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## Diehard Los Angeles Kings fans flock to Canadian-owned bar to watch Stanley Cup

Monday, 06.11.2012 / 6:05 AM / News  
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REDONDO BEACH, Calif. - If a hockey fan in Los Angeles doesn't have a ticket to Game 6 of the Stanley Cup final, there's no better place to be than the Redondo Beach Cafe.

Owned by former CFLer Chris Tsangaris and his brother Kosta, both natives of Montreal, the diner-style restaurant has become a hockey hot spot during the Kings current playoff run.

The place was crammed with jersey-clad fans on Saturday when Los Angeles failed to knock off New Jersey in Game 5 — and it will almost certainly be home to a similar scene when the Kings take another crack at finishing the job Monday night.

"Hockey is alive and thriving here," said Chris Tsangaris.

There's no doubt about that. The response has been so strong to the Kings' Cup run that the bar will add an extra 70-inch television screen for Game 6.

The walls are covered with memorabilia ranging from a signed [Ian Turnbull](#) sweater — the former Maple Leafs defenceman is a frequent visitor who also has a "five-goal" sundae named in his honour — to a team picture of the 1971-72 California Golden Seals.

And, of course, there are plenty of Kings sweaters, pictures and hockey sticks to go around. The NHL team played a big role in the early success of the restaurant, which was opened eight years ago.

"It took a little time, but the Kings were really, really generous with all of their support," said Tsangaris. "They realized quickly that we were a hockey-first place and they got pretty excited about that. Seven or eight years ago, there weren't too many places out here like this.

"Once they got behind us, it really took off."

The restaurant is a magnet for both Canadian transplants and those on vacation. Among the clientele for Game 5 were natives of Saskatoon, Edmonton, Toronto and at least three people apart from the Tsangaris brothers from Montreal — two now living in California and one a curious tourist.

It's also a haven for local Kings diehards like Jeff Ohara, who anxiously sat in a booth eating poutine more than two hours before puck drop. He's been loyal to the team for 40 years and is still waiting to celebrate his first Stanley Cup win.

"I've suffered," he said. "But the longer you wait the better it is."

The fever around the Kings charge to the Stanley Cup has nearly run the Tsangaris brothers off their feet. As the crowds grew, they had to add more televisions — with some fans even now willing to view games through a window from an outdoor patio.

And it's a knowledgeable hockey crowd, too.

A former linebacker for Cal State-Long Beach, Chris Tsangaris spent six seasons in the CFL with Winnipeg, Ottawa, Toronto and Montreal before retiring in 1997. Eventually, he made his way back to California.

"I just fell in love with the area," said Tsangaris. "When I got done playing in the CFL, I tried to come out here as quick as I could."

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- 5:00 ET: Cisco NHL Live
- 7:00 ET: NHL On The Fly
- 7:30 ET: NHL Plays of the Week
- 8:00 ET: Kings Stanley Cup Championship Video
- 10:00 ET: NHL Tonight

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Hockey fans were soon to follow.

The bar was a popular spot to watch the 2010 Vancouver Olympics and also hosts a well-attended Grey Cup party each year. It even had an Anthony Calvillo appreciation night, with the Los Angeles-born Montreal Alouettes quarterback making a personal appearance.

It's a rare oasis of Canadiana among the land of endless beaches and palm trees.

"It's like you're in Canada and two blocks away from the beach," said Tsangaris. "You get the best of both worlds here. You can come in here and have a Molson, watch a CFL game or a hockey game, and either go to the beach before or after.

"It is pretty sweet."

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GEICO QUOTE OF THE DAY

"I'm kind of tired of playing like an average goalie, it's getting ridiculous now, three or four games in a row giving up three goals or more. You know I don't care if they were nice goals or guys wide open it doesn't matter, you got to make some big saves to give your team a chance to at least get a point."

— Vancouver goalie Cory Schneider after the Canucks' 4-2 loss to the Coyotes on Tuesday

FAN POLL: STREAKING HAWKS

Which team has the best chance of ending Chicago's point streak?

- St. Louis (2/28)
Columbus (3/1)
Detroit (3/3)
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