

# ROYAL REFLECTIONS: SPEAKING WITH LA KINGS LEGEND DARYL EVANS

👤 Ryan Cowley 📅 April 10, 2017



*Image credit: Ryan Cowley Original photo credit: Bruce Bennett*

While skill plays a role, so does luck. But, don't go thinking that being lucky is a bad thing.

Ask **Bob Nystrom**; ask **Mike Eruzione**; ask anyone who has ever scored a career-defining game-winning goal if timing means anything. For **Daryl Evans**, it certainly did and, while his goal may not have been a championship winner like those of the aforementioned, the former left winger has nonetheless gone down in hockey lore, scoring, at that juncture and arguably overall, the biggest goal in **Los Angeles Kings** history.

The date was **April 10, 1982**; the Kings were hosting the juggernaut **Edmonton Oilers** in the opening round of the playoffs. The Oilers, stocked with a plethora of talent the **NHL** had rarely seen before, were led by **Wayne Gretzky**, who had just set **record-shattering** marks of 92 goals and 212 points that season. The Kings, though, had earned a split in Edmonton for the first two games of their series but Game 3 at the **Great Western Forum** looked like it was going to be ugly for the young Kings — and, in the early going, it was.

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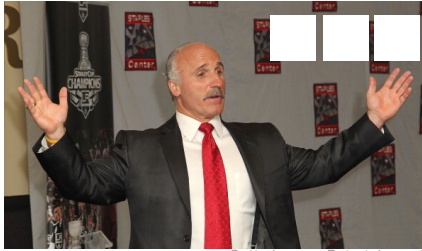
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The Kings entered the third period down 5-0. Few would have blamed the club for packing it in and focusing on the next game. To the Kings' credit, though, they elect not to give up, and began decreasing that once-insurmountable deficit, ultimately tying the game in the dying seconds, setting the stage for overtime. Then, at the 2:35 mark of the extra frame, centerman **Doug Smith** won a faceoff to the left of Oilers' netminder **Grant Fuhr** when Daryl Evans jumped on the loose puck, snapping it into the top corner to win the game and complete the improbable comeback for the Kings — which has become forever known as **'The Miracle on**



**Manchester'**. The goal set tone for the rest of the series as the Kings ultimately eliminated the Oilers in Edmonton to complete one of the greatest upsets in NHL playoff history.

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However, while many are quick to associate his name with that goal, the legacy of Daryl Evans runs deeper than what happened on that April evening 35 years ago.

Shortly following his conclusion of his playing career, which also included stints with the **Washington Capitals** and his hometown **Toronto Maple Leafs**, Evans would join the broadcasting booth, where he remains today, as an analyst alongside **Hall-of-Famer Nick Nickson**. In addition, Evans, known for his strong skating ability, holds skating clinics for participants of all ages. Also, since 2012, Evans has run the '**Fit To Be Kings Runners Club**' which was formed through a partnership between the Kings and an organization very dear to Mr. Evans, the **American Heart Association**.

In this edition of **MakeWay's 'Royal Reflections'**, we speak with Daryl Evans who takes us through 'The Miracle on Manchester' from the gradual momentum build for the Kings in the third period to his overtime winner. Evans also shares with us how he ended up in the broadcast booth despite never envisioning a career there prior to and also his role in the community.

This, ladies and gentlemen, is Daryl Evans.

Bob Miller Call (OT Goal - Kings vs Oilers 1982 Playoffs)



**Make Way for the Kings: You were drafted by the Kings in the ninth round of the 1980 Draft. Were you deterred at all having been drafted so late or did it give you extra motivation to succeed and to ultimately get to the NHL?**

Daryl Evans: You know, I think at that time when you're a young player, 19 years of age, just looking to get drafted, regardless of where it is— obviously we all want to go a lot earlier in the draft, but just being drafted and hearing your name called is a great honour and it's something very exciting for a young player. That's the way I felt when I was in the old **Montreal Forum**, where the draft was at the time, and it was very exciting.

**MW:** You were among a handful of rookie call-ups late in the 1981-82 season, playing in 14 regular-season games. However, bigger things were on the horizon as the Kings upset the heavily-favoured Edmonton Oilers in the first round of the playoffs, sparked by a 5-0 comeback in Game 3 win where you scored the overtime winner. That goal, obviously, would not have been possible had the Kings not made their dramatic third-period comeback first. Could you take us through the gradual momentum shift for the Kings during that third-period comeback?

DE: Well, when the second period was over, the Kings were trailing by five goals at that time. It was— it looked like a pretty insurmountable lead, but I think the approach we took going into the third period was to go out and win the final 20 minutes and just to get back on track, and get a little bit of momentum going heading into the next game of the series, which would have been Game 4. So, that's the attitude we took.

I think when we were fortunate enough to score a goal early on [in the third period], it kind of got us going a bit, gave the crowd a chance to do some cheering and by the mid-point of the period when we made it 5-2, at that point, it seemed like it was more respectable. You look at that scoreboard and we were winning that third period, which we set out to do, and things were on a bit more of a positive note being that we were still trailing by three. The confidence on the Oilers' side of things — they were still very confident, as they should be having a three-goal lead, arguably one of the most potent offenses the NHL has ever seen — so, I think that they trusted that they were in a pretty good spot.

Then, I remember at the 9:56 mark of the period, a bunch of us got those 10-minute misconducts and were sent to the locker room, so I was one of those players that got that and had to listen [to the game] from the

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Bruce Bennett  
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locker room the rest of the way. But, as things continued to keep moving, I think when you look at the latter part of the third period, or the midway part when it became 5-3, now I think you look at it and you think there's a possibility of something happening. Now, is the clock going to run out before good things can happen? We were fortunate enough to have a power play late in the period — **Garry Unger** took a five-minute major penalty that allowed us to be on the power play — and [the Oilers] had a couple of breakaways in that third period that they weren't able to capitalize on, and it just seemed that things kind of turned in our favour. We were basically racing against the clock. We pushed it to almost as close as we could get by scoring that equalizing goal with five seconds left.

So, it was an unbelievable third period and I remember, like I said, those dying moments there, trying to eventually get the equalizer and just hearing the way the announcers, **Bob Miller** and Nick Nickson, were talking about it. **Jim Fox** had stripped Wayne Gretzky of the puck in the offensive zone, there were a lot of climactic points in that small timeframe and eventually, the puck ended up in the back of the net, sending the game to the extra period.

**MW:** As exciting as it was to mount that comeback in the third, it must have been especially thrilling to win the game in overtime. Could you take us through what that overtime was like and what happened in the moments leading up to your goal?

**DE:** Well, I think when we step on the ice— I remember the seconds leading up to that goal, we had dumped the puck in and Grant Fuhr made a save on the puck, held onto it and I felt at that point— it was almost like a little bit of a freeze in time for a split second there and I felt that the puck, we should have kept it [on the ice] and in motion, instead of creating a defensive-zone faceoff for his team and an offensive-zone faceoff for our team.

*Photo credit: kings.nhl.com*

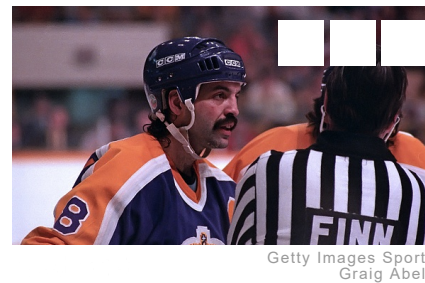
Then, I remember when **Don Perry**, our coach, put us on the ice — Doug Smith at center, **Steve Bozek** on the left and myself on the right side — we had three young players there. I remember lining up for the faceoff and we only had one hashmark on the faceoff circles at the time and **Kevin Lowe** was [the Oilers] player, the defender, who I was lined up against. Of course, he had his stick in my midsection, hanging out, he swiped and backed off a couple of feet. Doug Smith does a great job winning the faceoff, pulling it in behind him there and nothing happens unless he wins that faceoff, so I just walk into it, put the puck in the direction of the net. It had eyes and ends up over the right arm of Grant Fuhr and the rest is basically history.

But, it was an unbelievable moment and something I really learned to appreciate as time has gone by.

**MW: Whether teammates or coaches, who were some of your biggest influences during your playing career with the Kings?**

**DE:** I think being on [the Kings] team, which was known as the ‘**Triple Crown Line**’, playing with guys like **Marcel Dionne**, **Charlie Simmer** and **Dave Taylor**, the chemistry they had as a line and the leadership that they provided for young guys like myself coming up, those are moments that you’ll always remember. I think those guys always stand out. I was very grateful for Don Perry, who was the coach of the Kings when I got the chance that year in ‘The Miracle on Manchester’, I had him [in Los Angeles] but also in the **American Hockey League** [with the **New Haven Nighthawks**] and individuals like that stand out. I also remember [former Kings captain] **Terry Ruskowski** who came to us from **Chicago**. The leadership that he provided, just a different element from a veteran player.

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Those are players that are always very good to be around. You could learn a lot of things both on and off the ice and I would say that those guys impacted my career in a positive manner.

**MW: In addition to your playing career, you later joined the Kings as a broadcaster where you work alongside Hall-of-Famer Nick Nickson for the club’s radio broadcast. What were the circumstances that led to you entering the broadcast booth and what have you learned along the way from Mr. Nickson?**

**DE:** You know, it was nothing I really thought of at any time during my career or post-career. I remember leading up into my first game [in the booth], I was working in the automobile business at the time and we needed to cut a commercial that I went down to do with Nick Nickson down at the Forum prior to the game one night. **Mike Allison** was the Kings’ colour analyst at that time and he wasn’t at the rink yet. I was asking where Mike was and Nick had divulged that something had happened in regards to Mike on a personal note, that he was going to come to the game and fly out the next morning and go back home to address whatever he had to address. If I’m not mistaken, the Kings played again the next night or the night after that and I kind of asked [Nickson] who was going to do the next game with him and he said he hadn’t thought that far in advance and so I said I would do it with him and that’s how I came about doing my first game.

*LOS ANGELES, CA – NOVEMBER 28: Nick Nickson and Daryl Evans host Kings Talk following the game between the Los Angeles Kings and the San Jose Sharks at Staples Center on November 28, 2011 in Los Angeles, California. (Photo by Noah Graham/NHLI via Getty Images)*

It was something that I enjoyed doing and the following season, the Kings had come to me and asked me if I’d be interested in the position. We couldn’t come to terms at that time but they kept me on the radar and when ^

**Cammi Granato** came on board, [the Kings] hired her as a color analyst along with Nick and she wanted to continue her playing with the [United States} national team. So, there were going to be a number of games that she wasn't going to be able to make and they had asked me if I'd like to fill in and do those and, of course, I said, "Yeah," and a few games led to a few more, many more than I had expected — I think it was 17 games that year — and I think that really opened the door, paved the way for what would become a broadcasting career for myself.

After that season was complete, the Kings came to me on another note. I joined them as the Director of Suites and Premier Seats for what would be **STAPLES Center**, which wasn't open yet — it was the spring prior — so, I went there in that capacity and within weeks, I was hired also as the general manager of the training facility [**Toyota Sports Center**] in El Segundo, and eventually, the full-time regular position came all in that same wave. So, it was a busy, so to speak, off-season for me but it was great and like I said, it opened up so many things into where my career was going and what I was going to be doing, which leads me to today.

**MW: You are also very involved with the Los Angeles community, running adult hockey clinics and Fit To Be King, not to mention donating your time to numerous charities. How did those opportunities come about and how are you enjoying them?**

**DE:** Well, I think when it comes to the opportunities, I started teaching skating — power skating — when I was 10 years of age, just before my 11th birthday back in Toronto. So, when I came out [to Los Angeles], we did the one camp one year — I believe it was '82 in the off-season — I really enjoyed that and took a love for it and had a chance to assess youth hockey here in California in comparison to Toronto, and it was something I wanted to jump in and help out with. It was something I felt I could have a positive impact on, so I kind of dove in full-force at the time and became involved in summer camps and clinics. When we opened the training facility in El Segundo in '99, I started programs: the '**Lil Kings**' programs where we had little kids on the ice, also started a women's program.

We continue to have our camps and clinics all over the state and I've been a big part of that. We've even gone into Nevada and it's one of the reasons why, coming into next season, Las Vegas will host an NHL team.

So, being involved in youth hockey has been great, just watching the way the game has grown. The American Hockey League is now out here in California, we have high-school leagues. You know, the next thing that will really put the icing on the cake is to get **Division-I, II or III** hockey here but that's another department that I stepped into for a few years, too. I coached **UCLA** to the **Pac 8** [now **Pac 12**] **Championship**. We won that. We went to the national championships one year and was voted **Coach of the Year** in the two years I was with them.

I touched a lot of different capacities from the hockey element.

Charities: I sit on the board of the American Heart Association, I support the **National Brain Tumor Society**, the **Ronald McDonald House** in southern California. So, I just feel very fortunate that the impact I can have that I'm able to give something back, so I try to do as much as I possibly can, to be involved with the kids and the schools, the **Children's Hospital [Los Angeles]**, the **Fire Department**, the **Police Department**. I get involved wherever I can and it's just been great that I've been embraced into the community and I just feel that somewhere I've been not only for my adult life but somewhere where I've been around a lot longer. My kids have grown up in the community and I just feel very fortunate, so I just give back as much as I can.

Kings Weekly: LA Kings Run Club



He will be forever known as an overtime hero; that much is certain. But for everything that he has contributed since then, whether to the organization or to the community, there are few who are more admired and more synonymous with the Los Angeles Kings than Daryl Evans.

In addition to his contributions, Evans has also garnered fame as a sharp dresser, decking himself out in colourful, flamboyant suits — much like **Hockey Night in Canada's Don Cherry**, albeit a much-less-polarizing figure. But, most of all, what gravitates fans towards Evans is the fact that he is a down-to-earth man, a consummate gentleman.

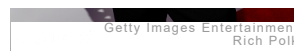
This writer has had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Evans on a few occasions. One such occasion occurred just hours before the **2015 Hockey Hall of Fame Induction**

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**Ceremony** where Evans' broadcasting partner, the aforementioned Nick Nickson, was inducted into the game's Holiest shrine.



At the event with friend and colleague **Jeff Duarte**, Evans invited us both to his hotel where we sat and talked about everything from **Nickson's career** to the influence he had on Evans to 'The Miracle on Manchester'. What I remember vividly was Evans' storytelling ability, which involved painting a picture for us to the point where the Kings' color analyst actually stood up and recreated his overtime-winner from 1982. Needless to say, both Jeff Duarte and I were richer for the experience.

The first time I met Mr. Evans, though, was the previous December when the Kings were in Toronto preparing to play the **Maple Leafs**. Following the club's practice, there were a handful of young Kings fans hoping to get autographs from their favourite players. Unfortunately, one child was in tears when his favourite player, **Jonathan Quick**, had already left for the bus.

*Daryl Evans, myself (middle) and Jeff Duarte (right); November 2015, Delta Hotel Lobby, Toronto (Photo credit: Jeff Duarte)*

Being consoled by his parents, the child was approached by Evans, who graciously took what he wanted autographed — a handful of memorabilia — and brought it out to the bus for Quick to sign. Needless to say, Evans' kind gesture made the child's week.

This writer actually wrote about the encounter in the days following. If you'd like to read it, I strongly encourage you to do so **here**.

To say that Daryl Evans has had a successful career in hockey would be an understatement. But for the former King, it's been all about giving back to the team, to the community and to the game that have given him and his family so much over the years.

Many of us first remembered him as not so much for his famous overtime winner but his reaction to said goal, akin to a **Price is Right** contestant who had just won a brand new car, dashing across the stage in utter jubilation. That may have been how he first got our attention, but Daryl Evans kept our attention with his exceptional broadcasting skills and his selfless contributions to the Kings organization, their fans and the community — and if he were to be honoured for these accolades, Evans would simply be too humble to accept them.

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Daryl Evans and the Los Angeles Kings: it's too difficult to imagine one without the other.

But, Evans' association with the Kings makes fans everywhere that much prouder to be supporters of this proud organization.



Daryl Evans, we salute you.

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