LA KINGS
NEWS CLIPS
12-18-14
BUSINESS OF HOCKEY OPENS THIS WEEKEND; TICKETS REMAIN

The Kings’ Business of Hockey seminars are returning this season and will feature an excellent array of speakers and presenters including Pat Brisson, NHLPA Agent and Co-Head of CAA’s Hockey Department, Kelly Cheeseman, CEO of AEG Sports, Luc Robitaille, President of Business Operations for the LA Kings, Ed Goren, former President of FOX Sports, David Carter, Principal of Sports Business Group, Jeff Solomon, Vice President of Hockey Operations and Legal Affairs with the Kings, Allan Walsh, Octagon Hockey Agent, Mike Altieri, Vice President, Communications and Broadcasting with the Kings, and Lee Zeidman, President of Staples Center.

For those who may not have a slapshot like Drew Doughty and are looking to break into the business side of sports, these seminars will offer tremendous insight from an array of leading figures in hockey and sports-business operations.

The three sessions:

December 20, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. (prior to Kings-Coyotes)
-Let’s Make a Deal
Panelists: Pat Brisson, NHLPA Agent & Co-Head Hockey Department (CAA), Jeff Solomon, VP Hockey, Hockey Operations & Legal Affairs (LA Kings), Luc Robitaille, President, Business Operations (LA Kings), & Allan Walsh (Octagon Hockey)
-Arena Operations
Panelists: Armen Dembekjian, Senior Event Manager (STAPLES Center), Brian McClary (National Hockey League), Bob Newman, President (AEG Facilities), Lee Zeidman, President (STAPLES Center)

January 10, 3:00 – 6:00 p.m. (prior to Kings-Jets)
-The Business of Hockey
Panelists: Kelly Cheeseman, COO (AEG Sports), David Carter, Principal (Sports Business Group), Warren Woo, Co-Owner (Nashville Predators)
-Big Data and Analytics
Panelists: Tom Braun, Sr. Manager, Analytics and Research (LA Kings), Lee Callans, Scouting Operations Coordinator (LA Kings), Aaron Levalley, VP, CRM and Analytics (LA Kings), Others TBA

March 21, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. (prior to Kings-Canucks)
-Money and the Media
Panelists: Mike Altieri, Vice President, Communications and Broadcasting (LA Kings), Pat Donahue (Director, Digital Media, LA Kings, Ed Goren, Former Vice Chairman (Fox Sports Media Group)
-Marketing and Sponsorship
Panelists: Brett Bittel (Enterprise Rent-A-Car), Davis Elen Advertising, Jonathan Lowe, VP, Marketing (LA Kings), Josh Veilleux, VP, Partnership and Sales (LA Kings)

General admission is $100; student admission is $75. A ticket includes admission to one day of speaker panels and one ticket to the Kings game that day. Panelists are subject to change.

TICKETS AND MORE INFORMATION HERE
DECEMBER 17, 2014 4:17 PM  
DECEMBER 17 PRACTICE QUOTES:  
DUSTIN BROWN

On whether the Kings have been challenged more with the puck or without the puck:
I think it’s more without the puck right now. What makes us good is our D-zone coverage and our defensive game, our checking game, whatever you want to call it. We’re really good at getting the puck back and closing gaps quickly. Right now, we’re a half-second late everywhere. As a result we’re playing more D-zone, which means we have the puck less. When we have the puck, we’re pretty good.

On how last year’s playoff road performance affects their mindset after the road trip:
Last year doesn’t come into play at all really in our mindset. It’s just frustrating, but it’s something you have to work through it individually and as a group. I know there are a lot of players who are in there frustrated, personally. Again, it’s about finding a way to push through together and that’s what this group has shown over the years. We’re capable of leaning on each other when we need to.

On surrendering three goals in two and a half minutes in the third period:
I don’t know the stats, but we’re pretty good at protecting momentum. But to give up back-to-back, penalty, PK goals… That’s another thing, when we’re good on our PK generally our five-on-five is really good. Again, it’s about trying to push through that because we are struggling.

On whether Jori Lehtera is a typical St. Louis forward:
Yeah, big, strong and skilled. That’s what good teams do. We’ve done it with finding guys that can come up and play. They’re no different.

DECEMBER 17, 2014 3:54 PM  
STANLEY CUP MOMENTS, EPISODE 6: THE FINALS

What was your favorite part of Stanley Cup Moments, Episode 6? Was it Dean Lombardi referring to Justin Williams as “the gunslinger”? The slow-motion multi-angular breakdown of Drew Doughty’s ultra-skilled Game 1-tying goal? Or perhaps the recollection of the conversation between Anze Kopitar and Williams in the dressing room between the third period and overtime? Instead of giving too much away, here’s KingsVision’s latest installment.

DECEMBER 17, 2014 3:39 PM  
KINGS LOOK TO RESPOND TO DEEP BLUES OFFENSE

As the St. Louis Blues erased a two-goal deficit on Tuesday night, one emerging star figured prominently into the comeback: Vladimir Tarasenko, who entered the night with 17 goals, matched his season highs with three goals and four points, and recorded the tallies to get St. Louis on the scoreboard and to put the home team ahead for good.

When the home-and-home series shifts back to Staples Center tomorrow evening (7:30 p.m. / FOX Sports West), he’s going to be one member of an effective line and a deep offensive team that the Los Angeles Kings will have to closely heed.

“The one thing is he skates really well and is shifty,” captain Dustin Brown said of Tarasenko. “Where the game is going, he’s the type of player who is going to find a lot of success in years because you can’t really slow a guy down like that like you used to be able to. His skating ability is what allows him to do everything else he does with the puck.”

His first two goals came off wristshots, the first on a blistering attempt from the slot that beat Jonathan
Quick high glove; the second was threaded between Quick’s glove and left pad. He added an empty net goal to punctuate the 5-2 win.

It is expected that he’ll be reunited with his regular linemates on Thursday. Because T.J. Oshie missed the game due to personal reasons, Jaden Schwartz skated opposite Alexander Steen on David Backes’ line. On Thursday, Oshie could return to the top line, which would place Schwartz opposite Tarasenko on Jori Lehtera’s line.

A portion of Tarasenko’s improvement this season can be traced to the addition of his former KHL teammate in Lehtera. The two played with Sibir Novosibirsk in 2011-12.

“Schwartz has played primarily with Lehtera and Tarasenko, and Lehtera and Tarasenko have a history together – a really good history of playing together prior to the NHL – and I think that Lehtera should be getting as much [credit]. It’s not about an individual. It’s clearly not. If it was about an individual, then we’d have individuals that would be jumping out at you. It’s about guys that can play together and be successful. The way St. Louis is set up now, they bring Stastny in. They have the Backes line and a Stastny line and a Lehtera line, so Tarasenko can slide right in there. It looks good.”

The Backes line had combined for six goals and 12 points in the four games in which it was intact prior to Tuesday’s win. St. Louis has won five straight and ranks seventh in the league with a 2.94 goals-per-game average — though the Blues haven’t held an opponent to under two goals over the last 14 games.

Apart from any tactical approach is the emotional response the Kings will be looking for after playing a pair of strong road periods before Tuesday’s game unraveled during a three-goal, two-minute and 30-second stretch in the third period.

“I think if you’re not excited about playing tomorrow after what happened in St. Louis, then we have bigger issues,” Brown said. “As a player, for me personally, I’m excited that we get to play them again, especially the way they beat us and how the third period transpired last game.”

DECEMBER 17, 2014 1:46 PM
DECEMBER 17 PRACTICE QUOTES: DARRYL SUTTER

On whether he looks at the road trip as a whole, or breaks it down into segments:
I think as a whole. Going into last night, we wanted to come back with being .500, so that was disappointing last night.

On whether the team plays differently on the road versus at home:
No. [Reporter: Any answer to it? It just seems odd.] It’s not really that odd. Two years ago this team couldn’t play on the road, either, if you look at it. I mean, everybody says, ‘Oh, this team’s historically been so good on the road,’ well, that’s not really true, when you look at it. Their home and road last year were the very same and the year before – the lockout year – was a tough road thing for us. Again, you’re putting the whole year together. You’ve got to go by trips and who your opponents are, what your schedule is – all that. You’re going on those trips, long trips, if you really want to go into it, do your road record based on conference and out of conference. And I won’t tell you what it is, but it’s going to shock you. We gave up too many goals against on the road this trip, that’s for sure, and our penalty killing clearly let us down at key times. If you just capsulized last night, I mean we played a really good game, and in three shifts we lost the game.

On whether Marian Gaborik is picking up his game:
Yeah, I said that after the Toronto game. [He’s] hopefully finding his way and getting more into those greasy areas. If you look at where he scored both of his goals last night, they’re basically tap-ins. They’re not from the outside. I mean, you’ve got to get there to score…He knows that. He’s a smart guy, and over the course of his career, most of his goals come right around the net. They’re like bang-bang hands plays.

**On whether Jeff Carter has been getting scoring chances:**
Not consistently. Not consistently. [Reporter: Any theory on that? It seems like when he’s on his game, you can really see it.] He hasn’t scored a goal for a month tomorrow. November 18th. I have it all marked down. [Reporter: Is he the type of player, Darryl, that you wouldn’t look for someone to make him better? He has to be the guy that makes others better?] I don’t look at that like that. I mean, you’re putting way too much pressure on him. We’re trying to get our top guys to be more productive players right now. It’s not just Jeff Carter. We’re playing Jeff and Kopi together because we think by playing Jeff at wing, it takes some pressure off in terms of the whole game, and Kopi and him, during different points of the regular season last year and when we first got Jeff, also, they could prove to be productive last year. There was a time last year when Kinger and Kopi and Carts were our best line. You’re just trying to manage it game-by-game. Hey, the reason that you shift guys around is because top guys aren’t producing. That’s clearly, when you look around the league now, why guys get shifted around.

**ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH**

Tom Timmermann: Tarasenko stars as Blues storm back

“Vladimir Tarasenko, not surprisingly, had his fingerprints all over this one as he recorded his second hat trick of the season.”

Tom Timmermann: Bluenotes: Gunnarsson cleared to play; Oshie misses game

“Winger T.J. Oshie missed the game because of “family reasons,” according to the team. He will accompany the team on its three-game trip that begins Thursday in Los Angeles.”

Jeff Gordon: Hockey Guy: Kings sing the Tarasenko Blues

“The Kings’ lackluster recent play has experts wondering if the Stanley Cup champions are finally wearing down after playing all those extra games in recent years.”

**BELLEVILLE NEWS-DEMOCRAT**

Norm Sanders: Tarasenko hat trick and third-period outburst leads the Blues past Kings

“It was a dominant third period by the Blues, who outscored the Kings 4-0 while scoring four goals on eight shots.”

**SB Nation – ST. LOUIS GAME TIME**

Donut King: Blues Surge Late, Take 5-2 Victory Over Kings

“David Backes has been largely seen as invisible at times this year, but that’s easy to do when you’re playing the shutdown role.”
WAKING UP WITH THE KINGS: DECEMBER 17

The Kings were an excellent road team for two periods on Tuesday, out-shooting, out-chancing and out-scoring a Blues team and capitalizing on a big insurance goal midway through the second period. For 40 minutes, it was familiar to the types of games the team had played at the Scottrade Center over the previous three seasons in a building where they had found success as a road team. But instead of being able to right themselves during increasing Blues pressure and shut the door in the third period, the Kings took two of their three penalties 28 seconds apart with 10 minutes to play, and their to-that-point solid road performance was swept away by surging St. Louis momentum and three goals in the span of two minutes and 30 seconds. It was a powerful and disappointing way to end the road trip, which could have been salvaged with 20 additional minutes of the type of performance they had etched out to that point. Instead, Los Angeles returns home to the friendly confines of Staples Center, where they’ll play 11 of the next 14.

Darryl Sutter has occasionally said over the last several months that this team is a different Kings team that he has coached, and as noted two days ago, he’s right. There are changes defensively, there are younger players vying for wider roles offensively, there are top players looking to find greater consistency and some who are looking to move past injuries that have disrupted their first 30 games. The team is looking to re-establish its road mojo, which hadn’t been an issue in two of Sutter’s first three seasons; one positive development is that the Kings have certainly found their footing possession-wise. But as Sutter said yesterday, “we’ve got to get a save in there somewhere.” That’s a blunt read on how the game turned, especially given that the Blues tied the game on a 5-on-3, and perhaps he’s looking to motivate Jonathan Quick for Thursday’s Staples Center rematch. But if Los Angeles finding consistent success is based heavily on Quick providing great goaltending – that’s virtually a given, even if players have off nights here and there – perhaps some of the recent inconsistency can be traced to a temporary production dip in the world-class goalie’s season: Quick has an .894 save percentage and 2.63 goals-against average over his last eight games.

Marian Gaborik scored twice Tuesday as he continues to build upon what has sharply developed into an upward-trending pre-Christmas run. The types of goals he scored were also encouraging: one was reminiscent of several of his Stanley Cup Final goals in which he located the puck in a tangled web of bodies and willed it past the opposing goalie, and one came on a redirection off a beautiful feed from Anze Kopitar when the team was in search of a big power play goal. If there are positives to be taken from a 1-3-1 trip, one is that Gaborik appears to be finding his game following an injury-stuttered earlier stretch.
When a young defenseman - more specifically, an 18-year-old player recently drafted by the Los Angeles Kings – tells you his favorite player is Drew Doughty, caution flags should go up. Is he just pandering? Maybe disingenuous? In the case of Roland McKeown, either notion could not be further from the truth. Conversely, he might just be the most mature, well-spoken prospect the team has had in at least a decade. If his abilities on the ice can properly sync up with his poise off of it, watch out.

“I loved the game from the first time I started skating,” noted the Ontario, Canada native. “Growing up, my dad was the GM of the local junior B team. Once I started playing regularly, things just kind of took off. My first few years I was a forward and then my dad noticed that it is tough to find a puck moving defenseman who can skate. He decided to put me back there and I really enjoyed playing defense. It just worked out well and I’ve been there ever since.”

When the Kingston Frontenacs selected him second overall in the 2012 OHL Priority Draft, he was described as a game changer from the blueline. After spending two years being coached by former NHLer Todd Gill, McKeown’s stock continued to rise, with his numbers improving to 43 points (11 goals, 32 assists) in 61 games last season. Come June, the Kings traded away one of their top prospects, Linden Vey, to the Vancouver Canucks in exchange for the 50th overall pick, ultimately used to select McKeown.

“It was important to get him when we got him, no question,” began Mark Yannetti, LA’s Director of Amateur Scouting. “The thing that really transitioned him from being a guy I liked to a guy I wanted, was what he did at the World U18s [Under-18 tournament], where he was captain of Canada’s team.”

Yannetti went on to say he liked what he had observed prior, but just wasn’t sure how it might eventually translate to the NHL.

“For me, if he would buy in, I think he would be the perfect guy to fill a [key] role. However, buying in means to simplify your game and doing things that are a whole lot less flashy, less noticeable, or fun. In talking to him throughout [his draft] year, I knew he had a burn to play, but I wasn’t always convinced that he would accept that kind of role. Then, when he went over to the World U18s, he just settled right into it seamlessly.

“He played a very simple, steady - but not basic. Don’t confuse steady and basic. He could be played in any situation when he played like that, and he could be played with any person on that team. So it gave him versatility and the coach relied on him. Despite all the tools and all that, the thing that sold me on him was that willingness. And when you get the “C”, that tells a lot about you, too. When other players that we talked to told us he’s a good teammate, you take notice. Then, when multiple players tell you that he’s a good captain and a good teammate, you really start to do some digging. We had multiple players tell us that.”

Understandably, McKewon is still a bit in awe over joining an organization that has won the Stanley Cup twice in the past three years. “I didn’t think they were a team that was very high on me,” he said. “Being selected by Los Angeles, though - I remember being at the Draft and looking up at the big board and seeing that the Kings had taken me. It was quite an honor.”

Some adversity has entered into the picture in the months that followed. After participating in Team Canada’s World Junior Championship evaluation camp over the summer, McKeown recently found out he won’t be part
of that squad, as he wasn’t invited back for their final selection camp before the tournament gets underway next week.

“That was one of my goals coming into the season, to be at that camp and ultimately get selected,” he shared. “That didn’t happen, so I want to use that for motivation. I’m working even harder to become a pro player. That’s my main goal now, to become a pro.”

One thing is clear; there has been a shift in his focus this year, at least according to the numbers. After potting 18 goals over the previous two seasons, McKeown has yet to find the back of the net and we’re just about at the halfway point of the OHL season.

“To play in the LA system, you have to be solid, and that’s what I’m working on, being that solid defenseman, that guy who can be a key contributor and that can defend well,” he explained. “My numbers are down a bit and I’m not happy about it, but I think my puck-moving ability will translate [to] points at the next level. To be a one-way, offensive d-man, I don’t think that’s going to be my knack. So I have to really focus on my defensive ability and worry about my overall game. Putting up points right now isn’t my main focus. It is more about becoming that solid defenseman.”

Interestingly, there are some times between the Kings and Kingston. Bernie Nicholls played there, as did Mike Stothers, the new coach in Manchester, and Mike O’Connell. Now serving as a key liaison in the Kings’ player development group, O’Connell recently returned from a visit to Kingston, where he saw McKeown play a few games.

“Roland is coming along fine. He’s a classic young defenseman who has a lot to learn, but he is in a good spot,” relayed O’Connell, who also spends time on the ice with all the top prospects at the Kings’ summer Development Camp. “He is very mature. He’s with it; he has a good head on his shoulders. He’s a fine young man and we’re really happy to have him in our organization. You just don’t want to give them too much information in the beginning. You want to give them an idea how we work. You also want to let them know there are certain things to watch out for as they work to become pros, like social media. Then, talk about their work habits and their off-ice habits. You want to make sure they’re going to stay focused on their career. Our guidance is a lot deeper than just style of play. It’s from how you practice to how you handle yourself as a young man. We try to give them guidance on how difficult that transition can be as the get to the next level. It’s going to take an extreme amount of work, both on-ice and off-ice.”

For Yannetti, the lack of offensive production thus far isn’t anything to be concerned about.

“The fact that he has numbers or doesn’t have numbers, it’s really irrelevant to me,” stated the always blunt Boston native. “I watched [Valentin] Zykov’s goals go down last year. Then he came to our camp, and he and [Nick] Shore were the two best players there for the second year in a row. In terms of numbers, screw the numbers… I’ve watched Roland play a bunch of times. I don’t think he’s played up to his potential this year, but in saying that, it’s not accusatory or a knock on him, because his style is… there are some tweaks and changes to his style right now… They’re not easy stylistic changes. I think he had a lot thrown on him in the summer and I think of you try to change or adapt or adjust too many things at once, I think you can suffer… He has specific things to work on and he knows those specific things and it looks to me as if he’s working on them, so I’m happy. I know what his potential is, so I don’t worry about his game in the short run - although you always want your guy’s games to be as good as possible - I don’t worry about it as much in the short run as I worry about him working on the things he needs to do.”

That message seems to resonate with McKeown, as he tries to keep the big picture in mind.
“From the start of my season, I’ve been solid defensively,” he added. “I’d like to see my numbers come up a bit for sure. I think push the pace a little bit up front. Make smart decisions obviously when jumping into the rush, but definitely add that to my game a little bit and not lose any offense. That’s a big thing… They just want you to be hard to play against and really have that complete level. That’s the biggest thing, to get that compete going, win your battles, and get the puck up to the forwards.”

While few players will ever be as good as Doughty in that area, McKeown claims to see more of himself in a player like Ryan McDonagh of the New York Rangers.

“In terms of their tools, that’s a very apt comparison,” Yannetti said, almost sounding impressed; before pointing out that McDonagh didn’t always show a higher level of compete. “It was developing, it was always in the background, but playing in high school hockey, he was just better than guys at the levels he played at. He didn’t have to excel in those competitive areas, those hard areas, those areas of will. McDonagh did not become McDonagh for five years.”

McKeown has not been penciled into anybody’s NHL lineup for next season, so time is on his side. Like all the prospects in the Kings system, Lombardi and crew will look to give them plenty of time to ripen. Better to bring them up a year too late than a year too early. It’s a concept McKewon is already on board with.

“I left Development Camp with a better understanding of the importance of using your athleticism as a defenseman, battling hard for pucks, using your partner to the best of your ability, awareness on the ice… all those things may seem little, but they make a huge difference in a defenseman,” he proclaimed. “You really see it in the players that are playing for LA right now, what it means to be a King. The drive and the hard work those guys have, that is their [trademark] and that’s why they’re Stanley Cup Champions. I’m willing to put the work in to reach that level. That’s why I’m working on my game every day - just listening to what LA has to tell me and really trying to translate that into my game.”

*John Hoven is the founder and editor of MayorsManor.com - previously named Best Hockey Blog by Yahoo Sports and the Best Sports Blog by LA Weekly. As a past member of the Professional Hockey Writer's Association, Hoven has voted on the top NHL Awards. He has been active over the years on the NHL Radio Network, where he co-hosts the West Coast Bias show, and on Twitter as well (@MayorNHL).*
The Kings return to the Stanley Cup Finals for the second time in three years taking on the New York Rangers as Justin Williams scores the OT winner in game 1

‘Stanley Cup Moments’ is a look back at the Kings’ 2014 Stanley Cup Championship and includes a number of special post-event interviews. The original 13-part series will also be featured on FOX Sports West programming throughout this season.

Episode 1: Adversity
Episode 2: The Deadline
Episode 3: The Comeback
Episode 4: The Freeway Face-off
Episode 5: The Rematch
Episode 6: The Finals
Episode 7: The Captain - Monday, December 22nd
Episode 8: Champions - Monday, December 29th
Episode 9: Mr. Game 7 - Friday, January 2nd
Episode 10: The Stanley Cup - Tuesday, January 6th
Episode 11: The Voices - Monday, January 12th
Episode 12: The Celebrations - Thursday, January 15th
Episode 13: Looking Back - Tuesday, January 20th
Kings look forward to rematch with Blues
By LISA DILLMAN

Kings captain Dustin Brown took the decidedly captain-like view of the team's upcoming rematch with the St. Louis Blues.

Embrace it.

The Kings face St. Louis at Staples Center on Thursday, two nights after suffering a third-period collapse in which they gave up four goals in a 5-2 loss to the Blues.

"I think if you're not excited about playing tomorrow, after what happened in St. Louis, then we have bigger issues," Brown said after practice Wednesday.

"For me, I'm excited that we get to play them again. Especially the way they beat us and how the third period transpired last game. Like I said, if you're not excited to play them again, there's bigger issues."

Forward Justin Williams had the same mind-set Tuesday.

"The good thing is that we get to play them again," he said. "A chance for redemption."

The Kings gave up five consecutive goals after taking a 2-0 lead. Blues Coach Ken Hitchcock noticed the change in his team in the third period.

"When we play reckless, we're a better team," he said Wednesday. "We don't play well when we play conservative or careful. We need to play reckless to be effective."

The Kings finished the five-game trip 1-3-1. Their victory came against Ottawa. They were outscored, 18-12, on the trip, which does not include Toronto's shootout goal.

"Going into last night, we wanted to come back with being .500, so that was disappointing last night," Coach Darryl Sutter said. "Our penalty killing clearly let us down at key times. If you just capsulized last night, we played a really good game and in three shifts, we lost the game."

The Kings have struggled away from Staples Center. They are 4-7-5 on the road, beating Dallas, Minnesota, Arizona and Ottawa.

"Two years ago, this team couldn't play on the road, either, if you look at it," Sutter said. "Everybody says, 'Oh this team's historically been so good on the road.' Well that's not really true when you look at it.

"Home and road last year were the same and the year before, the lockout year, was a tough road thing for us."

Forward Jeff Carter, an important component of the Kings' early success, has chilled since October. He has two assists in the last 10 games, including one Tuesday, and is without a goal in the last 13.

"He hasn't scored a goal for a month tomorrow," Sutter said of Carter.

That settled in during a lengthy pause.
"November 18th. I have it all marked down."

**Injury Blues**

St. Louis forward Jaden Schwartz will be week to week because of an injury believed to be a broken foot, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch reported.

He was injured with a little more than seven minutes left the first period, apparently when he blocked a shot by Kings defenseman Drew Doughty. But Schwartz finished the game and had a goal and an assist in the third-period comeback.

**KINGS VS. BLUES**

**When:** 7:30, Thursday.

**On the air:** TV: FS West; Radio: 790.

**Etc.:** Goalie legend Martin Brodeur, who was signed by the Blues on Dec. 2 to a one-year contract, is scheduled to start against the Kings. Brodeur, 42, played 21 seasons for the New Jersey Devils.
Los Angeles Kings get another crack at the St. Louis Blues
Elliott Teaford

BLUES AT KINGS

Faceoff: 7:30 p.m.

TV/Radio: FSW, 790-AM

Update: The Kings’ road woes continued with a 1-3-1 trip that concluded with a 5-2 come-from-ahead loss Tuesday to the Blues. The Kings (15-11-6) held a precarious 2-1 lead in the third period, but then gave up three goals in 2:30 en route to their fifth defeat in their last six games. The Kings fell to 4-7-5 away from Staples Center. The Blues’ Vladimir Tarasenko had a three-goal game to push his team-leading total to 20. ... “If you’re not excited about playing (tonight) after what happened in St. Louis, we have bigger issues,” Kings captain Dustin Brown said of a chance for redemption. ... Marian Gaborik scored both of the Kings’ goals Tuesday, a good sign for him and the team. Jeff Carter recorded their only third-period shot. Carter hasn’t scored a goal in 13 games. ... The Blues are 21-8-2.
Kings' Carter mired in deep goal slump

December 17th, 2014, 3:54 pm · posted by RICH HAMMOND

It seems as though Kings coach Darryl Sutter has a naughty-or-nice list, and there’s no debate as to which side of the ledger Jeff Carter has fallen.

"He hasn’t scored a goal since a month ago tomorrow,” Sutter said Wednesday. "I have it all marked down.’’

With that, Sutter pursed his lips tightly and gave a reporter a long, knowing look. Indeed, it’s been 13 games since Carter added to his season total of seven goals. Other Kings have slumped during that time, and the team’s defense is arguably a greater overall concern, but Carter’s dry spell has been baffling.

Carter turns 29 in two weeks, is a former 46-goal scorer and, given his immense talent, should be the Kings’ leading goal scorer. Instead he’s mired in his deepest scoring slump since he was a fresh-faced NHLer.

Carter hasn’t scored a goal in his last 13 games and has one goal in his last 17. Those are his longest droughts since 2006-07 (0 goals in 15 games, one goal in 19 games), Carter’s second NHL season.

Asked if Carter was generating enough scoring chances for himself, Sutter only said, "Not consistently." Assuming Carter isn’t playing through an injury -- there’s no evidence of that -- this has been a baffling run of non-production. Sutter continues to give Carter chances. Carter played 19 minutes, 38 seconds, in Tuesday’s loss to St. Louis, the most ice time for any Kings forward.

Carter did record a team-high four shots on goal against the Blues, but that’s a rather pedestrian total. During the Kings’ five-game road trip, Carter had two assists but recorded a total of only 11 shots on goal.

This struggle is uncommon for Carter. After that 15-game drought in 2007, he had not gone more than nine games without a goal, and in almost eight years, he had only three droughts of more than seven games.

Sutter has tried mixing up Carter’s line-combination looks -- he’s played with at least one different forward in three of the last four games -- but nothing seems to be working.

"We’re trying to get our top guys to be more productive players right now. It’s not just Jeff Carter,” Sutter said. "You’re just trying to manage it game by game. The reason that you shift guys around is because top guys aren’t producing.”

Carter isn’t alone. First-line center Anze Kopitar has one goal in his last 14 games and perennial underachiever Mike Richards hasn’t scored in nine games. But among Kings forwards, Carter has the second-longest goal drought, behind only fourth-line grinder Kyle Clifford (17 games).
Kings eager to avenge road loss to Blues

BY ABBEY MASTRACCO

EL SEGUNDO, CALIF. —

It was the end of a dismal road trip and it finally looked as though the Los Angeles Kings would break through with a big road win against a tough conference opponent. But three goals in the span of less than three minutes effectively took the wind out of their sails. The Kings ended a five-game road trip 1-3-1.

All season it's seemed as though the Kings couldn't buy a road win. An especially bad penalty kill led to more road woes through Buffalo, Montreal, Toronto and, finally, St. Louis.

"I don't know the stats, but we're usually pretty good at protecting momentum," captain Dustin Brown said. "When we're good on our PK generally our five-on-five is really good."

The Kings have allowed seven power play goals in the last six games, six in their five-game swing and coach Darryl Sutter made no excuses for their shorthanded performances.

"We gave up too many goals against on this trip, that's for sure, and our penalty killing has really let us down at key times," he said. "Times likes last night when we played a really good game for three shifts and we lost again."

The struggles began before the road trip when they lost three of their last four, all at home against Chicago, Boston and Philadelphia. The Kings have had trouble getting possession and keeping it. And their extended time in the defensive zone hasn't exactly been productive, as is evidenced by the goals against.

"When we have the puck, we're pretty good," Brown said. "I think it's more without the puck right now. What makes us good is our D-zone coverage and our defensive game, our checking game, whatever you want to call it. We're really good at getting the puck back and closing gaps quickly. Right now, we're a half-second late everywhere."

Away from the friendly confines of the Staples Center, the Kings aren't the worst team in the NHL, but they're far from their best. The team that won three Games 7 on the road in the playoffs last season is just 4-7-5 on the road this season, good enough for 24th in the league and no one can really explain it, but no one is really worried about it either.

"Last year doesn't come into play at all really in our mindset," Brown said. "It's just frustrating, but it's something you have to work through it individually and as a group. I know there are a lot of players who are in there frustrated, personally.

"Again, it's about finding a way to push through together, and that's what this group has shown over the years. We're capable of leaning on each other when we need to."

The silver lining of the schedule is this week is that the Kings will get a chance to avenge Tuesday night's loss to the Blues on Thursday at home. With the burn of three goals in three minutes still fresh, Thursday night's tilt takes on a new meaning.
"I think if you're not excited about playing tomorrow, after what happened in St. Louis, then we have bigger issues," Brown said. "I know as a player, I'm excited. Especially the way they beat us, how the third period transpired the last game."
Preview: Blues at Kings

BY JEREMY P. RUTHERFORD

When • Tonight at 9:30.
Where • Staples Center.
TV, radio • Fox Sports Midwest, KMOX (1120 AM).
Blues • The Blues are in Los Angeles tonight for a rematch against the Kings. Two nights ago, the Blues overcame a 2-0 deficit to post a 5-2 win over the Kings on home ice. Vladimir Tarasenko led the Blues with a hat trick as part of a four-point night. T.J. Oshie missed Tuesday’s game because of a death in the family but is expected back tonight. The Blues, though, will be without Jaden Schwartz, who is out indefinitely because of a broken foot. Martin Brodeur will be in net for the club.
Kings • Los Angeles went 1-3-1 on its five-game trip that ended in St. Louis. The Kings picked up two goals from forward Marian Gaborik Tuesday, building their 2-0 lead, but none elsewhere. Forward Jeff Carter, who is tied for fourth on the club with seven goals, has not scored in one month, a trend noted by Kings coach Darryl Sutter on Wednesday. The coach also was critical of goalie Jonathan Quick, who allowed four goals on 22 shots Tuesday. Said Sutter: “We’ve got to get a save in there somewhere.”
Injuries • Blues — LW Jaden Schwartz (foot), D Carl Gunnarsson (concussion) and G Brian Elliott (knee), out; Kings — none.
KINGS UNVEIL STADIUM SERIES JERSEYS

The Kings on Tuesday unveiled their jerseys for the 2015 Coors Light NHL Stadium Series, which will be contested against the Sharks on Saturday, Feb. 21, at Levi’s Stadium in Santa Clara, Calif. (7:00 p.m. PT / 10:00 p.m. ET, NBCSN, HNIC, TVA2). The jerseys are half-gray and half-white, with a black stripe running horizontally through the middle and intersecting with the team’s primary logo. The back of the jersey features black numbers outlined in gray on a white background, with the names in black. The design also includes the 2015 Coors Light NHL Stadium Series patch on the right shoulder as well as players’ numbers on the sleeves. The Kings complete the look with white pants and gray socks. Click here to take a closer look at the jerseys.
Senior Service Consultant of the Fan Relationship Management Center, A.J. TOMENY to Maryland Athletics Dir of Sales & Service of the Fan Relationship Management Center and BRANDON LOPEZ to UC Riverside Athletics Fan Relationship Management Center Manager. Aspire also hired CASSANDRA CARDENAS, BRADLEY GSCHWENDTNER and EDDIE RASCON as Sales Consultants at the FAU Fan Relationship Management Center, Louisiana Tech Univ. Fan Relationship Management Center and USA National Sales Center, respectively (Aspire)....The NHL Kings promoted EVA BASSETT to HR Manager (THE DAILY)....Atlanta Sports Council VP/Communications ERIC OBERMAN is stepping down to focus on his Exec Dir duties with the Atlanta Tipoff Club (THE DAILY)....The CFL Saskatchewan Roughriders promoted Senior VP & CFO CRAIG REYNOLDS to President & CEO (Roughriders)....iHeartMedia Senior VP/Sports L.A. DON MARTIN "is expanding his responsibilities to include Premiere and Fox Sports Radio" (RADIOINK.com, 12/14)....Cumulus Media named iHeartMedia Senior VP/Sports Operations BRUCE GILBERT to the newly created position of Senior VP/Sports (INSIDERADIO.com, 12/16).

Do you have an executive announcement? If so, please send to editorial@sportsbusinessdaily.com.

36 Names In The News

Bears Chair GEORGE MCCASKEY "was involved in a minor altercation" during Monday's night's game at Soldier Field after asking a Saints fan who was sitting in his seat to move. Sources said that the fan "shoved him in the back." McCaskey "was not injured," and the fan was "charged with simple battery, a misdemeanor" (CHICAGO.CBSLOCAL.com, 12/16).

SEASON FOR GIVING: Utah State's plans for renovating Romney Stadium yesterday "received a big boost" with a $1M donation from former Nike Brand President and Teneo Sports Chair CHARLIE DENSON and his wife TRENA (SALT LAKE TRIBUNE, 12/17)....Koch Industries and the Fred and Mary Koch Foundation are giving $4.5M to Wichita State Univ. athletics and $11.25M to the school in total, the "largest single-time gift in university history" (WICHITA EAGLE, 12/17)....Panthers QB CAM NEWTON yesterday "was playing Santa Claus and shooting basketball with two-dozen middle-school children" at Charlotte's Cochrane Collegiate Academy. Newton "made four stops across Charlotte to surprise teachers, students and homeless women and children with gift cards, presents and clothing -- through the Cam Newton Foundation -- valued at more than $31,000" (CHARLOTTE OBSERVER, 12/17)....The Trail Blazers will operate all of their philanthropic efforts under the newly renamed Trail Blazers Foundation. A new logo will represent the name change. The foundation's BOD also added three people to its 10-member roster, each elected to three-year terms (Trail Blazers).

NAMES: Cavaliers Owner DAN GILBERT's Bedrock Real Estate Services said Monday that it had purchased the State Savings Bank building, which is a historic landmark in downtown Detroit (DETROIT FREE PRESS, 12/16)....Sony's recent online breach revealed e-mails showing Mavericks Owner MARK CUBAN "was upset" about his salary for ABC's "SHARK TANK." However, Cuban said that he was "able to limit the damage" because of his new Cyber dust app. Cuban: "By moving my 'Shark Tank' negotiations to Cyber Dust, which I did prior to the hack, they remained private. ... Nothing is absolutely hacker free" (S.F. CHRONICLE, 12/17)....The Bills yesterday "treated Lions employees to pizza and chicken wings ... to express their gratitude" for hosting Jets-Bills at Ford Field on Nov. 24 following a snowstorm in Buffalo (DETROITNEWS.com, 12/16)....F1 team Owner GENE HAAS "will be bidding for the assets of the collapsed" Marussia F1 team when those assets are "put up for auction on Tuesday at its former factory" near London (THEGUARDIAN.com, 12/15)....TIGER WOODS yesterday "opened his first golf course design" at El Cardonal in Cabo San Lucas, Mexico, as "part of a five-year-old development called Diamante..."