

ROYAL REFLECTIONS: SPEAKING WITH LA KINGS LEGEND ADAM DEADMARSH

👤 Ryan Cowley 📅 January 17, 2017



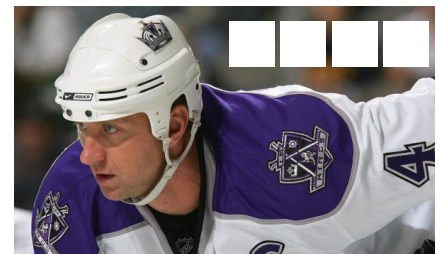
Image credit: Ryan Cowley

For 42 years, my father waited for his **Detroit Red Wings** to win a **Stanley Cup** — a feeling Kings fans can certainly relate to.

For my father, that wait ended in 1997 as he finally witnessed his team hoist Lord Stanley's chalice before watching them do it again the following year. Then, two years later, a chapter was added to the family rivalry as my father's Wings made short work of my, and my brother's, **Los Angeles Kings** by sweeping them in the opening round of the 2000 playoffs. Suddenly, my father was no longer a fan of a bottom-feeder but a perennial championship winner. So, in 2001 when the Kings were on the verge of falling behind 3-1 in their opening-round series with Detroit, it was understandable that my father became a little too big for his britches.

In addition to being swept by the Wings the previous spring, the Kings were fresh off trading star defenseman **Rob Blake** and thus, weren't given much of a chance in 2001. In fact, after finding themselves down 2-1 in their opening-round series against Detroit, the 2001 Kings were on the ropes, trailing 3-0 late in Game 4. Little did anyone know — including my father, who had been so sure of another Red Wings win that he prematurely went to bed — what was in store next.

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The Kings would go on to score three times to tie it before **Eric Belanger** completed the comeback in overtime on a beautiful pass from **Adam Deadmarsh**. Suffice to say that my father was a little more than shocked when he woke up the next morning.



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Earlier this season, in a continuation of **MakeWay's 'Royal Reflections'** series, I was able to speak with Adam Deadmarsh, who recounted his experience during said series, which has since become known as **'The Stunner at STAPLES'** or, to some, **'The Frenzy on Figueroa'**. Whatever you call it, though, it was one of the greatest moments in Kings history.

"During a playoff series, you know it is not all about one game," Deadmarsh told me. "It is a long journey so we needed to continue to play hard [in Game 4] no matter what the outcome. Pucks started to go in the net for us and the result ended up favoring us in that one. Detroit was not an easy team to come back on they were great defensively so the fact that we overcame that deficit is quite remarkable."

After taking Game 5 in Detroit, the Kings returned home looking to close out the series. Again, the Kings were down late but Deadmarsh scored the tying goal to force overtime before ending the series in the extra frame, making a significant mark on a franchise he had only been with for, at the time, a few weeks.

"As a team we battled very hard in that series," Deadmarsh continued. "I just happened to be in the right place at the right time for those goals but being part of a group like that was a lot of fun. We knew that going back to Detroit for a Game 7 was going to be a tremendous task to overcome, so Game 6 was crucial to try and finish off the series.

"I remember the crowd after the overtime goal being probably the loudest I have ever heard in a hockey game. It literally felt like the STAPLES Center was shaking. The fans excitement was truly something that will stick with me forever. And yes being the underdog always makes it sweeter ending a series against a top seed like Detroit was that year."

Adam Deadmarsh OT Goal 2001 Playoffs

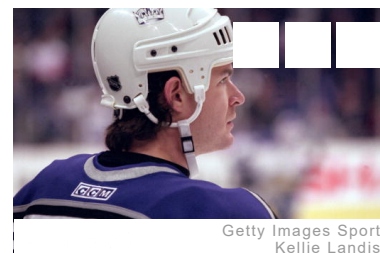


As previously mentioned, few, if any, gave the Kings a fighting chance against Detroit entering the 2001 playoffs. Rob Blake had just been traded to the **Colorado Avalanche** and while they did receive Deadmarsh and reliable defenseman **Aaron Miller** in return, the Kings were simply not poised to win — or so it seemed.

I asked Deadmarsh if he remembered any of the naysayers' opinions.

"I don't recall reading too much into it back then," he said. "But obviously Rob Blake is one of the best defensemen of all time, so it is impossible to fill his shoes. But as i said earlier, we had a great bunch of guys that pulled together at the right time and found a way to have some success."

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Deadmarsh then summed up his overall experience playing against the Red Wings.

"I always had a lot of fun playing against Detroit," the former King noted, "They had such a great team in those years. You knew when you played them that it was going to be an exciting game and you had to be ready to go or you were in for a long night. Between L.A. and Colorado I have some incredible memories playing against the Detroit Red Wings."

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While Adam Deadmarsh's brief time in Los Angeles was a success, this writer could never help but wonder, 'What if?' What if Deadmarsh had stayed healthy. After **suiting up for 31 games** with the Kings in 2000-01 (regular season and playoffs) following his trade from Colorado, Deadmarsh would go on to play just 96 regular-season games over the next two seasons with the purple-and-black. But while his 46 goals and 85 points in a Kings uniform were impressive, concussions unfortunately got the best of the Trial, B.C., native, who retired in 2003. Nevertheless, Adam Deadmarsh's story in Los Angeles is one of quality over quantity and while the Kings did part ways with star defenseman Rob Blake, who they got in return would go on to make an immediate impact.

Nearly 16 years after the 'Stunner at STAPLES', spectators will be still be hard-pressed to go to a Kings home game and not find handfuls of fans sporting Deadmarsh jerseys. That was the impact he had on this team during his brief tenure. After all, as we remember the thrill that was the 'Stunner at STAPLES', we will all be hard-pressed not to recognize and be thankful for the services of one Adam Deadmarsh.
