

MARTIN JONES RETURNS TO SHINE AS SHARKS DOWN LA KINGS IN OPENER

👤 Ryan Cowley 🕒 October 8, 2015



Photo credit:
Juan
Ocampo/NHLI
via Getty Images

Game 1; 0-1-0

LOS ANGELES — The anticipation was palpable for both clubs. After underachieving finishes last season, the **Los Angeles Kings** and **San Jose Sharks** entered the 2015-16 campaign with something to prove, each hoping to put their recent playoff misses behind them. Like 2014-15, the Kings and Sharks opened the regular season against each other at **STAPLES Center**. Unfortunately for the Kings, it was a similar outcome.

The Kings immediately gave their patient fans something to celebrate as just 1:49 into the contest, **Nick Shore**, who wasn't even a guarantee to make the big club this year, tipped a **Dustin Brown** shot home to give Los Angeles the early lead. It was not the start that ex-King **Martin Jones** wanted. **Drew Doughty** picked up the other assist on the goal.

Jones, though, settled down and, while he wasn't as busy as his counterpart, he was nonetheless solid. To make his night even better, Jones's teammates found a groove and proceeded to dominate the contest.

At the 9:43 mark of the first, **Joe Thornton** tied the game and then, just over six minutes later, San Jose's newly-named captain **Joe Pavelski** cashed in on the power play. The Sharks had their first lead of the night and it was one they would not relinquish.

In the second, the Sharks added to their lead, scoring 2:07 apart. First, **Brent Burns** scored on a screened **Jonathan Quick** and then the Sharks added to their power play success thanks to **Tomas Hertl**.

In the third, **Joonas Donskol** scored his first-career NHL goal to give the Sharks the 5-1 lead, and that is how it ended.

Joe Pavelski celebrated his first game as San Jose's captain in style, continuing his personal dominance against the silver-and-black with a three-point game. Brent Burns and **Marc-Edouard Vlasic** each had two-point nights.

Martin Jones, who received a warm reception from the STAPLES Center faithful prior to the opening puck drop, was solid, stopping 19 of 20 shots he faced, including a great save on **Tyler Toffoli** late in the second.

But while Jones and the Sharks were firing on all cylinders, the Kings just could not get anything going on this night.

While the Sharks scored twice on the power play, the Kings were horrendous on the man-advantage, going 0-for-6. In addition, the much-anticipated top line of **Anze Kopitar**, **Marian Gaborik** and **Milan Lucic** were nonexistent on this night. The line finished with a combined rating of -6 while Lucic, in his debut for the silver-and-black, delivered a late hit on Logan Couture which will most likely mean a one-game suspension.

Defenseman **Matt Greene** was not expected to be in the lineup on Wednesday but made a surprise appearance. He led all players with five hits. **Jake Muzzin**, meanwhile, finished the night with a -2 rating.

To suggest that this was not the way to start a new season is stating the obvious. However, having been shut out by the Sharks at last year's season-opener, the Kings did one better. That, however, provides little to no consolation for fans of the silver-and-black.

With the opener now behind them, the Los Angeles Kings will prepare for their next contest: on Friday night when they play host to the **Arizona Coyotes**.