

Administration of Barack Obama, 2015

Remarks Honoring the 2014 Stanley Cup Champion Los Angeles Kings and the 2014 Major League Soccer Champion Los Angeles Galaxy
February 2, 2015

Welcome to the White House! After Super Bowl Sunday, we thought we'd help America ease back into the work week with some more sports. *[Laughter]* So let's give it up for the Stanley Cup Champion L.A. Kings and the Major League Soccer Champion L.A. Galaxy.

We have NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman here; give him a big round of applause. MLS Commissioner Don Garber is in the house. We've got also Dan Beckerman, the president and CEO of AEG, the company that owns both of these championship teams. And of course, we've got Kings and Galaxy management and Kings Coach Darryl Sutter and Galaxy Coach Bruce Arena. Give them a big round of applause.

Now, as a Chicago fan, I'm a little resentful. *[Laughter]* You guys have an embarrassment of riches. Today feels a little like "Groundhog Day." If you're feeling a little déjà vu, you're not alone. Two years ago, we had the Galaxy and the Kings here together. So if you see Bill Murray playing the piano in the foyer, you know something weird is going on, and we're probably going to do this again.

This is actually three titles in 4 years for the Galaxy. It is their fifth Cup overall, more than any other franchise in MLS. And it will be the last one for the greatest soccer players America has ever produced, Landon Donovan, who unfortunately couldn't make it today. But everybody knows this team is a whole lot more than just Landon. There's league MVP Robbie Keane and Robbie Rogers. Apparently, there's some other guys not named Robbie—*[laughter]*—like Omar Gonzalez from Team U.S.A. And Juninho and Leonardo, two guys who've got that Brazilian one-name thing going, which is always very cool. *[Laughter]*

Now, this season wasn't a perfect storybook. The Galaxy started out the season in the cellar, then fought their way back into the playoffs. And then, in the MLS Cup against New England, the game went into extra time when Robbie Keane's goal gave them their latest title.

And I was just telling these guys backstage the degree to which they represent their sports so well, and America is starting to realize what the Beautiful Game is all about. And it is wonderful to see not just what's happening at the highest levels of professional sports, but how legions of young people are going to be continuing the traditions here in the United States with soccer for many years to come.

Now, like the Galaxy, the Kings needed overtime to win their championship; they needed two of them, in fact. And that was the easy part: Just to get to the Finals, the Kings had to win three straight Game Sevens—all on the road. They dug themselves out of a 3–0 hole against San Jose in the first round; they're laughing because they're thinking, man, let's try to do it easier next time. *[Laughter]* In the Conference Final, they beat my Blackhawks, which is unfortunate. *[Laughter]* I mean, first of all, in L.A., there's not even any ice really. *[Laughter]* So you'd think, like, Chicago, where it's probably 10 degrees below zero today, at least, we'd get some hockey. But I mean, we've won a couple, so I can't complain.

The Kings have done the unthinkable: They have turned a city with no snow and no ice and no winter into a hockey town—*[laughter]*—complete with an outdoor game in Dodgers Stadium. They have done it with a team that L.A. fans have embraced, guys like goalie

Jonathan Quick, playoff MVP Justin Williams. The first line of Brown and Kopitar and Gaborik, and Jeff Carter and his "hockey smile." And of course, Coach Sutter and his one-liners with the press. *[Laughter]* I've tried those one-liners, by the way, with the press, and it never seems to work. *[Laughter]*

I've also got to mention that in the middle of their season, a lot of these guys played for their national teams at Sochi, and we were proud to have Jonathan Quick and Dustin Brown wearing the red, white, and blue on behalf of team U.S.A. Very proud of them.

And that's just one example of how these teams represent more than the colors they wear for the Kings or the Galaxy. Both teams are major supporters of Children's Hospital Los Angeles. The Kings have partnered with Discovery Cube L.A., a local museum, on an exhibit called "The Science of Hockey" to give kids a mental and physical workout. Galaxy players served meals to more than 2,000 families at Thanksgiving, and the organization built a soccer field for the community to use in South L.A.

And finally, I want to recognize what Robbie Rogers of the Galaxy has done for a lot of people by blazing a trail as one of professional sports' first openly gay players. My guess is that, as an athlete, Robbie wants to win first and foremost. That's what competition is all about. But, Robbie, you've also inspired a whole lot of folks here and around the world, and we are very proud of you. So where's Robbie? There he is.

So congratulations to both of these teams, to the City of Los Angeles, and its fans. And best of luck when you are not playing Chicago. *[Laughter]*

Thank you, everybody. We're going to strike the podium and get some pictures. Come on.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:22 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to actor William J. Murray; Landon T. Donovan and Robert D. Keane, forwards, Robert H. Rogers III and Vitor Gomes "Juninho" Pereira Júnior, midfielders, Omar Gonzalez and José "Leonardo" Ribeiro da Silva, defenders, Los Angeles Galaxy; and Justin Williams, Dustin Brown, and Marian Gaborik, right wings, Anze Kopitar, centerman, and Jeff Carter, winger, Los Angeles Kings.

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Names: Arena, Bruce; Beckerman, Dan; Bettman, Gary B.; Brown, Dustin; Carter, Jeff ; da Silva, José "Leonardo"; Donovan, Landon T.; Gaborik, Marian; Garber, Don; Gonzalez, Omar; Keane, Robert D.; Kopitar, Anze; Murray, William J.; Pereira Júnior, Vitor Gomes "Juninho"; Quick, Jonathan; Rogers, Robert H., III ; Sutter, Darryl J.; Williams, Justin.

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