

# LA KINGS RE-SIGNING JAMIE MCBAIN TO SHIFT FROM UNHERALDED TO CELEBRATED

👤 Ryan Cowley 🕒 December 11, 2015

Never did I imagine how excited I would be when the Los Angeles Kings announced the re-signing of Jamie McBain. However, that was indeed the case last week when the blueliner got inked to stay with the silver-and-black for another year.

Despite suspending Slava Voynov last October, the NHL left the Russian's salary on the Kings' books – an unfair move given how precarious the situation was for the defending Stanley Cup champions. Nevertheless, Dean Lombardi and company had their backs to their wall with very little financial wiggle room. So, with just under \$1 million in cap space to work with, the Kings signed unheralded Jamie McBain in early November worth \$550,000.

While I had heard of the name before, yours truly knew next to nothing about McBain, but that soon changed.

Having played parts of four NHL seasons with Carolina and Buffalo, there was little about the then-26-year-old that stood out. His 6' 1, 181-pound frame was slightly small by Kings' standards although he did rack up a +14 rating while scoring six goals and adding 11 assists in 2013-14 for the Sabres. Once McBain began suiting for his new team, though, yours truly – in addition to many King fans – was left pleasantly surprised.

Unlike the case with past depth signings, the Kings didn't have much to spend so it is fair to suggest that the pressure was on Jamie McBain to earn his keep, but to the delight of his new team and their fans, he did so almost immediately.

Overall, his three goals and six assists and 26 games do not exactly look spectacular on paper, but McBain was there to fill a significant void left not only by Slava Voynov but by Willie Mitchell as well.

With Drew Doughty playing an exorbitant amount of minutes each night, Jake Muzzin still adjusting to a full-time role and Brayden McNabb getting his own feet wet in the big leagues, the Edina, MN, native entered an odd predicament, joining a team who, despite winning the Stanley Cup just five months earlier, was re-adjusting on the back end. To his enormous credit, though, McBain seemed to fit in with ease, averaging 12:41 of ice time. Despite his contributions, though, it was almost bewildering as to why McBain spent so much time in the press box as a healthy scratch.

Regardless whether Slava Voynov returns or not, Jamie McBain is just what the Kings need on the blueline this coming season. That is especially true in the wake of an expensive Andrej Sekera leaving to sign with the Edmonton Oilers.

While the loss of Sekera does sting considering, out of all aspects, how much the Kings gave up for him, he did sign a five-year deal where, in the first two years, he will be making \$6.5 million annually. Jamie McBain's new contract is worth \$600,000. So, while that alone may not give King fans closure in the waking of losing the veteran defenseman, it should help considerably, especially considering the Kings have much more financial lenience to call up a soon-to-be NHL-ready blueliner like a Derek Forbort when the time comes.

The news of Jamie McBain's re-signing in Los Angeles may not have shaken the foundation of the hockey world but sometimes – in fact, many times – it's those under-the-radar moves that puts a team over the top. In a way, this reminds me of mid-August 2010 when, with everything quiet on the free-agent market, the Kings signed aforementioned Willie Mitchell. Whichever way you look at it, though, the Kings are keeping a solid defensive-minded blueliner who can move the puck very well, even on the power play where one of his three goals came from last season.

Let's only hope that Jamie McBain will be spending less time in the press box and more time on the ice. After all, as far as yours truly is concerned, this underrated piece of the puzzle could very well be just what the silver-and-black need to make last season's disappointment a distant memory.

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