

## STANLEY CUP PROMOS TAKE NOSTALGIC WALK DOWN MEMORY LANE



Wayne Gretzky, former professional ice hockey player and coach and acknowledged by many sportswriters, players and the NHL itself, as the “greatest hockey player ever,” started a tradition that has been religiously followed by every Stanley Cup winning team. Way back in 1988, Gretzky’s team, Edmonton Oilers, won the Stanley Cup, he, to savor memories of the great moment, insisted upon having a team photo taken on the ice, with not just the players, but just about everybody associated with the team. This included the members of the management, coaches, trainers, scouts and a diverse range of assistants as well. By his own admission it was the greatest moment in his illustrious career and he wanted the moment immortalized on camera. This tradition is the focus of the National Hockey League spot from Young & Rubicam in New York for the Stanley Cup Final series, which begins Wednesday night between the New Jersey Devils and the Los Angeles Kings. The spot is part of a trilogy and brings up the rear. The first two began with spot in 2008, in which players raise the heavy cup effortlessly above their heads and followed with the emotional 2010, spot, where players are shown speechless, so overcome are they with emotion and euphoria over their victory. The ads are effective in their simplicity. There is no commentary and only a single message at the end defines the spot. The simply superb piano music score in the background is effective and moving. The ads show archival footage of earlier Stanley Cup celebrations and very efficiently convey the competitive spirit of the game and how much winning means to the players. Each ad concludes with a single moving line. In the pioneering spot, players lift the heavy trophy and raise it above their heads, the line reads, "It weighs 35 pounds ... except when you're lifting it." "There are no words," said the second. And the last in the trilogy, shows images of happy faces and scrums on the field, wrapping up with the line "It makes boys out of men." Some ad specialists argue that there is nothing too special about these advertisements. Meshing together archival footage and smart end lines, don't really require too much of ingenuity and the end result is also nothing to rave about. But these ads are unquestionably potent. They dig into a history and tradition that's has its own eccentricities and individual characteristics. The victory becomes a cause for celebration, irrespective of which team eventually wins the cup. Tradition is uppermost, so much so that the two teams that are battling this year's final, Devils and Kings, don't feature at all. Great images of the past set a compelling and forceful anticipation for viewing the final. The ad will be premiered tonight during the first game. There is little doubt that ere the game is over, the cameras will continue to capture images that could be used in the promos for next year's matches. Incidentally, this year LA Kings become first team in NHL history to win first nine road games in the playoffs as Anze Kopitar scored in overtime to beat the New Jersey Devils 2-1.