

# SOLID DEFENSIVE EFFORT PUSHES KINGS PAST AVS FOR BACK-TO-BACK WINS

👤 Ryan Cowley 🕒 October 19, 2015

## Game 5; 2-3-0

LOS ANGELES — After picking up their first win of the season on Friday, the **Los Angeles Kings** were hoping to carry that momentum into Sunday night as they played host to a **Colorado Avalanche** team who they had gone 7-0-1 against in their last eight. Like Friday, a solid defensive effort coupled with some resilience catapulted the silver-and-black to a 2-1 victory.

It was a fast-paced start to the game as the Kings and Avs exchanged a total of 24 shots — 14 of those in favour of the home side. But it was Los Angeles who opened the scoring as **Marian Gaborik**, on a perfect pass from captain **Dustin Brown**, sniped his first of the year past netminder **Reto Berra** to give the home team the early lead. The goal, scored at the 13:39 mark of the opening frame, snapped Berra's shutout streak in the process.

If there was one flaw to Los Angeles's game on this night, it was giving the Avs — who had been very strong on the power play thus far — too many opportunities on the man-advantage. That was evident at the 15:57 mark of the second when **Matt Duchene** potted his first goal — and first point — of the year as Colorado capitalized on the power play to tie it. However, whatever air was deflated out of **STAPLES Center** because of that goal was quickly restored.

On the very next play with the Avs attacking once again, **Tyler Toffoli** broke it up by stealing the puck and rushing in on a breakaway. There, he made no mistake, beating Berra for his third of this young season — and his third in his last four outings — to regain the Kings lead just 23 seconds later.

Unfortunately for the silver-and-black, they had a hard time staying out of the penalty box, which is a liability against a team as potent on the man-advantage as the Avalanche are. To the Kings credit, however, Duchene's tally was Colorado's only power play resulted as the home side finished the evening having successfully killed five of the Avalanche's six opportunities, including a brief 5-on-3. While Jonathan Quick was solid, defensemen **Brayden McNabb** and **Jake Muzzin** — just to name two — were instrumental in Los Angeles's success on the penalty-kill on this night.

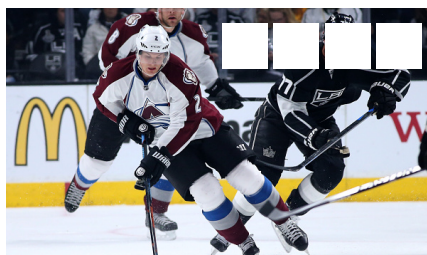


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**Alec Martinez**, however, was another blueliner who had a solid night. While he may not have registered any points, the **2014 Stanley Cup** hero was integral to his team's movement on the power play. Despite going 0-for-4 on the man-advantage, the Kings did move the puck much better than they had in previous games this season, looking more fluid, in sync. Martinez even chipped in defensively as he registered a pair of blocked shots.

The aforementioned Brayden McNabb, aside from making a crucial defensive stop late, was physical on this night, dishing out three hits, although Trevor Lewis did lead the way in said department with five. Still, McNabb's efforts, which included an assist on the Gaborik's opening goal, were good enough to earn him third-star honours.



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Having registered 40 shots but only two goals has become typical of the Los Angeles Kings, but that's not necessarily a bad thing as the team's defensive corps is starting to really come together and gel as a unit. It may still be very early in the season but it's so far, so good for the silver-and-black in said department and the results are starting to pay off.

As far as **Jonathan Quick** is concerned, he may not have been busy as Reto Berra but he was nonetheless a force, stopping 22 of 23 shots to pick up the win in what was his 500th-career **NHL** start.

After a sluggish start, the Kings were able to salvage their homestand with back-to-back wins. Next up, the silver-and-black will travel north for their first road game of the year as they visit the **SAP Center** against the **San Jose Sharks**. The Kings will hope to avenge their opening-night loss against a resurgent Sharks team, in tow with their new, just-as-resurgent netminder, former King **Martin Jones**.