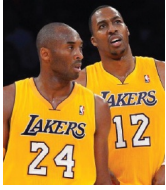


## Kobe, Lakers trying hard to be better as season moves into its stretch run

Written by Levi Johnson, Sports Editor  
Thursday, 31 January 2013 12:03 -

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Just beyond the midway point in the ongoing 2012-2013 season, which was as of this past Mon.(Jan.28),the perennially championship caliber team owned a 19-28 mark and was mired in the middle of the pack in the Western Conference, Pacific Division, 12 1/2 games out of first place.

But with recent back-to-back wins versus the Utah Jazz and the Northwest Division leading Oklahoma City Thunder, many people are of the mindset that Kobe Bryant and company might be truly jumpstarting a season that has been all but a complete disaster.

However, even with he and mates struggling to try to get it right, Captain Bryant hardly believes that the remaining slate to be dealt with is a wash within stagnant water.

"What we're trying to do now is figure out the things that work better for us as a team--both offensively and defensively," said the Lakers 17-year veteran, on the heels of LA's 105-96 win over Oklahoma City Sun.(1/27), at Staples Center.

"We did some good things on both ends of the court in beating a very good Oklahoma City team but we still have a lot of work to do. It's up to us to work harder and improve ourselves and build our confidence as we go forward. That's definitely the key to really turning our season around."

Made up of some new faces and personalities, including center Dwight Howard and point guard

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Steve Nash, the Lakers of today were touted as a very promising group at the outset of the current campaign.

Yet, as the '12-'13 schedule moves into its stretch run, outside observers and many Laker supporters, as well, aren't quite convinced that the real team is finally beginning to stand up.

Nonetheless, with a real chance to validate a yet solid resolve, the Lakers need to go forward with the thought that their best show is yet to come.

Mike D'Antoni apparently is encouraged by the Lakers most recent attempt to exhibit quality game-to-game performances.

"If we can just keep doing the things that are going to work (well)for us; we have a chance to be a really good team," said the LA coach minutes after the triumph over the Thunder.

"Nothing is going to be easy for us; not at all. But we're encouraged by our play in the last two ballgames."

Widely regarded as one of the premier teams in the National Basketball Association (NBA) for quite a long time, the 16-time NBA champion Los Angeles Lakers are currently going through some very unfamiliar times.

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