, if not more, as the Kings could have trailed by a few goals had it not been for his heroics. But in the third, the silver-and-black broke through.

With ex-King **Brad Richardson** taking a Delay of Game penalty late in the second, the Kings — also struggling on the power play recently — were on the man-advantage early in the third when **Drew Doughty** rifled a one-

timer home just 37 seconds into the frame to tie things up. Doughty capitalized on a crisp feed from **Alec Martinez** for his sixth with **Anze Kopitar** picking up the other assist.

Just 3:40 later, the Kings took the lead as **Marian Gaborik** fed **Tanner Pearson** in front who shoved his fifth past Domingue. **Dustin Brown** then ended a personal 14-game goalless drought just over two minutes later, taking a textbook pass from **Nick Shore** before sniping his third home. Suddenly, the Kings were running away with this one. But not so fast.

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With just under seven minutes remaining in regulation, **Jake Muzzin** received a match penalty for colliding with Arizona's **Boyd Gordon**. It appeared as if Muzzin hit Gordon — who was on his knees — hard with his backside, knocking the Arizona forward hard to the ice. While he was able to leave the ice under his own volition, Gordon had to leave the game and his team had a five-minute power play as a result. Shortly after, Alec Martinez was called for a Delay of Game infraction and on the ensuing power play, the Coyotes took advantage.

First, **Antoine Vermette** slapped a point shot home to pull the Coyotes to within a goal. Then, 30 seconds later, Oliver Ekman-Larsson tied with a point shot that fluttered past Quick. Suddenly, **Gila River Arena** was alive and well. The Kings had to settle for at least a point as this game went into overtime. However, whatever momentum the Kings lost, they regained it in the extra frame.

36 seconds into overtime, Anze Kopitar cut down the wing before faking out Domingue and netting his 10th on a backhand to win the game for the silver-and-black. The goal was the eighth shorthanded goal surrendered by the Coyotes this season.

So, the Kings return from the Christmas break on a high note as they hit .500 against Pacific opponents. It is also a good start to their four-game road trip as they now head to Western Canada.

Milan Lucic played in his 600th-career **NHL** game on this night and while his first-period penalty proved to be costly, he did finish the evening with three hits.

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Unfortunately for the Kings, the win came at a bit of a cost as **Jeff Carter**, who left the game with an upper-body injury, is expected to miss the next three games. Also, we will see if any further discipline will be handed down on Jake Muzzin.

Despite the loss, the Coyotes had a solid night from **Mikkel Boedker**, who assisted on all three of his team's goals.

Next up for the Kings is a Monday night date in **Vancouver** against the **Canucks**.
