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NEWS CLIPS

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Sturm's Road to Los Angeles

By Rich Hammond

If Marco Sturm wanted to play the NHL's game, he had to speak its language.

Both literally and figuratively.

As the 1996 NHL Draft approached, Sturm realized his limitations. A native of Germany, he spoke little English and also realized that his status as a 175-pound European player might reflect negatively on some NHL types who viewed overseas players as soft.

So, Sturm went to work. He learned English with the help of the wife of an assistant coach from his pro team in Germany. He took boxing lessons in order to build up his body.

Even with little depth to his hockey-playing resume as a teenager, Sturm became the first German-born player to be drafted in the first round when the San Jose Sharks took him at No. 21 in 1996. Sturm hasn't disappointed. Now in his 13th NHL season, Sturm is known as one of the league's fastest skaters and a responsible, hard worker.

Sturm has 234 points and 232 assists in 855 career NHL games.

“At the time, I was just surprised that I went in the first round,” Sturm said recently. “They always told me second or third round. I think it took me a while to actually realize all that. It should be something that I'm proud for.

“There aren't too many Germans who make it, but I'm glad for how my career here. I'm proud of getting to 850 games. I definitely didn't think about that at the start of my career.”

The Kings hope he can add a little spark to their attack this season. Acquired on Dec. 11 from the Boston Bruins for “future considerations,” Sturm is on the verge of his second comeback from knee surgery in the past three seasons, and is eager to prove himself.

Sturm tore up his knee during a May 1 playoff game and has not appeared in an NHL game this season, but Kings coach Terry Murray tentatively has Sturm slotted in the Kings' first-line left-wing role, a testament to the esteem in which Sturm is held.

Sturm will need to prove that the knee is strong, that he hasn't lost a step on the ice, at age 32 and after two major knee surgeries, but proving himself is nothing new to Sturm.

Germany is, to put it politely, not exactly a hotbed for international hockey.

Before Sturm arrived, only a handful of German born and raised players had made an NHL impact.

Germany -- or, at least, West Germany until the 1990 reunification -- has had its own professional hockey league since 1957, but Germany has won only two medals in Olympic men's hockey, in 1936 (when it was a four-team tournament) and in 1976.

Even when Sturm was growing up, in the late 80s and early 90s, and developing his hockey skills, he didn't have much to go on, in terms of making the leap to the NHL.

Before Sturm was drafted in 1996, only eight German-born players had ever appeared in the NHL, and most of those spent their young, formative years playing in Canada.

Walt Tkaczuk was the first, and perhaps most successful, German-born player. He was born in Germany but raised in Ontario. Tkaczuk joined the NHL in the 1967-68 season and had 678 points in 945 career games with the New York Rangers.

Randy Gilhen was the Kings' only German-born player until they acquired Sturm. He, too, was a Canadian kid -- he grew up in Winnipeg -- and played half a season for the Kings in 1991-92 before being traded to the New York Rangers.

Uli Hiemer is believed to be the first player born and raised in Germany to make the NHL. Drafted in the third round by the then-Colorado Rockies in 1981, the defenseman joined the NHL in 1984-85 and played 143 games.

German forwards were even more rare. Stefan Ustorf was drafted in the third round by Washington in 1992 but appeared in only 54 games over two seasons.

So those were the odds that a young Sturm faced in the mid-90s, circumstances that limited Sturm's ability to get noticed in North America and be taken seriously.

He did what he could, though. Sturm played in the Under-18 European Junior Championships in 1993 (at age 15), 1994 and 1995 -- with 11 points in five games in the 1995 tournament -- and also played in the much more well-known Under-20 World Junior Championships in 1995 and 1996.

Sturm didn't record a point in seven games in the 1995 tournament, but in 1996 he had four goals and six assists in four games for a German team that went 0-3-1.

Sturm finished third in scoring in the entire tournament, with only two points fewer than the tournament leader, a youngster from Edmonton named Jarome Iginla.

"I think that helped," Sturm said. "I was only 15 or something, so I played with a lot of older guys, and it was hard but at least I got my name out there and I think that helped a little bit."

It was also during that time that Sturm made his professional hockey debut, joining EV Landshut of the pro league in Germany. As a teenager, playing against older Germany players and many former NHL Canadians and Americans, Sturm totaled 12 goals and 20 assists in 47 games.

Growing up, Sturm had few German role models, in terms of the NHL, but he found some when he started playing professionally.

"No German players, but at (age) 16, I played my first two years pro in Germany, in the elite league," Sturm said. "I played with guys like Mike Bullard. He was around for a long time in the NHL, and some other guys too."

"Those were kind of my idols. They had been around and they played in the NHL for a long time, so I think those were kind of the guys I looked up to."

Around that time, Sturm also caught the eye of a young NHL GM named Dean Lombardi.

Lombardi was then the GM of the San Jose Sharks, and the 1996 NHL Draft would be his first, calling the shots, and Lombardi veered far from tradition. The Sharks had the No. 2 overall pick, and Lombardi took Andrei Zyuzin out of the then-Russian Super League. Zyuzin eventually turned out to be a journeyman NHL defenseman.

The Sharks also had the 21st overall pick and used it on Sturm, making him the first German-born player ever selected in the first round of an NHL Draft. San Jose had its eye on Sturm, and held a couple interviews with him before the draft.

Those interviews went well because of Sturm's planning. In the months leading up to the draft, Sturm took English lessons, displaying his focus toward making the NHL.

“I could understand a little bit from school, but it's just totally different,” Sturm said. “At the draft, I think I had 12 meetings, and I just wanted to make sure I came a little bit prepared and not like I didn't understand anything.”

After one more season in the German league, Sturm came to San Jose as a 19-year-old winger in 1997 and had 10 goals in 74 games. Within four years, he was a 20-goal scorer and, when healthy, he has been a consistent 20-goal scorer for the past decade.

Sturm also opened the NHL door for some of his countrymen. Since 2001, German born-and-bred players such as Dennis Seidenberg, Christian Ehrhoff, Marcel Goc, Christoph Schubert, Thomas Greiss and Alexander Sulzer have found success in the NHL.

Ehrhoff and Goc became Sturm's teammates in San Jose, and Greiss was also drafted later by the Sharks.

“I think, especially in San Jose, it kind of got started and they drafted a lot of Germans after that,” Sturm said. “I was glad to see that. There are good players over there, but it's tough, because the national team is not really good.”

“So it's kind of tough to stand out against Canada or the U.S. So it's tough, and you've got to be lucky. I think that's where I was too.”

Sturm has been known as one of the NHL's fastest skaters, making it sadly ironic that knee problems have slowed Sturm in recent seasons. He had major knee surgery in 2008 and then again this May, after severely injuring his knee in the playoffs.

After a summer and fall of recovery, Sturm found himself being asked to waive his no-trade clause because his team, the Bruins, was in a salary-cap crunch.

Lombardi, Sturm's former GM, showed interest, and Sturm agreed to join the Kings.

Sturm was scheduled to make his season -- and Kings -- debut on Tuesday night against Colorado, and the Kings believe he can add speed and a scoring punch to the lineup.

“I can feel it every day, getting more comfortable and stronger,” Sturm said.

“I've got to be patient, I know that, with that injury.”

[The best five seconds of the game?](#)

Posted by [Rich Hammond](#) on 22 December 2010, 5:30 pm

It was the type of power-play goal that the Kings — or any team, for that matter — would like to put in a bottle and use at every opportunity. The Kings already led Colorado 4-0 when they went on the power play late in the third period. Jarret Stoll won the faceoff back to Jack Johnson. Johnson made a sharp pass to his left and Justin Williams fired a shot past Craig Anderson. The whole thing took five seconds. That's exactly the type of "shot mentality" — one of Terry Murray's favorite phrases — that the Kings would like to see on the power play. "We haven't thought too much about using Williams on the blue line. Maybe that's something we need to do," Murray joked. But it's not as much about the players as it is the mentality. Earlier in the game, the Kings' power play broke down when they tried one too many passes...

MURRAY: "The mentality is a shot mentality that we have to have. That's got to be a selling point every day at practice. For me, that's the first option. I think, often, we're looking to pass the puck into the net, making highlight-reel plays. And we have the ability to do that once in a while, but there is, inevitably, long stretches of time before you see the next one. So what you saw last night, let's do that, with shot mentality, net presence. We've got Doughty and Johnson on the back end, who are those kinds of players, who can bring it to the net, and that's what we have to sell them on."

Greene takes step toward return

Posted by [Rich Hammond](#) on 22 December 2010, 4:30 pm

Matt Greene took a major step toward a return when he participated in his first full-team practice since last Wednesday. Greene hasn't played since he took a hit to the head from Detroit's Niklas Kronwall nine days ago, and Greene had been back in Los Angeles while the team played the last three games of its five-game road trip. After today's practice, Terry Murray said that if all continues to progress as planned, Greene would be on track to return for Sunday's game against Anaheim.

MURRAY: "He looks good, and he feels good. I had a little talk with him there at the end of the practice, and he's been biking. He skated yesterday on his own. He did get some extra (on-ice) work here today, and again tomorrow he will get pushed pretty hard in the morning skate. He will not play tomorrow. We're going to stay with the same lineup. So he will get through tomorrow's practice with good work, and have an opportunity to meet with the doctor, and hopefully he's going to be cleared and ready to go on the 26th."

Also, to check out Greene's appearance on The Food Network's "Cupcake Wars," click below for the video...

Murray pleased with Sturm's progress

Posted by [Rich Hammond](#) on 22 December 2010, 3:30 pm

The Kings essentially got what they wanted out of Marco Sturm in his debut last night. Sturm played almost 12 minutes in a low-profile, fourth-line role, and didn't look out of place in terms of the pace or level of the play. It will likely continue to be a slow build-up for Sturm, who before last night hadn't been in an NHL game since May 1, and the plan is to once again have Sturm as the fourth-line left-winger tomorrow when the Kings host Edmonton. Here's what Terry Murray said after practice today about Sturm's debut and his near future...

MURRAY: "When the trade was made, my view of that was that he was going to jump in and have an impact with our No. 1 line immediately. That's the scenario you're always kind of hoping would happen. But in reality, you have a player who is coming back from a very serious injury, and as you saw last night in the game, it's now (about) getting into the game, get your legs under yourself in playing situations, in stressful situations and finding your game again, basically, at a more controlled pace, playing on that fourth line. I thought his game was fine last night. I wasn't really evaluating any parts of his game. It was just great to see him get out there for those 11-plus minutes and feel pretty good at the end of the day, and get on the ice today without fatigue or muscle soreness, and get himself prepared for tomorrow.

"But I do see it, eventually, getting to where I've been penciling it in, and that is playing on that left side with Kopitar and Brown. He's a player who we know, at full strength and healthy and ready to go, is a dynamic guy with speed, a north-south player. He puts some points up on the board, and he's a responsible player both ways in the game. So he will have an impact on our hockey club once he gets on a roll."

Greene out one more game

Posted by [Rich Hammond](#) on 22 December 2010, 2:21 pm

After practice today, Terry Murray said Matt Greene is feeling good and that Greene will skate again tomorrow morning but will not play against Edmonton. Greene has not played since he took a hit to the head last Monday in Detroit. More notes and quotes to come from practice...

Wednesday practice: Greene on ice

Posted by [Rich Hammond](#) on 22 December 2010, 1:18 pm

Matt Greene is back on the ice for practice this morning, participating in regular drills, so we'll see after practice what his availability is for tomorrow's game. Otherwise, all else is normal...

Afternoon reading: Sturm feature

Posted by [Rich Hammond](#) on 22 December 2010, 12:40 pm

Marco Sturm made his Kings debut last night, and was credited with one shot on goal and one hit in 11 minutes, 42 seconds, of ice time (all of which was at even strength). Want to learn more about Sturm? He's the subject of my LAKings.com feature for this week, which takes a look at Sturm's background. Drafted in 1996, Sturm became of the first German born-and-raised players to make a real impact in the NHL. How did he do it? Who did he look up to. Sturm talks about that, and more, in the feature. Thanks for reading...

[Sturm's road to Los Angeles](#)

Schenn, Forbort set for World Juniors

Posted by [Rich Hammond](#) on 22 December 2010, 11:40 am

It's been a good week for a couple Kings prospects. Today, Derek Forbort was named to the United States' roster for the upcoming World Junior Championships, which start Sunday in Buffalo. Forbort, the Kings' first-round pick (No. 15 overall) in this year's draft, is a defenseman and a freshman at the University of North Dakota. Forbort has nine assists and a plus-3 rating in 15 games for the Fighting Sioux this season, and is now one of 22 players who will represent the United States in the World Juniors. Team USA opens the tournament Sunday against Finland.

Down the road, he might face Brayden Schenn, the Kings' first-round pick (No. 5 overall) in 2009. Schenn (pictured right), who played eight games with the Kings this season before being returned to his junior team, is an assistant captain for Team Canada. Schenn scored a goal Tuesday night in Canada's 4-1 exhibition win over Sweden. Canada plays a final exhibition game Thursday against Finland and opens the tournament Sunday against Russia. Schenn talked about his experiences with the Kings, and looked ahead to the World Juniors, in a Canadian Press story that you can read by [clicking here](#).

Also, the Manchester Monarchs picked up their four consecutive victory when they beat Connecticut 5-4 in a shootout last night. Oscar Moller had two goals and one assist and scored in the shootout. Goalie Jeff Zatkoff allowed three first-period goals. Martin Jones came on at the start of the second period and stopped 12 of 13 shots for the win. Thomas Hickey had one goal and one assist and Andrei Loktionov had two assists.

Postgame notes (Dec. 21)

Posted by [Rich Hammond](#) on 22 December 2010, 10:40 am

Some notes from last night's game...

- The Kings were able to end their five-game road trip with a winning record as they beat Colorado 5-0 on Tuesday night.
- During the road trip, on which the Kings won three games and lost two, they outscored their opponents by a combined margin of 22-10. During the trip, the Kings handed the Avalanche and Detroit Red Wings their first shutout losses of the season, and also ended the point streaks of the Nashville Predators (8-0-1) and Avalanche (6-0-0).
- Colorado entered Tuesday's game with 121 goals, most in the NHL, and had scored at least three goals in eight consecutive games. The Avalanche had been 7-0-1 in their last eight home games.
- The Kings on Tuesday went 1-for-3 on the power play and 3-for-3 on the penalty kill. On the trip, they went 5-for-15 on the power play (33.3 percent) and 15-for-17 on the penalty kill (88.2 percent).
- The Kings outshot the Avalanche 32-23. On the trip, the Kings' shots-against total started high, with 51 at Detroit, then fell to 31 at St. Louis, 30 at Nashville, 24 at Chicago and 23 at Colorado.
- The Kings are now 8-10-0 on the road, 15-3-0 when scoring the first goal, 9-1-0 when leading after the first period, 11-0-0 when leading after the second period and 16-3-0 when they score at least three goals in a game.
- Jonathan Quick recorded his third shutout of the season and his 11th career shutout. During the trip, Quick had two shutouts and one assist, for the third point of his NHL career.
- Dustin Brown tied his career high with four points (two goals, two assists). It was his second two-goal game of the season. Brown has five multi-point games in his last six games. He has totaled four goals and eight assists in his last six games and four goals and 11 assists in his last nine games. The Kings are 6-1-1 this season when Brown has a multi-point game.
- Rob Scuderi had his first goal of the season, and his first goal with the Kings. It was his fourth career goal in 405 NHL regular-season games, and his first since Oct. 4, 2008 (for Pittsburgh against Ottawa, in Sweden). It was also Scuderi's first-ever game winning goal. Scuderi also had one assist for his first multi-point game of the season.

- Brad Richardson had one goal. Four of Richardson’s five goals this season have come against Colorado, the team that traded him to the Kings in 2008. Richardson had a hat trick on Oct. 23, when the Kings previously played at Colorado.
- Justin Williams had a power-play goal. Williams has two goals in his last three games, after scoring only one goal in his prior 12 games.
- Drew Doughty had two assists. After going 10 consecutive games without a point, Doughty now has one goal and seven assists in his last five games.
- Anze Kopitar had two assists. Kopitar has six goals and seven assists in his last nine games, and the Kings have are 8-1-1 this season when Kopitar has a multi-point game.
- Jarret Stoll had a power-play assist. Stoll has three assists in his last two games, including two power-play assists.
- Ryan Smyth had one assist, and has four goals and one assist in his last six games.
- Marco Sturm made his Kings debut, played 11 minutes, 42 seconds, and was credited with one shot on goal and one hit.
- Anze Kopitar led the Kings with six shots on goal, while Trevor Lewis had three hits and Davis Drewiske had three blocked shots.
- Jack Johnson played a game-high 25 minutes, 49 seconds. Anze Kopitar led all Kings forwards at 18:20.
- The Kings won 35 of 61 faceoffs (57 percent). Jarret Stoll won 12 of 15 draws (80 percent).
- Terry Murray recorded his 99th win with the Kings, in 196. In Kings history, the coach to reach 100 wins the fastest was Tom Webster, who did it in 211 games.

The view from Denver

Posted by [Rich Hammond](#) on 22 December 2010, 9:40 am

First, a note that the Kings’ practice today has been pushed back to 1 p.m. A little more time for those of you who want to hit the wet streets and check out practice... As for last night’s Kings-Avalanche game, here’s how it was presented by The Denver Post...

[Kings claim shutout, bring end to Avs’ win streak](#)

[Postgame Avs-Kings: Can’t cope with Kopitar](#)

Derek Forbort Named to USA's National Junior Team

World Junior Championships to take place in Buffalo and Niagara, N.Y., Dec. 26 – Jan. 5

Wednesday, 12.22.2010 / 1:21 PM / [Press Releases](#)

Los Angeles Kings

LOS ANGELES – Los Angeles Kings prospect defenseman Derek Forbort has been named to Team USA's roster for the upcoming World Junior Championships, USA Hockey and the Kings announced today. The prestigious tournament is slated to take place in Buffalo and Niagara, N.Y., from Dec. 26 through Jan. 5.

Team USA's roster features 22 players and includes eight players from the team that beat Canada 6-5 in overtime in last year's tournament final. The Americans begin their title defense against Finland on Dec. 26 in Buffalo.

The Kings' first-round choice (15th overall) in the 2010 NHL Entry Draft, Forbort is a 6-5, 198-pound native of Duluth, Minnesota. He currently is a student-athlete at the University of North Dakota, where in 15 games he has nine points (all assists) and six penalty minutes. In 2008-09 and 2009-10 he played for the U.S. National Under-17 Team, and he earned a gold medal for Team USA at 2010 World U18 Championships (plus-9 in 7 GP).

Brayden Schenn, who played in eight games for the Kings this season and is currently playing for the Brandon Wheat Kings of the Western Hockey League, will play for Team Canada and prospect Linden Vey participated in Canada's National Junior Team's selection camp.

Other current Kings to participate in the World Junior Championships:

- Jonathan Bernier (Team Canada, 2008)
- Dustin Brown (Team USA, 2002 and 2003)
- Drew Doughty (Team Canada, 2008)
- Matt Greene (Team USA, 2003)
- Michal Handzus (Team Slovakia, 1996 and 1997)
- Jack Johnson (Team USA, 2006 and 2007)
- Anze Kopitar (Team Slovenia 2004, 2005 and 2006, Division I)
- Trevor Lewis (Team USA, 2007)
- Wayne Simmonds (Team Canada, 2008)
- Ryan Smyth (Team Canada, 1995)
- Jarret Stoll (Team Canada, 2001 and 2002)
- Marco Sturm (Team Germany, 1994 and 1995)

The Kings (19-12-1) begin a two-game homestand tomorrow when they host Edmonton at 7:30 p.m. The Kings then host the Ducks on Sunday at 6 p.m. Both games will be broadcast on FS West, KTLK AM 1150 and along the Kings Radio Network.

For all Kings ticket information, visit LAKings.com and call 1-888-KINGS-LA (1-888-54647-52).

Kings return home to take on Oilers

Tal Pinchevsky - NHL.com Staff Writer



Stats



32	GP	32
12	W	19
15	L	12
5	OT	1
29	P	39
0.453	P%	0.609
2.62	G/G	2.88
3.31	GA/G	2.34
16.1	PP%	16.7
71.3	PK%	86.0
25.6	S/G	28.8
34.7	SA/G	28.3
44.8	FO%	49.9

Date	Vis/Home	Final
<u>Apr 10, 2010</u>	EDM@LAK	EDM, 4 - 3
<u>Feb 11, 2010</u>	EDM@LAK	EDM, 3 - 2
<u>Dec 15, 2009</u>	LAK@EDM	LAK, 3 - 2
<u>Nov 25, 2009</u>	LAK@EDM	LAK, 3 - 1

OILERS (12-15-5) at KINGS (19-12-1)

TV: SNET-EDM (HD), FS-W (HD)

Last 10: Edmonton 6-3-1; Los Angeles 6-3-1

Season series: This is the first of four meetings this season between these teams, who will play each other twice more in the next six weeks. The Kings and Oilers split their series last season, with both of Edmonton's wins coming via shootout.

Big story: After acquiring him from Boston, the Kings placed winger Marco Sturm on their active roster this week. In his first game since offseason knee surgery, Sturm registered one shot in the Kings' 5-0 win Tuesday night over the Avalanche. ... After enjoying a hot streak to start December, the Oilers have dropped three of their last four games, including a 2-1 loss to the Sharks on Tuesday.

Team Scope:

Edmonton: In the opener to a three-game road trip, the Oilers fell behind 2-0 in San Jose before Dustin Penner's third-period goal bridged the gap. The eventual loss closed out a six-game homestand in which the Oil went 3-3.

"We had four turnovers on our 5-on-3, and that tells you that we're trying to do something that's not there," coach Tom Renney said following the loss in San Jose. "That sort of led to our demise. We got into a track meet in the second period (by) not managing the puck properly."

Kings: On Tuesday night, Los Angeles completed its five-game road trip in style with an impressive 5-0 dismantling of the Avalanche. In ending Colorado's six-game win streak, the Kings went 3-2 on the trip. Kings' captain Dustin Brown continued his hot play with a four-point night in Denver that included a two-goal third period.

"When you're playing those five games, like we have on the road, and come back and play the third period (like

that), that's a big buy-in by everybody," coach Terry Murray said. "There was a real solid attitude about the team."

Who's hot: With his four-point night in Denver, Brown has been on fire for the Kings, registering 12 points in his last six games. Not to be outdone, winger Anze Kopitar has 14 points in his last 11 games. ... With his goal in San Jose, Dustin Penner now has 3 goals in his last six games. Ryan Whitney, who assisted on Penner's goal, is enjoying a modest three-game point streak and is first in the League among defensemen with 25 assists.

Injury report: Gilbert Brule missed Tuesday's game with an illness while Jim Vandermeer is out indefinitely with an ankle injury. Ales Hemsky (groin) and Shawn Horcoff (knee) remain on IR for the Oilers. ... Matt Greene missed Tuesday's game in Colorado after sustaining an upper-body injury Saturday night in Nashville, a game that also saw fellow defenseman Willie Mitchell leave with a lower-body injury. Mitchell remains week-to-week while Scott Parse (hip surgery) is on IR.

Stat pack: Rarely do they match up statistically, but with one more minor penalty, Zack Stortini will pass Hall-of-Famer Paul Coffey for 17th on the Oilers' all-time penalty-minutes list. ... Don't expect much offense from Rob Scuderi. His goal against the Avs was his first regular-season marker since opening night of the 2008-09 season, when he was with the Penguins, a span of 184 games.

Puck drop: While both teams are known for their core of young, exciting scorers, they are polar opposites in the defensive zone. The Kings rank fourth in the League in goals allowed per game and the Oilers rank 29th, making goaltender Nikolai Khabibulin imperative to the team's success.

"He's the reason why we win," Oilers rookie Jordan Eberle said of Khabibulin following a 6-3 win last week over Columbus.

LAKings

1. #LAKings prospect Derek Forbort named to @usahockey World Junior Team: <http://ht.ly/3tiuY> [24 minutes ago](#) via [HootSuite](#)
2. Only the Vancouver Canucks have a better goal differential (+23) in the Western Conference than the #LAKings +20 [about 1 hour ago](#) via [HootSuite](#)

Terry Murray pleased with Kings' power-play strategy

Justin Williams' one-time goal against the Avalanche is what the coach has in mind.

By Mike DiGiovanna

6:17 PM PST, December 22, 2010

It was a meaningless goal, really, a power-play effort that capped a 5-0 victory over the Colorado Avalanche on Tuesday night, but to Kings Coach **Terry Murray**, it was a thing of beauty and, he hopes, a sign of things to come.

The Kings tend to get too fine with the puck sometimes, especially on the power play, opting for the extra pass instead of the shot, but that all changed with just under three minutes left in Colorado.

Jarret Stoll won a faceoff in the Avalanche end, drawing the puck to teammate **Jack Johnson** at the blue line. Johnson snapped a cross-ice pass to **Justin Williams**, who one-timed a shot past Colorado goaltender **Craig Anderson** for the final goal in what may have been the Kings' most impressive win this season.

Elapsed time from faceoff to goal: five seconds.

"That's the kind of shot mentality we have to have," Murray said after Wednesday's practice in preparation for Thursday night's game against Edmonton at Staples Center. "That has to be a selling point every day in practice. For me, that's the first option.

"Often, we're looking to pass the puck into the net, making highlight-reel plays. We have the ability to do that once in a while, but inevitably, there are long stretches of time before you see the next one."

The goal was the Kings' 21st in 126 power-play tries this season, a 16.7% success rate that ranks 21st in the NHL. With more of a shoot-first mentality, Murray thinks the Kings can improve on the power play.

"We have a presence with guys like Johnson and **[Drew] Doughty** on the back end," Murray said. "Those kinds of players can really bring it to the net, and that's what we have to sell them on."

Sturm plays

Left wing **Marco Sturm**, acquired from Boston on Dec. 11, made his Kings debut Tuesday night, playing almost 12 minutes in a low-key, fourth-line role against the Avalanche, his first game action since he had major right-knee surgery May 18.

Sturm will remain on the fourth line against Edmonton, but Murray expects the veteran to work his way into more meaningful minutes.

"When the trade was made, I thought he was going to jump in and have an impact with our No. 1 line immediately," Murray said. "But in reality, you have a player who is coming back from a very serious injury, and as you saw [Tuesday] night, it's [about] getting into the game, getting your legs under yourself in stressful situations and finding your game again.

"But I do see him eventually playing on that left side with **[Anze] Kopitar** and **[Dustin] Brown**. When he's full strength, healthy and ready to go, he's a dynamic guy with speed, a north-south player. He can put some points up on the board."

Going Greene

Defenseman **Matt Greene**, sidelined since he took a hit to the head Dec. 13 at Detroit, was a full participant in practice Wednesday, but Murray said he will not play against the Oilers on Thursday.

"He looks good and he feels good," Murray said of Greene. "Hopefully he'll be cleared and ready to go" for Sunday's game against the Ducks.

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latimes.com/sports/la-sp-kings-tonight-20101223,0,2316688.story

latimes.com

Up next for the Kings: Thursday vs. Edmonton

L.A. plays host to the Oilers at Staples Center, aiming to give Terry Murray his 100th victory as Kings coach.

By Mike DiGiovanna

9:40 PM PST, December 22, 2010

Kings tonight

VS. EDMONTON

When: 7:30

Where: Staples Center.

On the air: TV: FS West; Radio: 1150.

Records: Kings 19-12-1, Oilers 12-15-5.

Record vs. Oilers (2009-10): 2-0-2.

Update: In their first game back from a five-game, 10-day trip, the Kings will look to give Terry Murray his 100th victory as the team's coach. A win would also give the Kings a 12-2-1 record at Staples Center, which would be their best home mark in points through 15 games since 1992-93. The Oilers are in last place in the Western Conference, but their overall team speed can cause problems for opponents, as the Ducks discovered in a 4-2 loss to Edmonton on Nov. 21 in Anaheim.

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Thursday, December 23, 2010

Kings: Oilers can't be taken lightly

By Dan Arritt

Edmonton Oilers (12-15-5) vs. Kings (19-12-1) at Staples Center, 7:30 p.m., PT

Five storylines to track:

1. Two traps in one – With 22 of 30 teams in the NHL owning winning records, the Kings must take advantage of the few opportunities against weaker ones, something they could be better at this season. Against the clubs with losing records, Los Angeles is just 4-3. The Kings also need to avoid the trap of getting too comfortable in their first game back after a 10-day, five-game road trip. They're 2-1 this season after returning from road trips of two or more games.

2. Look out for No. 11 – **Dustin Brown** put up four points in a 5-0 win Tuesday at Colorado, but linemate **Anze Kopitar** probably had a more impressive overall game. Kopitar was a magnet with the puck and powerful on his skates. He even made one of the highlight moves of the season when he passed to himself through his legs and got off a quality shot on goalkeeper **Craig Anderson**. He's been a pest against the Oilers as well, accounting for 15 points in 15 career games.

3. Getting in the groove – The Kings looked much better on the power play during their five-game road trip, producing five goals in 15 man-advantage situations. They remain in the league's bottom third with a season-long success rate of just 16.7%, but the Oilers come in with the worst penalty-kill unit in the league at 71.3%, making them just the right team for Los Angeles to continue its upward trend.

4. The stat that counts – The biggest disparity between the Kings and Oilers is their goals-against averages. The Kings come in fourth-best in the league at 2.3 goals a game. Edmonton is last at 3.3. Except for a 6-4 loss last week in St. Louis, the Kings haven't allowed more than two goals in regulation since Nov. 24 in Montreal, a span of 11 games. The Oilers have been better of late, allowing three goals or less in nine of their last 10.

5. Hall gaining fame – Edmonton rookie left wing **Taylor Hall** is quickly becoming the **Blake Griffin** of the NHL. Like the Los Angeles Clippers rookie forward, Hall has the explosiveness of a cheetah and the creativity of **Leonardo da Vinci**. He's also the son of former Canadian Football League player **Steve Hall**, who went on to become a member of the Canadian national bobsled team. The younger Hall, who turned 19 last month, has four assists in his last two games.



Thursday, December 23, 2010

December a turning point in Kings' season

By Pierre LeBrun

Circle Dec. 4 as the night the [Los Angeles Kings](#) turned their season around.

Maybe it's just me, but when I watched [Anze Kopitar](#) score in overtime that night against Detroit and saw the Kings' reaction at a rocking Staples Center, I remember thinking, "This might be what the floundering team needs."

"I think you're right on with that Detroit game," Kings coach Terry Murray told ESPN.com on Wednesday. "That was pretty big. You're playing against one of the premier teams in the league, and to pull that out in the end with that overtime, it was what we needed to jumpstart us. It reinforced our understanding that if we play the right way as a team and as a group, we can get some good wins here."

The Kings have gone 6-2-1 in December and now look like the team many of us had predicted to do great things this season. They just completed a tough, five-game, 10-day road trip (3-2-0) with big wins in Detroit (a 5-0 victory), Nashville (6-1) and Colorado (5-0).

"What I liked about the game the other night in Colorado was that the third period was our best period," said Murray. "That's making the right statement to me as a coach, to see these young guys dig in and play with a real purpose to their game. We played with pace and tempo against a team that hadn't been shut out all year, a team that's the top-scoring team in the NHL."

Where was that Kings team in November? The downturn last month began with a 6-3 loss at San Jose on Nov. 15, a defeat that stung and knocked the Kings back for quite a stretch. "They came out and really took it to us and played a great game against us," said Murray. "That game really hurt us. That was a tough one to absorb."

The team would drop seven of eight games to end November, starting with that loss in San Jose. While Murray believes the results look worse than the actual effort on some of those nights, he conceded his team wasn't quite up to snuff. "As a young group of guys, we backed off emotionally a bit, we were not quite as connected as you'd like it to be," said the veteran coach. The popular read on the Kings from the outside was the young club was guilty of reading its preseason clippings.

"Maybe part of it was the press clippings, but part of it was that you're a young hockey club and you're going to go through these dips and these peaks," said Murray. "You have to learn to deal with it either way. At the end of the day, it looks like we're a better team because of it. We've played some good hockey in the month of December and that's the bottom line. The top guys on our team are leading the way."

Heading into Thursday night's home date with Edmonton, the Kings are one point out of the eighth and final playoff spot in the Western Conference with 39 points (19-12-1). There's a long road ahead to solidify a postseason berth -- Los Angeles is fourth in its own Pacific Division behind Dallas, San Jose and Anaheim, although the Ducks have played six more games than Los Angeles.

"The division is a hard one, for sure," said Murray. "It's going to be fun in the second half of the year with the way it's set up right now." [Jonathan Quick](#) must continue to be dynamite; the Kings netminder is among the league leaders in wins (16), goals-against average (1.94) and save percentage (.929). There was a buzz at training camp with the arrival of rookie goalie [Jonathan Bernier](#) and Quick responded to that challenge.

"It did push Quick," said Murray. "He knew that Jonathan Bernier was coming in, and had a great year in Manchester. But I made it clear at the start of the year that Quick was going to be our starting goaltender. Quick took on the challenge. He was disappointed with his finish last year and did the right stuff during the offseason. He came into the season in terrific shape and has had a wonderful start."

The Kings are fourth in the NHL in goals-against per game, in part because of Quick, but also because the team is playing a sound defensive game in front of him and Bernier. The Kings allow the sixth-fewest shots per game in the league (28.3).

"That's the way we have to be, a good checking team," said Murray. "That game in Colorado, that was key for us. We were on the right side of the puck. Since the day I've come in here, we've really committed to being a good checking team and cutting back on Grade A scoring chances [for the opposing team]. That allows your young goaltenders to have some success."

Profiles of Prime Time Players

FIRST LINERS

A Quick Rise Up The Ranks For One Connecticut Native

BY JESSI PIERCE



JONATHAN QUICK #32

POSITION: Goaltender
SHOOTS: Right
HEIGHT: 6-foot-1
WEIGHT: 212 pounds
BIRTHDATE: Jan. 21, 1986
HOMETOWN: Milford, Conn.
COLLEGE: University of Massachusetts—Amherst
USA HOCKEY HISTORY: A member of the silver-medal winning 2010 U.S. Men's Olympic Team.

IN A GAME as fast and fluid as ice hockey, quickness is a key attribute. Especially if you're a goaltender.

For Los Angeles Kings goaltender Jonathan Quick, his speed is not only distinguished in his last name, but also by his rapid rise up to the upper echelons of professional hockey.

The Milford, Conn., native took his place between the pipes as a 7-year-old, just two years after strapping on skates for the first time.

"I started playing hockey at 5 and was never a super strong skater, so I thought I could try goalie, and I haven't really looked back since," recalls the 24-year-old.

After a brief time at perennial prep powerhouse Hamden High

School, Quick made the jump to the Avon Old Farms Prep School, where he led the squad to back-to-back New England Prep Championships his junior and senior years. In his final season he recorded nine shutouts — a New England prep school record — catching the eye of both university coaches and professional scouts.

Despite being drafted in the third round of the 2005 NHL Entry Draft by the Kings, Quick chose the college route, attending the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. After starting 13 games his freshman year, Quick became the go-to netminder during his sophomore campaign, amassing 2,224 minutes and a .920 save percentage. That same season he



backstopped the Minutemen to their first ever NCAA appearance, upsetting Clarkson University before falling to Maine in the East Regional Finals.

Quick joined the NHL ranks after two seasons with UMass, spending much of 2007-08 splitting time between the Reading Royals of the East Coast Hockey League and the King's top minor league affiliate in Manchester before earning a permanent spot with L.A. in 2008-09.

"Playing in the ECHL made me really step my game up," says Quick, who became only the second goaltender in ECHL history to earn a shutout victory and score a goal in the same game.

"I knew that if I wanted to earn that roster spot [in the NHL] I would have to improve and really push myself to make that next jump."

Now entering his third NHL season in Los Angeles, Quick's swift glove has earned him the starting nod and recognition among goaltenders in wins the past two seasons. But it isn't personal stats that make Quick tick.

"It's about team success," he says. "If I'm playing well but we're not winning games, it doesn't mean anything. Last year we [the Kings] had a franchise record for season points, but my numbers weren't that great. That doesn't bother me one bit since we had the team success; that's what's important."

That same team success led the Kings to a third-place finish in the Pacific Division and their first playoff berth since 1992-93.

"Playoffs are a completely different game," Quick says. "That was a one-game series [with Vancouver]. Win one game, make it to the next round, lose one game and it makes it that much harder."

"It's a whole different mindset; you're going into it expecting to play seven games against the same team night after night. You have to make little adjustments. Whoever can adapt the best will end up winning the series."

Although the Kings fell to the Canucks in six games for an early exit from the post-season, Quick still got a taste of a championship run on the international level, being selected as one of three goaltenders to represent USA at the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver.

"It meant a lot to me to be selected as part of that team," he says. "There were a lot of goalies and a lot of top players to choose from, but it meant a great deal that USA hockey thought enough of me. We came one goal away from winning the gold medal and it was an honor to be a part of the whole thing."

At just 24 and already an anchor on the Kings defense, Quick has risen up the ranks in a manner befitting of his name.



YOUTH STAR

Jessie Aney

AGE: 12
HOMETOWN: Rochester, Minn.

A hockey duck, a tennis pal, and math home work, have very little in common, but for Jessie Aney the similarities are that she excels at all three.

Achiever 19, Aney is an example of USA Hockey's American Development Model, splitting her time between both hockey and tennis, vying for honours on a national scale in both sports.

On the ice, Aney was the leading scorer and MVP with Team Hockey at the International Cup this year August and currently leads 13 in the nation on the team's roster in the U.S. Tennis Association's 2- and 3-tier tournaments.

Aney has also a member of the state championship team for the Math Players at Minnesota. If that doesn't earn the middle schooler busy enough, she also gives back to the community by volunteering at a nursing home and making cake packages for soldiers overseas.

All of these accomplishments combined to earn Aney the Sports Illustrated Spirit Kid of the Year award.

FROM TSN.CA

AFTER SITTING WITH KINGS, SCHENN SEEKS GOLD WITH CANADA

TORONTO -- Brayden Schenn played just over eight minutes for the Los Angeles Kings in a 3-1 victory over the New Jersey Devils on Oct. 30, and then he sat, and sat, and sat.

For the better part of a month, the talented 19-year-old centre from Saskatoon was left idle, trying unsuccessfully not to think too much about his situation. With eight games under his belt, Schenn was approaching the 10-game threshold that would activate a year of his NHL contract and all but assure he wouldn't return to junior this season.

So he sat, contemplating the uncertainty. Would he stay in the NHL? Would he be sent back to the Brandon Wheat Kings of the Western Hockey League? Would he play again for Canada at the world junior hockey championship? He didn't have a clue about what was going to happen.

"I didn't get told anything," the baby-faced Schenn said in a recent interview. "Three weeks, up until I got sent to Manchester (of the American Hockey League on Nov. 17 for a conditioning stint), came back from Manchester and I didn't really get told anything. I'm sure they were unsure what they were going to do with me. . . .

"Everything is going through your head when you're not playing and you're sitting there in the hotel. . . . A lot goes through your mind."

Some closure finally came Dec. 3, two days after Schenn returned to the Kings from his two-week stint with the minor-league Monarchs, when he was sent back to Brandon. Disappointed over the demotion, the silver lining was that he would be able to rejoin the national junior team and help try to avenge last January's loss in the gold-medal final to the Americans.

Still, it took the fifth overall pick in the 2009 draft a while to get over the sting of being returned to the WHL and having to put off his NHL dream for another year.

"I'll agree with them, maybe it was the right decision. I guess I'll find out in the future," said Schenn, the younger brother of Toronto Maple Leafs defenceman Luke Schenn. "You can't argue with L.A. there. They've produced a lot of good players, they hold my future and they're going to do what's best for me.

"The main thing is I gained experience from it. It was definitely a good experience, I enjoyed my time there. Hopefully next year I go back with the experience and crack the roster."

His pain was the national junior team's gain, as head scout Kevin Prendergast described having Schenn as "an early Christmas gift."

A solid, six-foot-one, 190-pound package of soft hands and hard hits, Schenn instantly upgraded Canada's skill set, while providing needed doses of leadership and experience (he was named an alternate captain). He is one of only four returning players, and has one of the best offensive pedigrees on the club.

"The first thing he brings is leadership, he's a character kid, he's a blue-collar player, he fits the system perfectly," said Prendergast. "He's gritty, he's got good hands, he can play the power play, he can be a very, very good penalty killer for us.

"All those factors can help us."

And playing regularly again will help Schenn, who scored Canada's first goal in a 4-1 exhibition win over Sweden on Tuesday night.

So far this season, he's played in only the eight games with the Kings, seven more with Manchester (collecting four goals and three assists), and a pair with Brandon (scoring a goal and three assists) before joining Canada.

He insists the inconsistency in his playing time hasn't left him rusty, but a string of games will allow him to implement some of the lessons he learned in Los Angeles.

"When I was sitting out on gamedays, I would practise preparing mentally for the game and working on aspects of my game that you wouldn't get to work on in a normal practice, the down-low play and one-on-one battles," said Schenn. "I think L.A. did a pretty good job of keeping me focused and prepared for things like this, the world juniors."

By now Schenn is very familiar with all the pre-tournament talk about how this Canadian team is short on skill, how it will have to win ugly, how it's not as talented as the American squad. The overtime loss to the United States and having to settle for silver at the last tournament is also fresh in his mind.

"We don't really know what kind of team we're going to have right now," he said. "Look at our guys, we've got a lot of skill up front, big D-men on the back and two solid goalies as well. Maybe (the team is) not as skilled as past years but there's definitely some skill up there as well. . . .

"Last year was a tough pill to swallow there. They're calling the Americans the favourite, that's fine by us. You've always got to prove yourself and coming into this tournament, everyone's excited."

From Mayors Manor by John Hove

Terry Murray Update on Alec Martinez

Before the Kings left on their just completed five-game road trip coach [Terry Murray](#) provided some initial comments about [Alec Martinez](#).

He had only played six games with the team at that point and knowing it can sometimes take time for a young defenseman to adjust to the NHL, Murray pointed out he was improving each game and specifically liked his "body positioning and low play" compared to last season.

Now with an expanded body of work since we last spoke, I asked Murray for some additional thoughts on Martinez after practice today...

"We really like what Alec has brought and how his game has evolved here from the time that I first saw him two years ago. He came to training camp this year and had a good camp. He does a lot of good things and it was very noticeable actually throughout the exhibition games. He went down to [Manchester](#) (AHL) with the right attitude and was arguably their best player down there, putting up a lot of points and doing everything a player needs to do to develop his game.

"Since he's come up we've liked everything he's doing - his attitude, his work ethic, etc. When he's sitting in individual review he's asking a lot of questions, talking about his game. The part that has always been the achilles heel with him is he gets a little down on himself after making some kind of a mistake. He really takes on that responsibility and has a tough time bouncing back.

"He's getting through that though. He's maturing and we're seeing a pretty complete player who's only going to get better as a young guy."

When [Matt Greene](#) returns (probably 12/26) and [Willie Mitchell](#) makes it back into the line-up, the Kings will be faced with some tough decisions. Murray has previously said he doesn't want to play seven guys on D in a game.

So, that leaves one spot and three bodies - Martinez, along with Davis Drewiske and Peter Harrold. It's something to keep an eye on in the weeks ahead.

Kelly Hrudehy on Jonathan Quick

Former Kings goaltender (and current Hockey Night in Canada analyst) [Kelly Hrudehy](#) was on NHL Live radio yesterday. He talked quite a bit about [Jonathan Quick](#), so I thought I'd pass on some of the quotes...

[Billy Jaffe](#) asked "If you could pick one goalie to start a team with right now, who would it be?"

Hrudehy responded with "For many reasons I can chose about five or ten guys. So, this may surprise you a little bit - but because of age, because of the way he's playing right now, I'd guess I'd go with Carey Price...but, I may go with Jonathan Quick."

He went on to say that Quick "really impressed" him last year and he's "20 percent better" this season, adding "there's just something about his mental make-up that makes him feel like he's a general back there. Like nothing is going to affect him. He is, in my opinion, in the top five right now."

Hrudehy said even though Quick isn't "getting a lot of credit" right now and is "flying under the radar," that "because of his competitive nature" he likes him a lot.

High praise from a guy that knows a thing or two about the position.

For more comments from Hrudehy about many of the top goaltenders in the Western Conference - including more on Quick/Bernier, plus [Roberto Luongo](#), Marty Turco, Antti Niemi, [Jimmy Howard](#), [Craig Anderson](#), [Jaroslav Halak](#), etc. - be sure to check out his visit to MayorsManor from earlier this season. We covered it all in an interview [linked here](#).

[Terry Murray on Coaching Memories](#)

Tomorrow night vs. Edmonton [Terry Murray](#) gets a shot at a little piece of history.

With a victory in his 197th game with the Kings, he can become the quickest coach to reach 100 wins. [Tom Webster](#) (1989-92) holds the current record at 211 games.

After practice today I asked Murray to reflect back over his long career and pick out a few of his favorite memories...

"Getting to the Stanley Cup Finals is always a memorable time (1997 with Philadelphia). As a coach, that's your goal, that's what we're here for is to win and to get an opportunity to with a Stanley Cup. That was very memorable and was a great time.

"I guess going back even to the first years I got into the coaching side of the business, as an assistant coach, Brian (his brother) and I take over the Washington Capitals - who had never made the playoffs in their eight or nine years of existence. That year, getting into the playoffs and becoming a pretty good hockey club - that was a big step for that organization. There was a lot of turmoil. There was a lot of that talk of 'let's save the franchise, move it to Seattle, Washington' and all that stuff was going on. [David Polie](#) came in as the GM. So, there's good memories out of that stuff whenever you have an impact on what's going to happen and how the team plays."

Assuming the Kings continue to win under Murray, a few seasons from now he'll start chasing another Murray - [Andy Murray](#).

Andy is the Kings' all-time wins leader with 215. However, Bob Miller tells a funny story in his book [[Bob Miller's Tales from the Los Angeles Kings](#)], as part of a chapter titled 'Don't Count Chickens' where he explains how tough it was to get the record.

As the story goes, in March 2004 Andy needed just one victory (with 11 games remaining in the season) to become the winningest coach in franchise history. During a TV shoot, Bob pre-taped a congratulations to the coach.

Well...the Kings lost all 11 games to close out the season. And to make matters worse, the following year was cancelled due to the lockout. So, it wasn't until [October 6, 2005](#) - against the Wayne Gretzky coached Phoenix Coyotes - that Andy picked up victory 179 to top the list.

Surely, everybody in the Kings organization hopes it doesn't take as long for Terry Murray's 100th win to get here. In fact, it would probably be a nice early Christmas present for the coach if the team can beat the Oilers tomorrow night at Staples Center.