# SPORT-SCAN DAILY BRIEF

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memo to players — "There is still a lot of work to be do

# Winnipeg Jets

644033 Fehr's note to NHLPA indicates players' bargaining power at

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643973 Buffalo Sabres

Jeanneret and his mom are ready for trip to Hockey Hall of Fame

John Vogl

Rick Jeanneret appreciated the attempts to honor him through the years, but the Sabres' legendary announcer told everyone they'd have to wait. He had no desire to enter any halls of fame while he was still working in Buffalo's booth.

That changed after a chat with Michael Gilbert, the Sabres' vice president of public and community relations. They talked about Jeanneret's relationship with his 92-year-old mother, Kay, and how much it would mean to her to see her son honored.

After watching Jeanneret get inducted into the Sabres' Hall of Fame, the Greater Buffalo Sports Hall of Fame and the Buffalo Broadcasting Hall of Fame during the last year, Kay will accompany her son to Toronto on Monday for the biggest honor yet -- a place in the Hockey Hall of Fame.

"She's 92 and she's pumped," Jeanneret said today in First Niagara Center. "I just talked to her a little while ago, and she's ready to roll.

"I was going to wait for my career to be over before I allowed my name to be nominated for any of the halls. Once I sat down and talked to [Gilbert], and we talked about my mother and thought that maybe we should do this while she's still around and she can appreciate it, even though I knew and had a pretty good idea that once I accepted one there would be others. I'm running out of them now anyways.

"It seems like just about every month something has been going on, and this is really the ultimate one that will occur on Monday."

Jeanneret is this year's recipient of the Foster Hewitt Memorial Award, awarded annually by the NHL Broadcasters' Association. The honorees are recognized with a plaque in the Hockey Hall of Fame.

He will join late Sabres play-by-play man Ted Darling in the hall and will be accompanied by about 15 family members on the trip north. He'll be carrying the thoughts of Sabres' fans, too.

"My association with the fans and Western New York has been incredible over the years, and it just continues to build every year," Jeanneret said. "It's something that I'm very proud of and I treasure."

Buffalo News LOADED: 11.10.2012

643974 Buffalo Sabres

Fehr tells players NHL is still looking for immediate 50-50 split, 'lot of work to be done'

John Vogl

It appears the first three days of talks between the NHL and the players' association were long on time but short on breakthroughs.

NHLPA Executive Director Donald Fehr sent a memo to players following Thursday's meeting with the league, updating them on negotiations. Not much has changed.

"A significant gap remains," Fehr wrote in the memo, which was posted at TSN.ca. "We were told that the owners want an 'immediate reset' to 50/50 (which would significantly reduce the salary cap) and that their proposals to restrict crucial individual contracting rights must be agreed to. As you know, these include - among other things - losing a year of salary arbitration

eligibility, allowing the team to file for salary arbitration in any year that the player can file, extending UFA eligibility to age 28 or 8 seasons, limiting contracts to 5 years, and permitting only 5% year to year variability in player contracts. Individually each is bad for players; taken together they would significantly reduce a player's bargaining power and give the owner much more leverage over a player for most if not all of his career.

"In short, the concessions on future salary we have offered (at least \$948 Million to \$1.25 Billion over five years, depending on HRR growth) are not enough. We are still being told that more salaries must be conceded, and that very valuable player contracting rights must be surrendered. So, while we are meeting again, and while some steps are being taken, there is still a lot of work to be done and bridges to be crossed before an agreement can be made."

The sides are conducting a series of meetings today in New York. It is the fourth straight day of talks, with the league and union having met for about 18 hours during the first three days.

Buffalo News LOADED: 11.10.2012

643975 Buffalo Sabres

Rochester Amerks lose, but Luke Adam impresses

Staff

Kevin's 3 stars

- 1. Garrett Roe, C, Phantoms ... Scored winning goal, 4 shots, always buzzing.
- 2. Marc-Andre Bourdon, D, Phantoms  $\dots$  Ruled the Adirondack zone final 2 periods.
- 3. Marcus Foligno, LW, Amerks  $\dots$  Created energy and chances on the forecheck.

NHL owners leave players with options to consider as the league and the NHLPA attempt to end the second lockout in seven years.

The Rochester Americans learned that even after delivering a multitude of big hits and playing with a ramped-up degree of intensity, they won't always win.

The Adirondack Phantoms used a lucky-bounce goal off T.J. Brennan's ankle 7:49 into the third period to defeat the Amerks 2-1 on Friday night.

Garrett Roe's shot from above the right circle caromed off Brennan and then turned into a pitch from New York Mets right-hander R.A. Dickey, knuckling past the blocker of goalie David Leggio.

"In these type of close games, anything can happen — and it did at the end," Amerks coach Ron Rolston said.

The Amerks learned something else, though, too: Luke Adam is a much better center than he is a left winger.

While Adam and linemates Marcus Foligno and Brian Flynn didn't score, they were dangerous on many shifts. And Adam was much more visible — and comfortable — in the middle than he had been on the wing in the first 10 games.

He was used at center, his position through junior and for nearly all of his first two pro seasons, because Cody Hodgson and Phil Varone weren't in the lineup.

"I'm just trying to show not only that I can fill that role but also that's where I should be," Adam said. "There's no secret about it, I much prefer playing center."

He'll get his chance to stay a while, too. Hodgson has a broken hand and probably won't play for two or three weeks. Varone is said by the team to be ill, but there's a good chance he is hurt.

"He's going to get an opportunity this stretch of games," Rolston said, referring to the injuries.

But there's a chance he could stay in the middle even when the Amerks are healthy. As a winger, Adam had 2 goals, 3 assists and 5 points but just wasn't all that dangerous at even strength (1-1-2).

"If he's playing well there and he's producing," he may remain at center, Rolston said.

Which would no doubt please Adam. He didn't resist the move to wing and has said all along that he'll be just fine there. When he was sent down by the Buffalo Sabres in February of last season, most of his ice time over the final 27 games came on the left side.

"If he sees I can help the team more at wing, that's where I'll go," Adam said.

He was, however, the American Hockey League rookie of the year as a centerman with the Portland Pirates in 2010-11. And he did admit that he sensed added anticipation for Friday's game because of the switch back to center

"I was excited coming to the rink, knowing I was playing center," he said. "That's back where I want to be. I think I get the puck a lot more."

There wasn't any feeling of satisfaction afterward, however. "We need to finish," he said of the chances they created.

They need to build on momentum swings, too. In the third period, Nick Tarnasky dropped Oliver Lauridsen in a fight, but the Phantoms scored the winning goal on the next shift.

"We have to be better after Nick goes out and sticks up for guys," winger Mark Mancari said.

Democrat and Chronicle LOADED: 11.10.2012

643976 Carolina Hurricanes

Leaked Fehr memo provides insight into NHL talks

By Chip Alexander

A leaked Donald Fehr memo created the biggest stir Friday in the NHL's collective bargaining saga.

The NHL and NHL Players Association met for a fourth straight day in New York, and again little was said afterward about the progress – or lack thereof – in the labor talks. Fehr, the NHLPA executive director, and NHL commissioner Gary Bettman offered no details and it was unclear when the negotiations would resume.

Bettman said the NHL was willing to meet through the weekend, adding, "Whatever it takes." Fehr left the meeting saying only the union had "things to consider."

The internal memo from Fehr, sent Thursday night to the players as an update on the talks, was leaked Friday to the media. In it Fehr said in part, "We are meeting again, and while some steps are being taken, there is still a lot of work to be done and bridges to be crossed before an agreement can be made."

Fehr's memo said the league had made its "make whole" proposal on honoring existing contracts, calling it a step forward but saying there still remained a "significant gap." He said the league wanted an "immediate reset" to 50-50 on the division of annual hockey-related revenue, not to phase it in over the first three years of the CBA, as the union proposed.

Fehr said the league wanted its contracting proposals to be accepted, including limiting contracts to five years and extending unrestricted free agent status to age 28 and eight years service.

"Individually each is bad for players; taken together they would significantly reduce a player's bargaining power and give the owner much more leverage over a player for most if not all of his career," Fehr wrote in the memo.

Carolina Hurricanes forward Jordan Staal tried to remain upbeat as the talks continued this week.

"Obviously it's not fun to hear that there's still a lot of work to be done," Staal said. "I think a lot of the players are very optimistic and very happy they're talking again and working hard ... It's still part of the process, I guess. You can't expect it to be done in a few days."

It's believed the league disputed some of Fehr's claims during Friday's meeting. Fehr later held a conference call with the union's executive board and negotiation committee.

All the players can do is continue to work out, skate and try to stay informed. They hired Fehr, a tough, skilled negotiator, to do a job and are trying to remain patient.

"That's the hardest part right now," Staal said. "That's why we hired Don, obviously. He's keeping everyone on the same page and understanding that we need to be patient to get the right deal. We need to find a way to make it happen. ... Hopefully we can make a breakthrough soon."

A breakthrough could mean a possible Dec. 1 start and perhaps a 70-game season. But that would also mean having the CBA approved in a week to 10 days, allowing time for players to return from Europe and then a week of training camp.

"I'm still optimistic," Staal said. They're talking and they're moving forward. There are things we've wanted to talk about with (the league) for a while and they're talking about it now. So still optimistic and still hopeful (and) excited we can get this thing started."

News Observer LOADED: 11.10.2012

643977 Carolina Hurricanes

Canes Now: Jordan Staal tries to stay upbeat about NHL talks

By Chip Alexander -

Jordan Staal moves the puck as the Carolina Hurricanes practice at Raleigh Center Ice in Raleigh, NC on Sept. 6, 2012.

With CBA talks ongoing for a fourth straight day in New York, the Canes' Jordan Staal is trying to stay upbeat, positive, hopeful that he'll be back on the ice soon and playing.

But like many of the players, Staal received an internal memo Thursday night from Donald Fehr, executive director of the NHLPA. The memo, which has been leaked to the media, said in part, "We are meeting again, and while some steps are being taken, there is still a lot of work to be done and bridges to be crossed before an agreement can be made."

Staal's reaction?

"Obviously it's not fun to hear that there's still a lot of work to be done," he said after skating at Raleigh Center Ice. "I think a lot of the players are very optimistic and very happy they're talking again and working hard throughout the past three days.

"It's still part of the process, I guess. It's my first time through it but it's still taking time. You can't expect it to be done in a few days."

The tone of Fehr's memo wasn't very encouraging. He reported the league had made its formal proposal on "make whole" and while calling it a step forward noted there still remained a "significant gap." He said the league wanted an "immediate reset" to 50-50 on the divison of hockey-related revenue, not a phase-in to 50-50 over the first three years of the CBA, as the union proposed.

Fehr said the league wanted its contracting proposals to be accepted, including limiting contracts to five years and extending unrestricted free agent status to age 28 and eight years service.

"Individually each is bad for players; taken together they would significantly reduce a player's bargaining power and give the owner much more leverage over a player for most if not all of his career," Fehr wrote in the memo.

As for players such as Staal, all they can do is continue to work out, skate, try to stay informed and hope for the best. They hired Fehr, a tough, skilled negotiator, to do a job and must try to remain patient while he does it.

"That's the hardest part right now," Staal said. "That's why we hired Don, obviously. He's keeping everyone on the same page and understanding that we need to be patient to get the right deal. We need to find a way to make it happen, and I think we're on the right track and we're talking and things are going the right way. Hopefully we can make a breakthrough soon."

A breakthrough could mean a Dec. 1 start and perhaps a 70-game season. But that would also mean having the CBA approved in a week to 10 days, allowing time for players to return from Europe and then a week of training camp

"I'm still optimistic," Staal said. They're talking and they're moving forward. There are things we've wanted to talk about with (the league) for a while and they're talking about it now. So still optimistic and still hopeful excited we can get this thing started."

News Observer LOADED: 11.10.2012

643978 Chicago Blackhawks

NHL, players union meet again, but no agreement

Sports Xchange

The NHL and NHL Players' Association met for the fourth consecutive day on Friday in New York as they try to hammer out an agreement on a new collective bargaining agreement, ESPN.com reported.

A number of meetings were scheduled between the two sides for Friday, but no agreement was announced at the end of the afternoon session.

There had been reports that talks might continue into Friday evening, but multiple media outlets reported that discussions are through for the day.

However, there is no indication the talks are on the verge of breaking down.

NHL commissioner Gary Bettman apparently is willing to resume the talks after the union has had time for some internal discussions. It's possible talks will continue over the weekend, although nothing had been scheduled as of Friday afternoon.

Among those participating in Friday afternoon's talks were NHL commissioner Gary Bettman, Boston Bruins owner Jeremy Jacobs, Washington Capitals owner Ted Leonsis, Minnesota Wild owner Craig Leipold and Calgary Flames co-owner Murray Edwards.

NHLPA told ESPN.com that Brad Richards, Jeff Halpern, Chris Campoli, Mathieu Darche, Ron Hainsey, George Parros and Kevin Westgarth were at the meetings.

Fehr sent a memo to players following the NHL's latest proposal on Thursday, which was a response to the union's Wednesday proposals.

Fehr seemed to caution the players about becoming too optimistic that a settlement might be imminent.

ProHockeyTalk.com obtained a copy of the entire Fehr memo, and it appears the union still has issues with revenue sharing, the league's "Make Whole" idea, and various issues regarding player contracts that "significantly reduce a player's bargaining power and give the owner much more leverage over a player for most if not all of his career."

The 55-day lockout has forced the cancellation of 327 regular-season games, including the New Year's Day Winter Classic in Michigan, and ensured that a full season won't be played.

Chicago Tribune LOADED: 11.10.2012

643979 Chicago Blackhawks

NHL talks on break; union holds internal meeting

By Associated Press

NEW YORK — The NHL Players' Association has left the negotiating table to have internal discussions and hold a conference call with the union's executive board and negotiating committee to determine what step to take next in the hockey labor talks.

Negotiations resumed Friday for a fourth straight day at the offices of the NHL's lawyers, and three sessions of talks were held. The last, which began in the late afternoon, broke up after about two hours. Players' association executive director Donald Fehr says only that the union has "some things to consider" before getting back to the table.

NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman adds that the league is available to continue talking as soon as the union is ready. Neither side is ruling out getting together again on Friday night or over the weekend.

Daily Herald Times LOADED: 11.10.2012

643980 Columbus Blue Jackets

NHL: Sides return to sniping as labor talks drag on

By Aaron Portzline

A week of quiet talks between the NHL and the Players' Association crumbled into disharmony yesterday, with the league accusing union leaders of not fully disclosing its proposals to players, the union calling that suggestion false, and no clear signs that progress has been made on the core financial issues separating the sides.

Rancor has returned to the collective-bargaining process as the NHL lockout hits its 56th day today.

"I don't know what the next step is," union executive director Donald Fehr told reporters in New York. "I don't know what will happen next. There is still a lot of work to do."

The NHL gave the players a proposal yesterday that would have guaranteed them their existing contracts even with an immediate 50-50 split of hockey revenues. The plan called for players' salaries to be deferred and paid back, with interest, by the second and third years of the agreement.

The union rejected that proposal, with Fehr telling reporters that — despite what the NHL said — it would not guarantee players their existing contracts, some signed just hours before the last agreement expired.

The players, according to reports, don't think they should be paid less than a full 82-game share no matter how much of the 2012-13 season is canceled, because the owners initiated the lockout. A full 82-game regular season is no longer possible. The season was supposed to open more than a month ago, and so far, more than 300 games have been canceled.

If progress has been made on the players' demands for increased revenue sharing, contract limits and scheduling issues — Fehr said there has been modest progress this week — the sides are still far apart, if only philosophically, on major money issues.

And that was the good news of the day.

Fehr sent a message to players early Thursday updating them on negotiations. The memo, obtained by Canadian sports network TSN and NBC Sports, did not include the entirety of the offer, the league said, specifically its willingness to honor existing contracts.

An NHL source, speaking with the Minneapolis Star-Tribune, suggested that Fehr was not fully informing the players, a serious charge in labor negotiations. Fehr denied the charge, and players throughout the NHL — who have raved about the union's newfound transparency — came to his defense.

"That is totally and utterly false," said Montreal winger Mathieu Darche, who has been highly involved in the process.

"It's pretty tough to believe Don is being accused of this," Ottawa defenseman Marc Methot said. "That's a cheap shot, in my opinion."

The union has noted that more than 100 players have attended negotiating sessions, and all players are welcome. It led to accusations that the owners may be trying to divide the players.

The sides have tentative plans to meet today, which would mark a fifth straight day of talks — the longest stretch.

Columbus Dispatch LOADED: 11.10.2012

643981 Detroit Red Wings

NHL roundup: Hodgson out with broken bone in his right hand

**Detroit Free Press News Services** 

ROCHESTER, N.Y. -- Buffalo Sabres center Cody Hodgson is out indefinitely after suffering a broken bone in his right hand during a game with the team's American Hockey League affiliate.

Rochester coach Ron Rolston says Hodgson will miss at least a few weeks before having his injury evaluated. Hodgson told the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle he was hurt after being slashed by Adirondack's Brandon Manning in a game Oct. 27. Hodgson wore a splint in a game against Hamilton on Friday, before being sidelined the following day.

Acquired by Buffalo in a trade with Vancouver in February, Hodgson is coming off his first full NHL season. The 2008 first-round draft pick was eligible to play in the minors during the NHL lockout.

Notebook: The NHL is fighting proposed legislation that would make it legal in Canada to bet on the outcome of a game. The bill would repeal the criminal code section that prohibits wagering on a single sporting event.

Detroit Free Press LOADED: 11.10.2012

643982 Detroit Red Wings

Status of NHL talks in dispute; talks will continue Saturday

By Detroit News wire services

The NHL was unhappy with a memo that NHLPA executive director Donald Fehr, above, sent players on Thursday night that described a "significant gap" between the sides, saying it was not an accurate picture of where the talks stand.

The level of frustration and accusations intensified after the fourth consecutive day of bargaining between the NHL and NHLPA in Manhattan on Friday, but it appeared talks will continue Saturday.

"Whatever it takes, we're available," commissioner Gary Bettman said after talks broke up last night.

The league was unhappy with a memo that NHLPA executive director Donald Fehr sent players on Thursday night that described a "significant gap" between the sides, saying it was not an accurate picture of where the talks stand.

Owners have offered to honor existing contracts and guarantee players their share of last year's salaries and will pay them back with interest, but the Fehr memo does not mention that. The league also disputes some other elements, saying revenue sharing and some contract issues are negotiable.

In a briefing at about 9 p.m., Fehr emphatically denied that he withheld information from his constituents and said talks likely will continue Saturday. Fehr said the sides are not as far apart as it might seem.

According to the memo obtained by TSN and NBC, Fehr wrote that revenue sharing "needs considerable work, and the make-whole proposal, while a step forward, a significant gap remains . . . Moreover, at the same time we were told that the owners want an 'immediate reset' to 50/50 (which would significantly reduce the salary cap) and that their proposals to restrict crucial individual contracting rights must be agreed to.

"In short," Fehr wrote, "the concessions on future salary we have offered (at least \$948 million to \$1.25 billion over five years, depending on hockey-related-revenue growth) are not enough. We are still being told that more salaries must be conceded, and that very valuable player contracting rights must be surrendered . . . While some steps are being taken, there is still a lot of work to be done and bridges to be crossed before an agreement can be made."

The league has already called off 327 regular-season games, including the New Year's Day Winter Classic in Michigan, and said a full season won't be played. The NHL is in danger of having a lockout wipe out a full season for the second time in seven years.

Bettman declined to say if these talks have moved the sides any closer to an agreement.

"I am not going into the details of what takes place in the room," he said. "I really apologize but I do not think it would be constructive to the process. I don't want to either raise or lower expectations. I won't be happy until we get to the end result, and that means we're playing again."

Bettman is scheduled to attend Hockey Hall of Fame inductions Monday night in Toronto, but developments in negotiations could prevent that.

"That's my plan (to attend), but if there is a reason to be doing something else, as much as I enjoy the Hall of Fame inductions, if there is something else that is pending, that would take precedence."

The lockout began Sept. 16 after the collective bargaining agreement expired, and both sides rejected proposals Oct. 18. The belief is that the players' association has agreed to a 50-50 split of hockey-related revenues, but that division wouldn't kick in until the third year of the deal.

Detroit News LOADED: 11.10.2012

643983 Detroit Red Wings

Detroit Red Wings' Jonathan Ericsson finds Swedish league play a bit of a grind

By Ted Kulfan

Troy — Jonathan Ericsson enjoyed his brief stay in the Swedish League, but he felt it physically.

Ericsson, a Red Wings defenseman, wound up playing seven games for Vita Hasten (his hometown team) and Soderalje, both lower division teams in the Swedish Elite League. Those teams wound up going 7-0 with Ericsson in the lineup.

"It was fun to play some games," said Ericsson, who was able to go back home (he returned to Detroit this week) while NHL players are locked out. "You hope it gets started over here but who knows?"

Ericsson played about 30 minutes a game in his three games with Vita Hasten and immediately realized he wasn't quite in game shape.

The workouts with other locked out Red Wings have helped, but they aren't anything like actual games.

"In the third period I was cramping every shift," said Ericsson of his first game back. "It was a lot of ice time right away and, of course, I wasn't use to playing. I hadn't played in five months.

"I could barely go, and then I couldn't stretch (after the game) because I had to meet all the fans after the game, and that took an hour after the game.

"I was feeling it for sure. Still feeling it."

What Ericsson learned quick was games are different than practices, no matter how intense the workouts are.

"Game tempo is different from when you're practicing or skating around here," Ericsson said. "Games are totally different. I really noticed that, even in the lower levels, a game is a game."

Ericsson isn't likely to return to Sweden in 2012 given he's already maxed out the allowable days he can live there without tax issues coming into play.

Ericsson said he'll wait out the lockout, hopeful the NHL season will begin soon.

"Guys are feeling a little more optimistic, but (we're) still not close to getting done (in terms of a deal)," Ericsson said. "Don't get too high or don't get too low."

Helm update

Forward Darren Helm returned to the Wings' workouts Friday after suffering a broken orbital bone and needing nine stitches after taking a puck to the face a week ago

Helm didn't require surgery and said he felt well enough to be playing — if there were actually games to be played.

"It would hurt and I would wear a full cage for sure, but if I had to play, I'd play," Helm said.

Helm appeared frustrated and angry after the incident, a deflected puck off a stick that caught Helm flush on the face.

"There were a couple of things on," said Helm of getting hurt. "There was frustration, from not being able to play (because of the lockout) and having it happen here (during a skate to stay in shape in case there is a season) and after the stitches and surgery (late last season)."

Helm suffered a knee sprain and lacerated left forearm tendon late last season, keeping him out of the lineup for the last three weeks of the regular season and all but three minutes of Game 1 in the playoffs

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643984 Detroit Red Wings

Four days of meetings between NHL, NHLPA reportedly lead to little progress toward CBA

Ansar Khan

But that optimism faded Friday, when talks in New York ended with reportedly little progress made.

So, it doesn't appear as if the lockout, which will reach eight weeks on Saturday, will end soon.

No further meetings are scheduled, but NHL commissioner Gary Bettman told media covering the talks that the league is available to meet through the weekend, if necessary, prior to Monday's Hockey Hall of Fame induction ceremonies in Toronto.

Bettman declined to reveal details of the talks or characterize the state of negotiations.

"I don't want to raise or lower expectations," Bettman said. "I won't be happy until we get to the end result and that means we're playing again."

NHL Players Association executive director Donald Fehr left the meeting without commenting, other than to say the union has "things to consider."

Some Detroit Red Wings skating at the Troy Sports Center Friday said they are trying to remain on an even keel, noting the highs and lows during this entire process.

"There's no sense getting so excited or so down," Danny Cleary said. "Talks are going slow, probably a lot slower than a lot of people anticipated, but they're talking. Got to still have optimism, got to be hopeful."

Cleary said the issues, which include the NHL's "Make Whole" provision and revenue sharing, "aren't easy to iron out."

"Pension is a big issue, revenue sharing is a big issue; then you got players' share, a huge issue, and players' contracting rights," Cleary said. "You're talking about changing the complete landscape of all players' rights for probably almost their whole career.

"You can't think about (just) yourself now, which a lot of people probably would, you have to think down the road in future years. You have to at least give yourself a chance to have some bargaining power, have some negotiating rights."

Fehr did not paint a rosy picture of the state of talks in a memo sent to players Thursday night.

Players likened the latest developments to Oct. 18, when a swell of optimism was quickly dashed after the league rejected three counterproposals from the union during a brief meeting in Toronto.

"It's happened a few times, where you think it's a positive and then suddenly it goes down again," Red Wings defenseman Jonathan Ericsson said. "Now, I think more guys are feeling more optimistic, but still it's not close to being done.

"Don't get too high or too low."

Cleary said there at least appears to be traction, since the sides hadn't met for this many days in a row before.

"There's definitely movement, a lot of movement, actually, compared to where we were," Cleary said. "It's a good sign."

Michigan Live LOADED: 11.10.2012

643985 Detroit Red Wings

Red Wings' hard-luck Darren Helm has plenty of time to let broken orbital bone heal

Ansar Khan

He was fortunate to avoid a serious injury last Friday when hit by a deflected puck during an informal practice – his broken orbital bone does not require surgery.

And with no NHL games taking place anytime soon due to the lockout, Helm does not need to rush back. So he is taking a couple of weeks off from informal skates with teammates.

"If I really wanted to, I could go out there," Helm said Friday. "It hurts moving around, kind of getting bumped around. I'd be wearing a full cage, but when I get blood flowing it starts kind of pulsing a little bit.

"We're not playing, so there's no sense to put it in too much aggravation, so I'm going to let it heal as much as I can."  $\,$ 

Helm needed stitches in his lip after being hit with a puck during pregame warmups in Nashville on Dec. 26.

He missed the final 10 regular season games after suffering a sprained medial collateral ligament on March 17, when he delivered a hit on San Jose's Dominic Moore but got the worst of the exchange.

Then, in his first game back, he had tendons in his forearm sliced by Alexander Radulov's skate blade in the playoff opener against Nashville, ending his season.

His latest injury would not have kept him out long if the season was underway.

"They said there's a bunch of little pieces of my orbital bone floating around in my cheek," Helm said. "They said it'll kind of come together on its own. It's not one of the major bones that, if it broke, I would need surgery. It's the smaller, they said, paper-thin bones."

He has pondered this string of bad luck.

"I counted about 61 stitches since Christmas, major surgery," Helm said. "Hockey gods aren't on my side right now. I might have to do something to fix that, but it's hockey."

Michigan Live LOADED: 11.10.2012

643986 Detroit Red Wings

NHLPA's Donald Fehr, in memo, tells players owners still asking for too many concessions

Ansar Khan

In the memo, obtained by tsn.ca, Fehr says the union received a proposal on revenue sharing that needs "considerable work," said the owners' "Make Whole" provision was a step forward but that a "significant gap" remains and that the league wants an immediate reset to 50-50 in hockey-related revenues.

Fehr said of other issues:

"As you know, these include -- among other things -- losing a year of salary arbitration eligibility, allowing the team to file for salary arbitration in any year that the player can file, extending UFA eligibility to age 28 or 8 seasons, limiting contracts to 5 years, and permitting only 5 percent year to year variability in player contracts. Individually each is bad for players; taken together they would significantly reduce a player's bargaining power and give the owner much more leverage over a player for most if not all of his career."

Fehr told players the concessions on future salary the union has offered, which he claims amounts to at least \$948 million and could be as much as \$1.25 billion over five years, depending on revenue growth, are not enough for the owners.

"We are still being told that more salaries must be conceded, and that very valuable player contracting rights must be surrendered," Fehr said in the memo. "So, while we are meeting again, and while some steps are being taken, there is still a lot of work to be done and bridges to be crossed before an agreement can be made."

The sides are meeting for a fourth consecutive day Friday in New York, with multiple sessions planned.

Michigan Live LOADED: 11.10.2012

643987 Detroit Red Wings

Red Wings scouting report: Henrik Zetterberg will be seeking faster start, more power-play production

Ansar Khan |

(MLive.com periodically will profile a Detroit Red Wings player while the NHL lockout lingers):

Henrik Zetterberg

Position: Center

Age: 32

Height/weight: 5-11/197

How acquired: Drafted in seventh round (210th overall) in 1999 entry draft.

Contract: Nine years remaining on a 12-year deal that has a salary-cap hit of  $6.083 \, \text{million}$ .

2011-12 stats: 82 games, 22 goals, 47 assists, 69 points, plus-14 rating, 47 penalty minutes.

Career stats: 668 games, 252 goals, 372 assists, 624 points, plus-144 rating, 271 penalty minutes.

Approaching milestones: Needs 13 goals to tie John Ogrodnick for eighth place on the franchise's all-time list. Needs 10 points to pass Brendan Shanahan and move into ninth place on the club's career scoring list.

What he's doing during the lockout: He is dominating the top Swiss league, playing on a line with Red Wings teammate Damien Brunner for EV Zug. Zetterberg has nine goals and 16 points in eight games.

Strengths: Tremendous two-way skills, he can dominate at both ends of the rink. Extremely strong on the puck, with the ability to maintain possession in traffic. Good vision and playmaking ability as well as a finishing touch. Teammate Pavel Datsyuk has won three Selke Trophies as the league's top defensive forward, but Zetterberg is the team's match-up center, usually assigned to play against the opposition's best forward.

Weaknesses: Has a knack for slow starts and experiences prolonged scoring slumps. His tenacious style has put a lot of miles on his average-sized frame.

2011-12 in review: Led team in points (69) for the third season in a row (including a tie with Datsyuk in 2009-10), but it still was his lowest output since 2006-07 (68 points). ... He got off to a slow start, with just nine goals and 36 points in his first 52 games, before picking up 13 goals and 33 points in the final 30 games. ... He had only three power-play goals, equaling a career-low, and 14 power-play points, his lowest output since 2003-04 (13). ... Appeared in all 82 games for the first time in his nine-year career. ... Led club in shots on goal (267) for the sixth consecutive season, but with his lowest total since 2006-07 (224). ... Won only 49.1 percent of his faceoffs, worst among the club's centers.

2012-13 outlook: Expect Zetterberg to be be named team captain around the time of the season opener, expanding the leadership role he assumed when named an alternate captain in 2006, following Steve Yzerman's retirement. If there is an NHL season, having played in Switzerland could spark the slow-starting Zetterberg. The chemistry he's formed with Brunner likely will prompt the Red Wings to use that combination at the start of the season, perhaps with Valtteri Filppula as the other winger.

Who do you think should be on Zetterberg's line to start the season? And how important is it for the Red Wings to get more production from Zetterberg on the power play?

Michigan Live LOADED: 11.10.2012

643988 Edmonton Oilers

Flames winger Baertschi cranks up AHL's Heat

By Joanne Ireland,

Abbotsford – It might have been understandable had Sven Baertschi dragged his sorry self to Abbotsford to wait out the NHL lockout, knowing he was just a new collective bargaining agreement away from establishing himself with the Calgary Flames.

Instead, the winger from Switzerland has revelled in his first tour of the American Hockey League. He has not only been an offensive sparkplug for the Heat, head coach Troy Ward said he's brought an energy to the lineup that hasn't gone unnoticed.

"We have a lot of players at this level who have a hard time getting up every day and their moods fluctuate. This guy doesn't," said Ward.

"He loves life, he loves the game, and I think it shows."

Baertschi couldn't be ignored last season when the Calgary Flames had run out of healthy forwards and put in an emergency call to the Portland Winterhawks of the Western Hockey League. He not only filled a roster spot, he scored three goals in five games.

His last NHL game was against the Oilers in Edmonton, then he returned with the Winterhawks for a playoff series against the Edmonton Oil Kings.

Fitting, then, that Baertschi would play a part in the AHL version of the Battle of Alberta. He had an assist on the second Heat goal in their 4-0 victory over the Oklahoma City Barons in the first game of their two-game set Friday night in Abbotsford.

"Sometimes, I look at the news to see how it's going (with the CBA negotiations) ... but that's just the way it is. I'm happy to have a good place to play," Baertschi said. "I have a great place here and maybe it just had to be that way that I had to play here. It's great development down here.

"It wasn't easy when it came out that there wasn't going to be a training camp, but I got over it really quick. You have to take things the way they are and make the best of it. Last year went well, but it was only five games.

"They (the Flames) wouldn't give me a spot just because I scored (three) goals. That's not the way it works," continued Baertschi, who scored in his first AHL game.

The Swiss sensation, selected 13th overall by the Flames at the 2011 entry draft, will be the centre of attention later this week when a television crew from Switzerland lands in Abbotsford this week to catch up with the five-foot-11, 190-pound forward.

"Maybe it had to be that I'd keep developing down in the (AHL). I'm getting used to pro hockey. It's good for me, personally, that I adjust to it.

"I played one year in a men's league at home, but it's a little different here in North America. I want to make sure I keep improving."

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643989 Edmonton Oilers

Hall happy to be playing hockey again

By Joanne Ireland,

Abbotsford, B.C. – For the most part, Taylor Hall really feels like it's business as usual.

His surgically repaired left shoulder feels good, he's already scored, and he's rooming with Jordan Eberle again.

Life is pretty much like it was before he was hurt, and before the NHL locked its doors.

There was a 12-hour trek to Abbotsford from Oklahoma City, which came a week after an overnight bus trip to Texas. While he didn't dress for all three American Hockey League games squeezed into a three-day window, he played at San Antonio, where the ice was abysmal.

There have also been some meager fan gatherings in the rinks, which is why Hall, for one, was looking forward to the games in Abbotsford, where the 7,000 seats were sold out for both Friday and Saturday.

"It's going to be fun to be in that atmosphere again," he said. "There are not a lot of fans in Oklahoma, and in San Antonio, we were pretty much playing on cement, the ice was so bad. Now we finally get to play in front of a crowd that really does care about hockey.

"There's certainly a lot to miss about the NHL, but playing in front of the fans and scoring a big goal is definitely (one of them)."

Still, Hall would much rather be where he is, settling into the life in the AHL, playing the game he knows with players he is growing up with rather than make his way around the larger ice surfaces in Europe.

"I never went through the long road trips in the WHL. I had two-hour road trips in the OHL, so it's a little bit of a change. There's definitely a lot of things I miss about being in the NHL," he said. "It took us a long time to get here yesterday — two flights and a three-hour bus trip — so it's not something I'm used too, but at the same time, I'm playing hockey and playing with a lot of really good guys."

Hall, who came out of the Edmonton Oilers' lineup last March to have shoulder surgery, played his first game on Nov. 2 against the Houston Aeros. Friday, against the Heat, was just his third game.

"So far, the surgery has held up. I feel good," he said. "If the lockout was to end right now, I think I'd be even happier, but right now, I'm pretty good.

"For the first weekend, it was good for me to ease into it. I really felt lost out there in that first game. Now that I have the practice schedule down and the style of play, it will factor in to me being able to play more, and play my game.

"Seven-and-a-half months was a long time to go between games and it's not like I had a training camp or an inter-squad game and an exhibition game. I went from practice right into a game, but every day out there, every period I play, I feel a little bit more used to everything."

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643990 Edmonton Oilers

Cult of Hockey: Strong play bolsters Hartikainen, VandeVelde's NHL dreams

By David Staples,

EDMONTON - A number of Edmonton Oilers prospects have moved up the organizational depth chart with their strong play with the Oklahoma City Barons in the American Hockey League.

The biggest movers so far include Teemu Hartikainen, Tanner House, Chris VandeVelde, Martin Marincin and Colten Teubert.

Let's take a closer look at each of them:

Hartikainen: The six-foot, 215-pound Hartikainen is more of a bull than a matador, more of a grinder than a goal scorer. He has also got to be a lock to make the Oilers when the NHL lockout ends. He has been that solid in Oklahoma City, and the Oilers are in that much in need of this kind of player, a thick, gritty, crease-crashing, goalie-screening, Tomas Holmstrom clone.

Hartikainen had a decent nine points in his first 10 games, behind only Nugent-Hopkins, Eberle and Schultz. Crucially, Hartikainen was ahead of fellow winger, Magnus Paajarvi, the big, fast Swede, who had six points.

When it comes to scoring chances, Hartikainen had chipped in on 5.7 per game, with Paajarvi at 4.5. Their defensive games are similar, with both strong on the boards, but Hartikainen's superior offence has likely moved him ahead of Paajarvi on the depth chart.

House: When the Barons need a checker, no player has stepped up more than House, 26. He's not flashy, not fast, but he knows the defensive angles. He keeps his body between his own net and the player he is checking. He knows when to aggressively check a player and when to fall back into a passing lane.

At even strength, House has made just one mistake that has contributed to a scoring chance against the Barons. Of course, he's only chipped in on 11 chances for his team, so he's hardly tearing up the pea patch on the attack, but that kind of defensive acumen makes up for a lot.

VandeVelde: If the NHL season were to start today, and the Oilers decided to go with a more youthful player than Eric Belanger as fourth-line centre, VandeVelde would be the guy, not last year's pick Anton Lander. The big American centre VandeVelde has shown himself to be tougher, stronger defensively, better on the penalty kill and better on offence than Lander.

Of course, VandeVelde is 25, four years older than Lander, but it's not close between the two players right now in terms of their two-way performance. They have both made eight mistakes that have contributed to scoring chances against the Barons, but in nine games Vandevelde has chipped in on 17 even-strength scoring chances, while Lander has chipped in on just nine chances in six games.

Marincin: If a defenceman is doing his job at even strength, he will chip in on one scoring chance for every chance against that he makes a mistake on. Marincin has met this test so far, chipping in on 26 scoring chances and making mistakes on 26. He's a strong passer and good skater. On defence, he's got size and reach. His positional play has been only adequate, but not so bad for a rookie.

He's paired up well with Justin Schultz. It's no stretch to see them together in the Oilers' Top Four sometime next season.

Teubert: He still makes the odd, awkward positional gaffe and his skating is subpar, but there's been no stronger shot-blocker or physical defender on the team.

In one recent game, not only did Teubert come charging to the defence of Schultz after Schultz had been elbowed and knocked down on a late hit by Houston Aeros player Brett Bullmer, Teubert delivered a Dave Semenkolike beating on

Bullmer. Not a civilized response, but a useful one, given that the law of the jungle reigns in pro hockey.

List of mistakes made on scoring chances against by Barons forwards at even strength after 10 games:

House, 1; Antti Tyrvainen, 4; Dane Byers, 5; Josh Green, 6; Tyler Pitlick, 7; Anton Lander, 8; Jordan Eberle, 8; Paajarvi, 8; Chris VandeVelde, 8; Hartikainen, 9; Ryan Nugent-Hopkins, 11; Mark Arcobello, 12; Ryan Martindale, 20.

My Cult of Hockey colleagues Bruce McCurdy and Jonathan Willis grade the Barons each game, and only Schultz has graded out higher on the blue-

line than Teubert. I've also seen more promising signs of smart and sound play from Teubert.

So maybe he can be an NHL player. He can certainly be a useful teammate in a tight spot.

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643991 Edmonton Oilers

B.C. summit between Oilers, Flames AHL farm clubs fizzles

By Joanne Ireland,

ABBOTSFORD, B.C. — There should have been more sizzle in the matchup between the American Hockey League offshoots of the NHL's Edmonton Oilers and the Calgary Flames.

More sizzle. More goals — actually just a goal from the Oklahoma City Barons. Just more of something resembling a matchup.

The Barons were thumped 4-0 by the Abbotsford Heat on Friday at the Abbotsford Entertainment & Sports Centre, falling woefully short in the special-teams game. More troubling is that the fact that Barons have now been shut out in two straight games.

"Special teams once again. We don't capitalize on our opportunities and our PK has to get better," said Barons head coach Todd Nelson. "It's been our Achilles heel.

"Right now, we're just shooting ourselves in the foot."

Dustin Sylvester put a power-play goal past Barons goaltender Yann Danis at 18:50 of the first period, giving the Heat a 1-0 lead, then Ben Street added another eight minutes into the second.

Before the second intermission, Martin Marincin's attempted clearing pass from the behind the Barons net hit a teammate and ricocheted into the net. Krys Kolanos put a finishing touch with a five-on-three marker.

"I've been on the other side of that and it deflates you," Street said of Abbotsford's back-breaking third goal. "But we didn't want to take our foot of the gas."

The Barons have scored 31 goals in 11 games, well short of the pre-season expectations, given they have Oilers stars Taylor Hall, Jordan Eberle and Ryan Nugent-Hopkins in the lineup. They were to be an unstoppable lot.

Instead, they are 5-5-0-1.

The Heat improved to

7-1-0-2 and once again their penalty kill was at its stinglest best. It has allowed just one goal since the season opened.

"We're not shooting the puck enough. We have to get greasy," Nelson said. "When you go through times like this, you can't rely on pretty plays. It seemed that every time we got something going, we took a penalty ... you can't take undisciplined penalties like that, especially when your PK is not very strong."

It was another story on the other side of the ice, where the Heat's penalty kill was again at its best – even against a power play featuring Eberle, Hall, Nugent-Hopkins, Justin Schultz and Teemu Hartikainen. The Heat killed off all five of the Barons' power-play opportunities.

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643992 Edmonton Oilers

Edmonton Oilers' Taylor Hall finding his game with Oklahoma City Barons

By Robert Tychkowski

Taylor Hall's shoulder feels fine, it's his rear end that's a little sore from all of that ungodly American Hockey League travel.

The bus ride from Houston to San Antonio for their third game in three days last week was some eight hours long. Getting from Oklahoma City to Abbotsford on Thursday took two commercial flights and a three-hour bus ride up from Seattle.

And all of that, folks, is pretty average stuff in the minors.

"It's not something I'm used to, I never went through the long road trips in the WHL, I had two-hour road trips in the OHL," said the Edmonton Oilers winger, who's also taking the long road back from shoulder surgery. "(The AHL) is a bit of a change, but at the same time I'm playing hockey with a lot of really good guys."

And at least in Abbotsford there were people in the seats and ice under his skates. In a lot of AHL stops, he's come to discover, neither of those two luxuries are ever guaranteed.

"There's not a lot of fans in Oklahoma," sighed Hall, who played to 2,064 in his first game back.

"And in San Antonio we were pretty much playing on cement, the ice was so bad. Now, we get to come to Canada and be in front of a crowd that really does care about hockey.

"There's a lot you miss about the NHL, but being in front of the fans and scoring a big goal is definitely a good feeling."

Just playing is a good feeling. When Hall went under the knife late last season, the Oilers said the timing wasn't an issue because he'd be fully healed long before opening night. Turns out, if there hadn't been a lockout, he'd have missed a month.

Oops.

But he's feeling better today than he has in years, now that the chronic pain is gone.

"So far the surgery has held up well," said the 20-year-old winger before the third game of his comeback Friday night against Calgary's farm team, the Abbotsford Heat. "After each game I didn't feel sore and didn't have the feeling I did when it was pretty bad last year. I'm pretty happy about that."

Though he scored 38 seconds into his first game with the Barons, Hall admits he's still a long way from the player he wants and needs to be. It's a process that requires determination and patience, qualities he has at least one of.

"Whenever you come back from injury there's always a time span where you're not going to be as good, it's just about making that time span as small as possible," he said. "Seven and a half months is a long time to go in between games. It's not like I had a training camp, then an intra-squad game, a Joey Moss Cup and exhibition games. I went from practice right into a game.

"I felt lost out there, but every day, every game and every period I feel a bit more used to everything."

Even the travel.

"It is an adjustment playing here in the AHL. But now that I've got the practice schedule down and I'm used to the style of play and who I'm going to play with, all those things factor into me being able to play more, and play more of my game."

As for his next big journey, back to the NHL, Hall isn't holding his breath. He doesn't see the lockout ending any time soon.

"Honestly, no. I don't think were really that close, to be honest. There's been a lot of talks the last few days, but from what I'm hearing it's mostly spinning of the wheels, which is too bad. It's really frustrating that we're not playing hockey yet. I thought we would by now."

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643993 Edmonton Oilers

Theo Peckham latest Edmonton Oiler to sign with a pro team, the San Francisco Bulls of the ECHL, during the NHL lockout

By Derek Van Diest ,

Theo Peckham needed to get back on the ice, playing meaningful games.

However, unlike some other high-profile players, the Edmonton Oilers rugged defenceman wasn't exactly being inundated with overseas offers during the NHL lockout.

So when a former coach offered up a spot on an ECHL blue-line, Peckham accepted, even though it's actually costing him money to play with the San Francisco Bulls.

"I know the coach here really well. We were talking and he suggested if the lockout was going to be long, that maybe I can come down, skate and maybe play a few games," Peckham said. "It's kind of tough, there weren't really a lot of opportunities for me in Europe and things like that.

"So I kind of exchanged a couple of e-mails with (head coach and general manager) Pat (Curico) and we kind of pulled the trigger on it one day, and now I'm here."

Peckham suited up for his first game with the Bulls Wednesday, making the eight-hour bus trip to Ontario, Calif., in an eventual 3-1 loss to the Reign.

He was back in the lineup Friday as the Bulls played host to the Stockton Thunder at the Cow Palace just outside of San Francisco — the arena where the San Jose Sharks used to play before moving into the HP Pavilion.

Peckham, who turns 25 Saturday, had not played in a meaningful game since March.

"It had definitely been a while," he said. "It was pretty tough, the first period it was a little bit hard on the lungs, but I kind of settled in during the second and third."

Having spent a lot of time in the gym during the off-season, Peckham was looking forward to training camp with the Oilers this year. The Richmond Hill, Ont., product would have weighed in nearly 20 pounds lighter than he had played at the previous season.

Unfortunately, due to the labour unrest between the league and its players association, Peckham was left idling.

"It sucked, because of the amount of weight I dropped over the off-season," Peckham said. "I think I was at about 223 pounds when camp would have started. I played at about 240 last year.

"Now that month and a half, where you haven't played too much hockey outside of a few skates here and there, you put on a few pounds. It's not much, only about three, four pounds, but it's definitely hard on you mentally when you prepare so long for camp and then there's no camp."

Peckham spent the lockout in Edmonton trying to find ice wherever he could, skating with the NAIT Ooks for a while.

Now with a place to play, he is hoping to be game-ready, if and when the two sides come to terms on a new collective bargaining agreement.

"I still feel good on the ice, I only had a couple of practices with the team before getting into that game Wednesday," Peckham said. "The thing is that you don't want them (NHL) to announce on a Monday that everything gets started on a Thursday and you haven't skated in a month.

"Just to be on the ice is good and I'm having a lot of fun down here. This is probably the most fun I've had playing hockey in probably my whole career. At the same time, it's about getting ready to play if the NHL come back."

Having signed a one-year extension with the Oilers worth \$1.075-million, Peckham needed to take out an insurance policy to play with the Bulls.

His ECHL salary covers the majority of the policy, but not quite all of it, which means Peckham is paying to play in San Francisco.

"I think it cost me about \$100 a month to play down here, maybe a little bit more," he laughed. "I'm playing for the love of the game you could say. But it's good, they set you up in an apartment here, so it levels out in the end. And it's a beautiful city and a good group of guys. I'm paying for memories I guess."

Being the lone NHLer on the team — although Rayne Clowe of the Sharks is practicing with them — Peckham had to get used to an unfamiliar role in his first game with the Bulls.

"They threw me out on the power play on Wednesday and I didn't know what to do," Peckham said. "It kind of caught me off guard, I haven't played the power play in about three years.

"It was good, but you don't want to start trying to do too much down here. For me, I just want to work on my decisions with the puck and make sure I'm making good decisions. I want to work on those things that I struggle with at the NHL level and try to get the most out of it that I can here."

Here's what members of the Edmonton Oilers are doing during the NHL lockout:

Oilers in Oklahoma City

(Prior to Friday)

Jordan Eberle

Six goals and five assists in 10 games.

Ryan Nugent-Hopkins

Three goals and seven assists in nine games.

Magnus Paajarvi

Two goals and four assists in 10 games.

Justin Schultz

Six goals and nine assists in 10 games.

Teemu Hartikainen

Three goals and six assists in 10 games.

Taylor Hall

A goal in two games.

Edmonton Sun: LOADED: 11.10.2012

643994 Minnesota Wild

NHLPA to determine next step in negotiations

Posted by: Michael Russo

After hoping for a few days that no news is good news and "at least they're not storming off in a huff and a puff," and "at least they keep meeting" despite slow progress, it became abundantly clear tonight: this lockout's far from being over.

Despite four days of talks after the NHL and NHLPA's No. 2's met for several hours last Saturday, the NHL and NHLPA still remain a good distance apart on a new collective bargaining agreement.

I've been saying on the radio all week that I suspected we'd still have a couple more blow ups and soap operas and emotional roller coasters during this process, so let's hope this is just one minor blip before the two sides eventually reconvene for the good of the game. After all, there's just too much to lose. As I wrote last Sunday, it's a math equation now.

But today? Today did not go well. Other than league lawyers meeting in pension subcommittee's with union lawyers, the actual NHL and NHLPA meeting didn't begin until close to 4 p.m. ET. It was over in about 90 minutes, and little of that was face to face. Much was caucusing.

According to ESPN's Katie Strang on a tweet, "the meeting ended with some tense exchanges between the two sides."

After the meeting, NHLPA Executive Director Don Fehr held a conference call with the negotiating committee and executive board to provide an update. Other players are invited on those calls, too, and reportedly, players are getting very frustrated with the league.

Afterward, Fehr told reporters during a subsequent press scrum that the union will meet internally Saturday morning and determine the next step. He did say he assumed the union would be in touch with the league, but he never said if that would be to schedule the next session. The league says it's willing to get back at the table at any time.

"We'll come to grips with where we are and try and figure out what to do next," Fehr told reporters in New York (thanks to Canadian Press' Chris

Johnston for sending me audio of Fehr's gathering). "I don't know what will happen next."

Friday's breakup came after the NHL proposed a 50/50 split in revenues with the players this week, multiple sources say. In addition, the league spelled out its "Make Whole" provision, which many feel would be the type of breakthrough that could lead toward the eventual end of the lockout.

But the union still feels it comes well short than making the contracts "whole," although Fehr did say tonight that the union told the league they felt "were much closer together on a structure of a deal than suggestions were."

The NHL's definition of its "make whole" provision is to insure that players will continue to make at least 57 percent of \$3.3 billion, or \$1.883 billion. To do that, players would have their 12.3 percent salary reductions deferred for a maximum of three years, sources say.

The league would subsidize the players \$150 million the first year and \$61 million the second year, plus 2 percent interest. By Year 3, the players would be "made whole" as long as revenues grow 5 percent, said sources.

The league says it will guarantee this \$211 million if revenues don't rise back up.

Still, players want to be paid in full every cent agreed to in good faith with owners and Fehr said Friday night they aren't "receiving the full value of their contracts." That's still more than \$350 million, player sources say.

Until this issue is reconciled, this thing's in trouble, and the longer they're not playing, the more revenues drop and the harder the math becomes. Also, players feel owners are standing firm on all their contractual changes like free agency to 28, five-year max contracts, contract variances of 5 percent, etc.

Word of the NHL proposal trickled out because the NHL didn't feel Fehr portrayed its 50/50 proposal fully in a Thursday night memo sent to 725 players. That memo was leaked to the media Friday and thus got back to the league and its owners.

In the memo, Fehr didn't provide details of the league's "Make Whole" 50/50 offer, said a "significant gap remains," said revenue sharing "needs considerable work," and that the NHL's proposed contractual changes "must be agreed to."

Fehr said Friday night that in memos, you "necessarily have to summarize," and that he's routinely transparent with his constituents. All players are invited to any bargaining session on the union's dime, and dozens have sat in on these meetings with the league, including this week.

Players have raved throughout the lockout that Fehr keeps them constantly informed and jumped to his defense tonight.

My blog below just stated that the memo didn't portray their proposal fully, so word was getting out about what their proposal was.

It was also reported on Twitter by the New York Post that the union was seeking full 2012-13 salaries even in a shortened season and regardless of league revenues. I was led to believe this, too, and remember again, revenues will surely fall due to the lockout.

The Post also added that in addition, they wanted 5 percent growth or more than \$1.9 billion, and this would eat 65-67 percent of league revenue during a shortened season.

However, Fehr said tonight that the union was trying to put a structure in place with the NHL before "dealing with the effects of the lockout."

Games have been canceled through Nov. 30, meaning there is still time to reach a deal and start by Dec. 1. But the clock is ticking, damage to revenues and the league's reputation is being done, and as both Commissioner Gary Bettman and Fehr said, "There's still a lot of work to do "

Star Tribune LOADED: 11.10.2012

643995 Minnesota Wild

NHL frustrated by lack of traction

Article by: MICHAEL RUSSO,

The NHL believes union head Donald Fehr didn't portray its proposal accurately to players.

The fourth consecutive day of meetings ended quickly between the NHL and NHL Players' Association on Friday night, and the two sides are still far apart on a new collective bargaining agreement.

After the owners were left waiting for the Fehr brothers -- Donald and Steve -- for most of the day, the two sides broke apart on shaky terms after about 90 minutes. Don Fehr, the NHLPA's executive director, held a conference call with players afterward. The union hierarchy will meet internally Saturday before determining the next step.

"We'll come to grips with where we are and try and figure out what to do next," Fehr told reporters in New York. "I don't know what will happen next."

Friday's breakup came after the NHL became frustrated with a lack of traction this week after the league proposed a 50/50 split in revenues with players. In addition, each contract would be honored using a "make whole" provision, according to league sources, something the NHL believed would be the type of breakthrough that could lead toward the eventual end of the lockout

The league promised to guarantee players their \$1.883 billion share (their 57 percent share of last season's revenues). To do that, players would have their 12.3 percent salary reductions deferred for a maximum of three years, sources said.

The league would pay out two lump sums totaling \$211 million plus 2 percent interest, and by Year 3, the players would be "made whole" as long as revenues grow 5 percent, said sources.

Fehr disputed that Friday night, saying by the union's math, players would "not be receiving the full value of their contracts."

Word of the league proposal trickled out because the NHL didn't believe Fehr portrayed its 50/50 proposal fully in a Thursday night memo sent to 725 players. That memo was leaked to the media Friday and thus got back to the league and its owners.

In the memo, Fehr didn't provide details of the league's "make whole" 50/50 offer, said a "significant gap remains," said revenue sharing "needs considerable work" and that the NHL's proposed contractual changes "must be agreed to."

Fehr said Friday night that in memos, you "necessarily have to summarize," and that he's routinely transparent with his constituents. All players are invited to any bargaining session on the union's dime, and dozens have sat in on these meetings with the league, including this week.

The New York Post reported the union is seeking full 2012-13 salaries even in a shortened season and regardless of league revenues, revenues that will surely fall because of the lockout.

However, Fehr said the union was trying to put a structure in place with the NHL before "dealing with the effects of the lockout."

Games have been canceled through Nov. 30, meaning there is still time to reach a deal and start by Dec. 1. But the clock is ticking, damage to revenues and the league's reputation is being done, and as both Commissioner Gary Bettman and Fehr said, "There's still a lot of work to do."

Star Tribune LOADED: 11.10.2012

643996 Minnesota Wild

Sources: NHL offering 50/50, willing to honor all contracts plus interest

Posted by: Michael Russo

Talks between the NHL and NHL Players' Association broke up very quickly this afternoon after a fourth consecutive day of meeting.

The league is waiting for the NHLPA to have a conference call with its executive board and negotiating committee before letting them know when they'll reconvene.

But talks did not end well today, I am told.

The NHL was perplexed by a memo that NHLPA Executive Director Don Fehr sent his 725 constituents on Thursday night that stated there's a "significant gap" between the two sides, according to multiple NHL sources close to the negotiations.

The league feels the memo isn't a fair portrayal of what the owners offered.

The memo was obtained by NBC Sports' Pro Hockey Talk and TSN, and has since been authenticated by the Star Tribune. It can be read below or at the above hyperlinks.

The league has been under the impression that the majority of players are ready to get back onto the ice if revenues are split 50/50 and all contracts are honored in full. Several players have told the Star Tribune that in recent days

That's exactly what the owners have offered the players, the sources say, something Fehr did not spell out in his memo. I have an email into the NHLPA asking if I can talk with Fehr or confirm what I'm about to report below.

The league has promised to honor all existing contracts and guarantee players their \$1.883 billion share – or 57 percent of last year's revenue, the sources say.

In exchange for going to 50/50 immediately, players would have the reduced part of their salaries (12.3 percent) deferred one or two years, "and the owners will pay them back, plus interest, and it would not go against their share and the league is guaranteeing it no matter where the revenue of the league goes," said one of the sources.

In Year 1, players' salaries would be reduced about \$150 million. The players who have their salaries reduced would get every cent back in a lump payment in Year 2, the source says, plus interest. In Year 2, the players' salaries would be reduced \$61 million. Those players would get that money back plus interest in a lump payment in Year 3, the source says.

By Year 3, they'd be "equal" as long as revenues go up by 5 percent.

The league also feels "we're there" on revenue sharing, with a source saying that the league is basically willing to go with the NHLPA's proposal other than a couple issues that need to be talked about.

The sources also say it's untrue that the NHLPA must agree to all the league contract demands. That is negotiable, with the one area the league feels must be stopped are the back-diving contracts.

Theoretically though, this should be a somewhat simple bridge to gap because a player would still get his money; he just would no longer get contracts like, "\$9 million, \$9 million, \$9 million, \$8 million, .... \$1 million," an intent to artifically lower the salary-cap hit.

Year by year salaries would be spread out with slight variances if the NHL gets its wish.

I'm told one of the NHLPA's demands that the league is not willing to do is pay 100% of the salaries this season no matter how many games are played. If there's a shortended season, the league will want to prorate that, not pay players in full.

But it's clear the league is getting very concerned that the players have not been told the nuts and bolts of their 50/50 proposal. And from the players I've talked to, they feel 50/50 plus honoring all contracts is fair once the other contractual issues are negotiated as well.

We are at a critical juncture even though many want to point out games started Jan. 20 in 1994-95 and the season wasn't canceled in 2005 until Feb. 16.

This is (was actually) a \$3.3 billion business. If Fehr is not willing to go to 50/50 at \$3.3B, think he will when it's \$2.2B, \$1.8B? He has spent his entire career fighting the salary cap. There comes a point where revenues become so damaged, it makes it awfully difficult to proceed with a cap. And if that becomes the end game, we're in for a long, long hiatus with no hockey

As for pensions, NHL and NHLPA lawyers met for much of the day on that issue, but the league was left waiting for the Fehr Bros. and a handful of players until 4 p.m. ET after originally expecting to meet at 10 a.m.

Here is Fehr's memo to his players Thursday night:

Today, we met with the NHL off and on over several hours. A number of matters were discussed, including our proposal for a new pension plan, revenue sharing, the players' share and salary cap issues, and the owners' "make whole" concept. Present today were Chris Campoli, Mathieu Darche, Ron Hainsey, Johan Hedberg, Manny Malhotra, and Kevin Westgarth (David Backes was present for part of the day), as well as Mathieu Schneider, Joe Reekie, Steve Webb and Rob Zamuner.

No new proposals were exchanged on pension issues, but we will discuss this issue again tomorrow (Friday). We did receive a proposal on revenue sharing in response to the proposal we made this week, but this subject still needs considerable work.

In addition, we received a revamped proposal covering players' share and cap issues, their so-called "make whole", and player contracting issues. The owners finally did formally give us their "make whole" idea, which in dollar terms is similar to the discussions Bill Daly had with Steve Fehr a few days ago. While a step forward, a significant gap remains. Moreover, at the same time we were told that the owners want an "immediate reset" to 50/50 (which would significantly reduce the salary cap) and that their proposals to restrict crucial individual contracting rights must be agreed to. As you know, these include – among other things – losing a year of salary arbitration eligibility, allowing the team to file for salary arbitration in any year that the player can file, extending UFA eligibility to age 28 or 8 seasons, limiting contracts to 5 years, and permitting only 5% year to year variability in player contracts. Individually each is bad for players; taken together they would significantly reduce a player's bargaining power and give the owner much more leverage over a player for most if not all of his career.

In short, the concessions on future salary we have offered (at least \$948 Million to \$1.25 Billion over five years, depending on HRR growth) are not enough. We are still being told that more salaries must be conceded, and that very valuable player contracting rights must be surrendered. So, while we are meeting again, and while some steps are being taken, there is still a lot of work to be done and bridges to be crossed before an agreement can be made.

We will review today's discussions over night and tomorrow morning before meeting again with the owners. Following our meeting tomorrow with the league, we will be able to provide a broader update.

As always, please contact us if you have any questions or comments.

Best regards.

Don

Star Tribune LOADED: 11.10.2012

643997 Montreal Canadiens

Blake Geoffrion in surgery — "not life-threatening"

By bbranswell

Hamilton Bulldogs forward Blake Geoffrion is undergoing surgery at a Montreal hospital Friday at 10:30 p.m. ET after he was bodychecked and struck his head on the Bell Centre ice during a game against the American Hockey League's Syracuse Crunch.

Geoffrion was checked by Syracuse defenceman J.P. Côté as he skated into the Syracuse end of the rink midway through the first period. Geoffrion struck his head on the ice and lost some blood, but left the ice under his own steam.

He was rushed to a Montreal hospital. His parents were with him.

Hamilton coach Sylvain Lefebvre said the injury was not life-threatening.

"We're going to update you guys as soon as we know more," Lefebvre told reporters. "But as far as Blake is concerned right now he is under good care."

The Bulldogs lost 4-1 to the Crunch. Forward Steve Quailer scored the Bulldogs' lone goal, his first of the season. The game drew a record crowd for a Bulldogs' game at the Bell Centre — 18, 582.

Canadiens GM Marc Bergevin spoke to reporters before tonight's game. You can watch an extended video of the scrum below. It begins with

Bergevin answering a question by The Gazette's Pat Hickey about whether there is a possibility that if the salary cap goes down that the team wouldn't be able to sign defenceman P.K. Subban. Bergevin answered that and a host of other questions.

Montreal Gazette LOADED: 11.10.2012

643998 Montreal Canadiens

Canadiens forward Blake Geoffrion has surgery on injured head

By QMI Agency

Canadiens centre Blake Geoffrion had surgery Friday after suffering a head injury during an American Hockey League game between the Hamilton Bulldogs and Syracuse Crunch in Montreal.

Geoffrion left the game in the first period after taking a hard check from Syracuse's J.P. Cote. After the check, Cote's skate appeared to make contact with Geoffrion's head. Geoffrion was left bleeding, but skated off the Bell Centre ice under his own power before being rushed to hospital.

Bulldogs head coach Sylvain Lefebvre said Geoffrion underwent surgery and that the injury was "not life-threatening." Geoffrion's parents joined him at the hospital.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with him and his family," Lefebvre said.

Geoffrion is the grandson of legendary Habs winger Bernie "Boom Boom" Geoffrion. Drafted in the second round of the 2006 National Hockey League draft by the Nashville Predators, the 24-year-old was traded to the Canadiens on Feb. 17 as part of a deal that sent Hal Gill to the Music City. In 55 games with the Preds and Habs, Blake has five goals and eight assists for 13 points.

- with files from Jean-Francois Cheaumont

Montreal Sun LOADED: 11.10.2012 643999 Nashville Predators

Nashville Predators broadcaster Stu Grimson organizes alumni game

Josh Cooper

# ALUMNI GAME

- What: Alumni game between the Nashville Predators and St. Louis Blues.
   Proceeds go to Hurricane Sandy relief and Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt.
- Where: A-Game Sportsplex in Franklin
- When: 5:30-6:30 p.m. today.

Predators radio broadcaster Stu Grimson and his St. Louis Blues counterpart, Kelly Chase, had more than 4,000 penalty minutes combined during their NHL careers.

On the ice, they were combatants — Grimson, a former Predators tough guy, said he and Chase tussled three to five times in their careers — but off the ice, they've come up with an alumni game today at A-Game Sportsplex in Franklin.

It's a collaboration that they hope will be the beginning of a partnership between former players of both teams.

The game will begin at 5:30 p.m. and end at 6:30. A suggested \$5 donation will be asked for at the door. Proceeds will go to Hurricane Sandy relief and Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt.

"We knew we wanted to host an alumni game. As the game was starting to take shape, Hurricane Sandy hit around that time," Grimson said. "It was just a natural for us, staring at the devastation, feeling helpless about the folks in the Northeast, here's a great opportunity to do something important

and something worthwhile to help offset all they're going through, to assist with all they're going through."

Grimson and Chase had the game in the works for a while. When the Predators hired Grimson over the summer to help with their radio broadcasts, they also hoped he would act as a local team alumni liaison.

Chase holds a similar role with the Blues, who were supposed to be in Nashville this weekend to play the Predators until the NHL lockout canceled the game. So the timing for an alumni game made sense.

"Stu has always been great with charity and kids and helping in the community," Chase said. "We thought it was a great opportunity for us to help them get started on something, and it's a big fraternity. We're trying to help the Nashville guys so they can build the game there like we did in St. I ouis "

The game is set to include former Predators J.P. Dumont and Dan Keczmer as well as former Blues Tyson Nash and Jeff Brown. Local players also will participate. Both sides hope it's the first of many such games between the two groups.

"A lot of folks from around town have indicated they're excited about it and being out there," Grimson said. "The response is pretty positive."

Tennessean LOADED: 11.10.2012 644000 Nashville Predators

Analysis: Compromise needed if sides are to make progress today

Kevin Allen

The problem with compromise is that it is an expensive proposition. By definition, a compromise requires giving up something of value. We've all heard it said that a fair compromise requires everyone to leave unhappy. That's why compromise is easy to discuss and difficult to achieve.

That's why the best possible outcome for NHL fans Friday is for owners and players to both leave negotiations feeling like they didn't get close to what they wanted.

As NHL owners and players engage Friday in the fourth consecutive day of negotiations, with a morning and afternoon session, the real hope to start a 74-game NHL schedule around Thanksgiving still comes down to pain tolerance. Both sides need to make the painful decision that resolution of these stalemated negotiations isn't going to go exactly the way they envisioned, or hoped, it would.

They both have to compromise more than they have at this point. In other words, they have to bargain in the old-school sense of the word. Give up something. Get something. We all know how it works.

Certainly it has been positive that both sides have been engaged for about 18 hours of negotiations since Tuesday, but Friday seems like pivotal day because players are expected to react to the NHL's offer for the "make whole" provision.

This lockout has always been about the owners' desire to reduce players' share of the revenue from 57(PERCENT) to 50(PERCENT), and players have shown a willingness to move in that direction. But what players want in exchange for accepting a reduced share is that their already-signed individual contracts be honored. The "make whole" provision is the owners' attempt to address that issue.

Neither side is revealing what the owners' offer is, but the undercurrent Friday morning is that the players don't believe the owners' proposal goes far enough to address the issue.

What happens Friday will determine whether there is any hope of a quick march to a settlement to the 55-day NHL lockout. If both sides embrace their positions as being their best offers, then we are doomed to a lengthy lockout. If they begin to grind out a solution through negotiations, then the momentum of these meetings will continue.

Negotiating style has been a problem from the beginning of these talks. The players have resented that owners have approached negotiations like they are buying a used car. They started out with a lowball offer in the summer,

and then improved it dramatically, and then tried to sell their movement as a meaningful compromise.

It's difficult to accept those negotiating tactics when you don't believe that it's fair for owners to be asking you for more when they told you seven years ago that accepting a salary cap and a 24(PERCENT) salary rollback would solve all of their problems.

Players had a valid point that the original demands were insulting.

But that was then and this is now. And now it is time to engage in across-the-table negotiations. It's time for players to move away from principle and toward practicality. Salaries are being lost. The game is being damaged. There's a real threat that another season could be lost. We have to move past the unfairness issue. Standing on principle and losing \$1.81 billion isn't noble. It's madness.

Of course, it also seems ludicrous for the owners to risk losing this season at a time when the league has much positive energy. The sport is growing in both visibility and stature. The league's relationship with NBC looks like an exciting partnership.

Although players haven't given owners what they wanted, they have offered significant concessions. It is also time for owners to be both reasonable and practical. Owners need to start listening to what players are saying. Owners need to start backing away on its demands on contract rules because those are important to players. Tacking those issues onto a reduction of revenue has fueled players' rage from the beginning.

If owners get more than a billion dollars in revenue concessions over a sixyear deal, do they really need to limit the length of contracts to five years? If the CBA ensures that players will never receive more than 50(PERCENT) of revenue, does it really matter if the Pittsburgh Penguins want to give Evgeni Malkin a 10-year contract?

The key Friday is not for either side to get what it wanted. What we need Friday is for both sides to realize they aren't going to get what they wanted, and to make a deal based on that understanding.

Tennessean LOADED: 11.10.2012

644001 New Jersey Devils

Talks Sour as League, Union Meet for Fourth Day

By REUTERS

Negotiations appeared to have soured on Friday as National Hockey League (NHL) owners and locked out players completed a fourth consecutive day of talks to resolve their bitter labor dispute.

"We thought we were much closer together on a structure of a deal than suggestions were," NHL Players Association (NHLPA) executive director Donald Fehr told reporters in New York. "They (the NHL) came back to us and said, 'No, we're very, very far apart on a structure of the deal'."

Minnesota Star-Tribune, citing sources, said the NHL believed the league had given the players almost all they had asked for, but Fehr was not passing on that information based on a memo sent to players in which the executive director said there was a "considerable gap" in the positions of the two sides.

Fehr disputed both points.

"If you write a memo, and it's a quick one, you necessarily have to summarize," he said, adding "that doesn't have anything to do with all the calls that are made by the player reps."

The two sides are trying to work out how to split \$3.3 billion in annual revenue.

The owners want to reduce the players' share from the current 57 percent to 50 percent.

A major stumbling block appears to be a "make whole" concept to honor existing player contracts.

"We are still being told that more salaries must be conceded, and that very valuable player contracting rights must be surrendered," Fehr said in the memo which was written on Thursday.

NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman declined to characterize the talks, which are aimed at reaching a new collective bargaining agreement and salvaging some of the season.

"I'm not getting into the specifics," Bettman said.

Both sides have agreed to meet again on Saturday, the New York Times reported.

Already more than 300 games and the league's showcase event, the New Year's Day Winter Classic, have been canceled since owners locked out the players on September 15. All league games until November 30 have been called off in a season that originally was scheduled to start on October 11, leaving sponsors and broadcast partners unhappy.

(Reporting by Gene Cherry in Salvo, North Carolina; editing by Amlan Chakraborty)

New York Times LOADED: 11.10.2012

644002 New Jersey Devils

A Leaked Memo Could Complicate the N.H.L. Labor Talks

By JEFF Z. KLEIN

A leaked internal memorandum from the players union may have caused some damage to the labor negotiations between the N.H.L. and the union Friday.

Little progress was made in the talks, which were conducted for the fourth straight day, but both sides agreed to meet again Saturday. The day's most notable development came when Donald Fehr, the union's executive director, issued a sharp response to a report that the league was concerned about some of the items in the memorandum.

On Thursday night, a memo was sent to the union's 725 members in which Fehr said there was a "significant gap" between the N.H.L. and the union on several important issues.

On Friday night, Fehr addressed concerns that the league seemed to be raising about some of the language in the memo. Citing league sources, The Minneapolis Star Tribune said the N.H.L. believed that Fehr had misled players by inaccurately summarizing the league's positions.

"First of all, understand that their proposal is made in front of players in the room who hear it, in front of staff who hear it, in front of former players who hear it," Fehr said Friday, almost three hours after the bargaining session at the offices of the law firm Proskauer Rose on Eighth Avenue had ended.

Fehr said those players and union officials called members of the rank and file to inform them about the negotiations. Noting that "if you write a memo, and it's a quick one, you necessarily have to summarize," he added "that doesn't have anything to do with all the calls that are made by the player reps."

Winnipeg defenseman Ron Hainsey, who has attended most of the bargaining sessions during the 55-day lockout, called the report a "slight bit of misinformation that went around this evening."

Hainsey said the players representatives made and took calls daily to keep the membership informed on issues.

"This notion that something was hidden over the past 24 or 48 hours is totally inaccurate, and we feel that should put this issue to rest," Hainsey said.

Fehr said the owners did not raise the question of the memorandum's accuracy during the day's bargaining, which was attended by four N.H.L. owners, including Craig Leipold of Minnesota.

During Friday's talks, which lasted from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., no offers were exchanged, but discussions involved pension issues, procedural contract matters and the biggest stumbling block in talks so far — how the league will honor existing contracts under a lower salary cap.

"I don't want to either raise or lower expectations," Commissioner Gary Bettman said after the talks had ended for the day. "I won't be happy until we get to the end result."

Bettman said he was willing to bargain through the weekend, and even to miss Monday's Hall of Fame induction ceremony in Toronto "if something else was pending."

"When you're in a process like this, you're really not watching the calendar," Bettman said. "I can't even tell you what day it is."

New York Times LOADED: 11.10.2012

644003 New Jersey Devils

Trouble Brewing for NHL as Lockout Drags On

By REUTERS

TORONTO (Reuters) - Canadians may be depressed about the ongoing National Hockey League (NHL) lockout that has darkened arenas across the hockey mad nation but they are not crying in their beer about it, at least not Molson Coors.

As the labor war between billionaire owners and millionaire players drags on trouble appears to be brewing for the NHL with fans, sponsors, television networks and those who earn a living on the fringes of the sport angered over the prospects of losing a second season in eight years.

An Angus Reid poll released on Friday found that more Canadians blame owners for the lockout now in its 55th day and 31 percent of hockey fans polled have switched to watching the National Football League (NFL).

The tedious negotiation dance has become all too familiar for weary North American sports fans, who have been dragged a through Conga line of labor disputes by the NFL, NFL officials and the National Basketball Association in the past 15 months. Now they must watch NHL owners and players wrestle over a \$3.3 billion pie.

Some of that frustration surfaced like the froth on a foamy beer on Wednesday, when Molson Coors chief executive Peter Swinburn, who signed a reported seven-year \$375 million sponsorship deal with the NHL, suggested the brewing giant could seek compensation for a dramatic slump in sales in Canada

In the first month of the fourth quarter, Molson Coors sales to retailers fell 5.1 percent in Canada, hurt by industry weakness and the NHL lockout.

"NHL is a major property for us," said Molson vice-president Dave Dunnewald. "Hockey generates a lot of beer occasions in Canada, whether it's in bars, in home, or in the venues.

"And it's a really important part of how we activate behind our power brands, Coors Light and Canadian.

"So we're obviously working to replace the hockey programming but hockey would be the premier property and on top, we lose the direct volume in the hockey venues that are ours."

Most sponsorship deals come with "make good" clauses shielding companies from calamities such as lockouts and Molson is certain to receive some relief in the form of additional marketing and advertising opportunities if the labor strife drags on but compensation is unlikely.

According to business and marketing experts, Swinburn's threat should be viewed as more of a warning shot across the NHL's bow.

"It's jawboning or whatever you want to call it," Bill Sutton, professor at University of Central Florida's DeVos sports business program and former vice-president of marketing at NBA, told Reuters. "You can check with any lawyer, I can't imagine they have any claim for the loss of any beer sales but what he is saying is, 'Hey guys, I'm going to have to put my money somewhere else or take it out of the market, if you're not back skating pretty soon, you are not going to see that money this year'."

# SPONSORS CONCERNED

NHL sponsors have not been shy about expressing their concerns when it comes to the operation of the league.

Last year commissioner Gary Bettman faced the threat of a sponsors' revolt over concern of escalating violence in the game following a devastating hit by Boston Bruins Zdeno Chara on Montreal Canadiens Max Pacioretty that left Air Canada threatening to pull its sponsorship.

"They (sponsors) have some influence," Neal Pilson, head of Pilson Communications and former president of CBS Sports told Reuters. "They have a lot of stake.

"This is the fourth quarter and it would be a big quarter for whatever sponsor because this is the platform for your activation into the holiday season.

"You set up all these campaigns to activate in the holiday season and all of sudden the platform you we're going to use isn't there."

As the fans and some sponsors grumble the league's broadcasting partners have been mostly silent, stoically counting the hours of lost programming and advertising revenues.

A year ago the NHL was crowing about a new \$2 billion rights with NBC that was to roll out a lineup of games this season highlighted by the moneyspinning New Year's Day Winter Classic, that has already been wiped from the schedule by the labor dispute.

The U.S. rights holder to the 2014 Winter Games, NBC is watching the negotiations with double interest to see if the NHL will renew its Olympic commitment as part of the new CBA and allow players to compete in Sochi.

In Canada, where hockey is the king of all sports properties, finding ways to fill hundreds and hundreds of hours of programming will not be as easy.

The country's all sports networks have tried to satisfy the country's hunger for hockey by plugging in minor and junior games and tournaments from around the world including Switzerland's Spengler Cup and the world junior championships.

The NHL has been a ratings grabber for the Canadian Broadcasting Corp. bringing in a huge chunk of revenue for Canada's national broadcaster, which has resorted to filling its iconic Hockey Night in Canada time slot on Saturday with replays of old games.

"It's not optimal for us," Jeffrey Orridge, executive director of sports properties at CBC, told Reuters. "There is no substitute for live hockey and the advertisers that buy spots at a certain rate card because of the audience it generates.

"Hockey Night in Canada is an institution, it's not just about putting on hockey games it's about preserving a cultural institution."

(Editing by Gene Cherry)

New York Times LOADED: 11.10.2012

644004 New Jersey Devils

NHL lockout update: NHL, NHLPA end meetings today with reportedly 'no progress'

By Charles Curtis, NJ.com

There were more than a few pundits that thought the memo sent to the players by Donald Fehr was a sign there was a long way to go in the ongoing lockout.

After today's round of meetings finished, it definitely feels as if that's the case.

Despite the possibility of the two sides meeting again tonight, Sportsnet's John Shannon said that wouldn't be the case. It was then followed up by a tweet from ESPN's Pierre LeBrun, who said, "Source from talks says no real progress today." He later said he was told the union "doesn't agree with league's model or \$\$...not good day."

Fehr's memo did stir up some trouble, according to The Star Tribune's Michael Russo, who wrote "the league feels the memo isn't a fair portrayal of what the owners offered." Russo explained that the owners believed players would come back with a 50-50 split and contracts that were completely honored.

The source told Russo that's what the owners offered, which was "something Fehr did not spell out in his memo." Players would have to take a reduction down to 50-50 immediately but would have the salary they lose then be paid back with interest.

Remember that "significant gap" Fehr mentioned in the memo? It sounds as if nothing was done today to reduce the size of the fracture. In fact, depending on what other news comes out after tonight, it could get even

Star Ledger LOADED: 11.10.2012 644005 New Jersey Devils

NHL lockout update: NHLPA's memo reveals details of Thursday's meeting

By Charles Curtis, NJ.com

The veil of mystery surrounding the meetings has been lifted, after some sources leaked information vesterday that led to speculation.

TSN printed a memo sent by Donald Fehr to the players after yesterday's meeting, shedding light on what's been discussed.

Among the topics: "Our proposal for a new pension plan, revenue sharing, the players' share and salary cap issues, and the owners' 'make whole' concept," it read. He also said "pension issues" would be discussed today, but while there were talks of revenue sharing, "this subject still needs considerable work."

There was some language in the memo that made it sound as if an agreement is far from happening soon. While discussing the "make whole" topic that was broached, Fehr said "a significant gap remains" despite it being a step forward. That's because the owners would like to make the change in hockey related revenue immediately, giving both sides 50/50 presumably, the players would rather have a slight reduction each year that eventually ends with 50 percent of revenue -- and an adjustment to contract rights, like restrictions on how many years players can sign for and the loss of a year of "salary arbitration eligibility."

"Individually each is bad for players; taken together they would significantly reduce a player's bargaining power and give the owner much more leverage over a player for most if not all of his career," Fehr said.

Perhaps it's good timing that the memo came when both sides are hard at work discussing these issues. And according to the Associated Press, Fehr "didn't rule out talks stretching into the weekend, too."

But the so-called significant gap between the two sides is going to have to be reduced before there's any hope for a 2012-13 season.

Star Ledger LOADED: 11.10.2012 644006 New Jersey Devils

NHL, players meet for 51/2 hours; more meetings today

By TOM GULITTI

Negotiations between the NHL and its players continue to be in a fragile stage, but the sides continue to find reason to meet, providing hope that eventually it will lead to the breakthrough that ends this owners' lockout.

They will get together for a fourth consecutive day today after meeting for nearly 51/2 hours Thursday at the midtown Manhattan offices of the law firm that represents the league.

There still is a lot of ground to cover, however, and the biggest issues have vet to be settled.

Representatives from the NHL and the NHL Players' Association have met for nearly 18 hours over the past three days. They met for more than seven hours Tuesday and more than five hours Wednesday. Thursday's meeting began at approximately 1 p.m. and lasted until almost 6:30 p.m. before the sides broke for the night to conduct internal discussions.

NHLPA executive director Don Fehr confirmed after the meeting that the sides will meet again today, but would not reveal any details about what they talked about Thursday or how things are progressing.

"I am not going to characterize it except to say, as I have before, that it's always better when you're meeting than when you're not," Fehr said. "It's better to be meeting and talking, than not."

NHL commissioner Gary Bettman also would not disclose the nature of the negotiations.

"We have work to do," Bettman said. "My hope is that we can achieve the goal of getting a long-term, fair agreement in place as quickly as possible."

The NHL responded Thursday to the proposals the players submitted during Wednesday's meeting concerning revenue sharing among teams and how the players and owners will split hockey-related revenue and guarantee the players' existing contracts.

It is unclear how the NHL's response was received by the players, but that they are scheduled to meet again today appeared to be a good sign.

"We are working and in the process now with [a series] of meetings, and we are meeting again [today] and hopefully it leads us to the right place' Bettman said.

The players view revenue sharing as one of the most important issues. Their latest proposal reportedly calls for \$260 million in revenue sharing among teams. The union asked for \$240 million in revenue sharing in their initial proposal Aug. 14.

The NHL's initial proposal called for \$180 million in revenue sharing. The league upped that figure to \$200 million in its Oct. 16 proposal. Although the sides are not moving closer on revenue sharing in terms of the dollar figures, the NHL has indicated it is willing to negotiate further on that topic.

The far more complicated issue is the split of HRR hockey-related revenue and how the owners will guarantee full payment of the players' existing contract - an element the league dubbed "make-whole" in its Oct. 16 proposal.

The NHLPA proposed Wednesday a gradual cutting of the players' share of hockey-related revenue to 50-50 by Year Three. The NHL wants to go to 50-50 in Year One by deferring payment of a portion of the players'

Bergen Record LOADED: 11.10.2012 New Jersey Devils

644007

Leaked memo by players' union head irks owners

By Pat Leonard / NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

Commissioner Gary Bettman would be willing to skip Monday's Hockey Hall of Fame ceremony if there was a reason to remain in Manhattan and talk.

Frustrations boiled over in the NHL labor negotiations Friday night, when the league and union concluded their fourth straight day of meetings seemingly further apart than when they had started on Tuesday.

Specifically, the league lost its patience with players' union executive director Don Fehr. Through several reports, the NHL accused Fehr of misrepresenting some specifics of the league's proposals, citing a memo from Fehr to the players that had leaked Friday morning that they felt omitted or did not fully explain the owners' positions.

The league has been frustrated by Fehr's stall tactics and refusal to work within the framework of the NHL's proposals for a while, but this was the first open public display of those frustrations. The hope has been to get a deal done in time for a Dec. 1 start date and a 60-game regular season, but the idea of that happening is laughable following Friday's antics.

There may be more meetings this weekend. There also may not.

The NHL wants to resolve the core economics of a new collective bargaining agreement first since it is the primary issue blocking a deal. But on Friday, Day 55 of the lockout, the NHL and union for some reason spent their morning session discussing player pensions, which are important but not the issue that is keeping hockey off the ice. The same goes for revenue sharing, which ate up time in Wednesday's meeting.

Commissioner Gary Bettman told reporters that he would be willing to skip Monday's Hockey Hall of Fame ceremony in Toronto if there was a reason to remain in Manhattan and talk, but as of late Friday night, it was not clear if he had one.

Fehr held a brief media session after the NHL's accusations surfaced. Both he and the players contended that he has kept his constituency fully informed throughout the lockout, and insisted the union and league are closer to agreement on the core economic issues than the NHL is letting on.

Of course, that was only one side of the story.

One report, which the Daily News has confirmed, said the NHLPA's core economic proposal on Friday asked for too much: Last season's full players' share of 57%, plus an additional 5% tacked on top, plus the full revenue for an 82-game 2012-13 regular season — even though a full season is no longer possible — with that players' number then increasing by 5% in each season thereafter. The players' association, however, disputed those numbers.

New York Daily News LOADED: 11.10.2012

644008 New Jersey Devils

NHL talks 'ice' & slow

By MARK EVERSON

Brooks on Such panic, so soon.

The earliest an NHL lockouts was settled was two months from tomorrow, Jan. 11, 1995, and still there was a 48-game season. The other lockout prompted the Feb. 16, 2005 cancellation of that 2004-05 season, which was revived momentarily until finally buried Feb. 19. It was settled July 13, 2005.

It's Nov. 10, folks.

To expect this lockout settled this past week was to expect either the NHL or the Players Association to capitulate, despite the fact the sides have neared the 50-50 revenue split everyone outside believed would be the basis of a deal. Neither folded anywhere near this early before.

The eternity of an 82-game season — including the Winter Classic — and the price of those season tickets have been forgotten.

The NHL still can do a New Year's Party if it wants to, and still do it well. It just won't be able to wring every last dime out of it — so they won't play. The sides met for a fourth straight day yesterday in multiple sessions, but the basic issues of slashing the players' share of revenue from 57 percent and guarantees of contracted salaries remain unresolved. The NHL now wants an immediate plunge to 50-50, while the Players' Association would get there eventually.

It's always about this time the league starts suggesting the union isn't keeping its players informed about NHL offers, and it was right on time yesterday. The last time, it succeeded in driving a wedge in the union, stars and agents becoming the accommodators.

Each side insists the deal progresses on each's own terms. It's as if one side favors a point-spread scheme, and the other side plays odds on winlose, and neither will adjust. The sides discussed pensions, scheduling, and the main issues of revenue shares, revenue-sharing, make-whole of contracts and the salary cap.

The evening session concluded with bitter exchanges between players and owners in attendance, according to an ESPN.com report.

New York Post LOADED: 11.10.2012

644009 New York Rangers

NHLPA revisiting 50-50 split as gradual, not immediate; Friday talks with NHL crucial on 'Make Whole' provision, revenue

By Pat Leonard

The NHL and players' union met for six hours Thursday in Manhattan and scheduled their fourth meeting of the week for Friday, but they're still a long way from a deal.

NHL commissioner Gary Bettman and union executive director Don Fehr shared little with the media in scrums outside the office of the law firm representing the league, Proskauer-Rose, just off of Times Square. But the union revealed it had made a new offer Wednesday on the owners' 'Make Whole' proposal to honor player contracts, recommending a gradual transition from the current 57-43 player-owner revenue split toward 50-50 instead of an immediate reduction, which the NHL prefers.

### LEONARD: WRAPPED IN SECRECY, NHL TALKS AT CRUCIAL STAGE

When the week opened with a seven-hour meeting on Tuesday – the first group session since Oct. 18 – it was believed that the league and union already had agreed on an immediate 50-50 split. Now it's back on the table, and on Thursday the NHL presumably responded to that offer and – to put it mildly – didn't accept it.

"I don't really have much to say," Bettman shrugged on the sidewalk on day 54 of his third lockout as commissioner. "I'm not going to discuss the negotiations or the substance of what we're talking about. I really don't think that would be helpful to the process."

"It's always better when you're meeting than when you're not," Fehr said.

Sounds logical, but the NHL and NHLPA still haven't proven it correct.

New York Daily News LOADED: 11.10.2012

644010 NHL

Even with locked-out NHL stars, KHL still a mess

### **ERIC REGULY**

"Game is sold out – hope you have a ticket," he tells me. I had mistakenly assumed I could nail one at the ticket booth and go into a low-grade panic.

He laughs: "Don't worry. Games never sold out in Moscow."

Well, indeed. We roll up to the aptly named Minor Arena in the Luzhinki Sports Complex that was the centre of the American-boycotted 1980 Moscow Olympics. There is no crowd outside and not much of one inside. At best half of the 8,700 seats are occupied (Toronto's Air Canada Centre, home of the Maple Leafs, has 18,819 seats for hockey).

The Minor Arena says a lot about the state of the Kontinental Hockey League – the KHL – Russia's NHL equivalent and the league that is soaking up dozens of NHL players, including Ovechkin of the Washington Capitals and Evgeni Malkin of the Pittsburgh Penguins. The KHL, like Dynamo's arena, is having trouble attracting paying fans. In an interview, Malkin, who now plays for Metallurg Magnitogorsk, says "a complex of marketing efforts are needed to summon fans to the stands in Moscow. You see, Moscow offers too many events and amusement and people often simply do not choose hockey."

The arena, a handsome though run-down neo-classical building, was constructed in 1956 and is wholly inadequate for a team of Dynamo's status and potential drawing power. In the 1980 Games, it was used for volleyball competitions and had no roof.

There are no corporate VIP boxes inside, nor any souvenir stands or concessions, save a cafeteria that serves vile snacks. On the plus side, attending a hockey game in Russia won't bankrupt you. My skinny hot dog, Snickers bar and bottled water come to about 100 rubles, the equivalent of \$3.25. A game ticket costs about \$10.

A family of four would be hard-pressed to shell out much more than \$50 for tickets and snacks and that's a key part of the KHL's problem. Russian hockey arenas are not pleasure domes designed to shake down the fan for everything he is worth, all the better to pump up team revenues and profits. None of the 20 KHL teams in Russia (there are six in other countries) makes a profit. "Hockey in Russia is a social project," Dementiev says.

I ask a young Russian hockey journalist, Maria Rogovskaya, of the sports website championat.com, why the arena is more than half empty and she explains that the crowd might have been thinner if Ovechkin were not on

the ice. "They are coming because they have only one chance to see NHLers play," she says.

The fans try hard to pump up the volume, but there aren't enough of them to get the job done. The requisite young cheerleaders add a dash of flash but seem incapable of holding the fans' attention. The entertainment between the periods consists of two small remote-control dirigibles, covered in advertising, that hover lazily over the rink.

Both teams are lazy in the first period, but I enjoy the passing plays in the big rink – the KHL rinks are about four metres wider than the NHL ice. Dynamo, the winner of last season's Gagarin Cup, the equivalent of the Stanley Cup, are expected to crush the opposition. But Sibir's defence proves remarkably strong and Ovechkin's sniper shots don't find their mark. The players come alive in the third period and the Siberians take the game 3-2 in overtime.

The Sibir players are delighted that they've humbled mighty Dynamo and its prized import, Ovechkin, a two-time NHL most valuable player. "I'm really happy," says Kristian Kudroc, 31, the Slovakian Sibir defenceman and Tampa Bay Lightning alumnus.

I ask if he has any regrets joining the KHL after careers in the NHL and in Finland. "The NHL is the top league but the KHL is raising the level of play very quickly," he says, adding that even the pay is decent.

He's right, in the sense that organized hockey over here almost collapsed along with the Soviet Union and is only now making a comeback. But it's got a long way to go before it reaches the stature and sustainability of the NHI

At the moment, the league occupies a never-never land between social service and commercial product, doing neither particularly well. "I'd state that level of play in Russia has grown substantially during the last seven years," says Sergei Gonchar, the Ottawa Senators defenceman who, like Malkin, signed up for Metallurg. "Perhaps it's not NHL calibre yet.

## Sweeping change

Vladislav Tretiak, the Russian goaltender in the 1972 Summit Series, has a successful dual career as head of Russia's Ice Hockey Federation and deputy in the Russian Duma, the lower house in parliament. He is gracious and engaged even though he is still shaken by the murder of a political colleague only five days before he met me at the Ritz-Carlton hotel near the Kremlin in Moscow.

His local constituency aide and fixer was gunned down in a fitness club in the city of Ulyanovsk, in the Volga region well east of Moscow, proving yet again that politics, like business, can still be a blood sport in Russia. He declines to talk about the killing, politely insisting that the topic is hockey and only hockey.

Tretiak, 60, is still unmistakably the goalie beloved by three generations of Canadian and Russian hockey fans. He is six-feet tall, probably 220 pounds, with a bit of a paunch. He still looks powerful even though he no longer hits the rink to keep fit. "Bad knees," he says through an interpreter.

He represents the golden era of Soviet hockey, in the 1970s and into the first half of the 1980s, when the national team was the dominant force in the international game and the KHL's predecessor league could still hang onto its best players. Tretiak's teams won gold in the 1972, 1976 and 1984 Olympics. Between 1970 and 1983, they captured 10 world championships and, in 1981, the Canada Cup. During that time, he also won 13 league titles with CSKA Moscow, better known as the Red Army team, the shock troops of the Russian ice for decades.

A lot has changed since then, and not necessarily for the better.

In his youth, Soviet hockey was more than a national passion and a source of national pride; it was a training program instilled with military-style discipline that produced cracking great results. Tretiak entered the CSKA sports school at age 11 and trained three times a day to utter exhaustion. He remembers being weighed down with cruel equipment. "The stick was so heavy that it was difficult to hit the puck away," he says. "In the third period, I couldn't lift my legs because the shin pads were so heavy. They were stuffed with horse hair and it sucked up the water."

The endless training produced some of the world's best players and teams. CSKA was particularly strong, winning 32 championships in the post-war decades. If it spotted a young player it didn't want to lose to a rival team, such as Dynamo, which was controlled by the KGB during the Soviet era, it simply drafted him into the army and made him an offer he couldn't refuse. Its best players became stars and were well paid by Soviet standards,

where ownership of a Lada was considered a rare privilege. "The hockey players were the first to drive foreign cars in Moscow in the 1970s," says Ilya Kochevrin, the KHL's commerce and communications vice-president.

In 1991, the Soviet Union collapsed and so did Soviet Hockey League, as it was called, to be replaced by the sorry Russian Hockey League. With the Russian economy in free-fall – the country defaulted on its debt in 1998, shortly after the oil price collapse – the teams were starved of investment. "There were no salaries, no jobs," Tretiak says.

Arenas fell apart for lack of maintenance and some doubled up as clothing and food markets – the ultimate dishonour for a once-proud league. Kochevrin estimates that two-thirds of the very best Russian players fled, most of them to NHL but also to leagues in Scandinavia and Germany, even little Croatia.

As the arenas crumbled, TV coverage became shabby and the top players fled overseas, fans disappeared in droves as the games turned into amateur shows. Alex Kravtsov, a Moscow PR man and one-time hockey fan, says "It was painful to watch the KHL games."

Arenas turned into echo chambers. In the dark days of the late 1990s and into 2000 once-thrilling teams like Saint Petersburg could barely draw an audience. In a 12,000-seat arena, the team often had trouble drawing 500 spectators. "Just die-hard fans were there," Kochevrin says.

Tretiak rolls out some grim statistics to illustrate hockey's decline in Russia. The country has just under 400 covered hockey arenas left in operation. And Canada? Try 2,500. About 500,000 Canadians of all ages play hockey. In Russia, whose population is four times that of Canada, there are only 86,000 players and virtually no female players. "We don't have the infrastructure." he says.

Stuffed with Russia's best, the NHL went through something of a renaissance in the last decade at the Russian league's expense. The league, by then known as the Russian SuperLeague, was killed off in 2008, to be replaced by the KHL. The idea was to create a product that would restore the fan base within Russia, expand outside Russia, protect players and owners through proper legal frameworks and create profits for the teams' owners.

A tough assignment. "No one believed it could become the sport of choice again," Kochevrin said.

# Buoyant mood

The KHL is a sprawling mess of a league that has attracted as much bad publicity as good in its four-year history.

The maiden season got under way on Sept. 2, 2008 and the first disaster came only five weeks later, when a dazzling rookie Avangard Omsk player named Alexei Cherepanov – "the Siberian Express" – collapsed on the bench shortly before the end of a KHL game and died a few hours later. He could not be rushed to hospital for lack of an ambulance on site. The arena's defibrillator was not working. He was 19 and a New York Rangers prospect.

His death reinforced the image that the KHL arenas were clapped-out holding pens whose emergency staff were uncaring or incompetent. Worse was to come. On Sept. 7, 2011, the charter aircraft carrying Lokomotiv Yaroslavl, the pride of Yaroslavl, a UNESCO Heritage city on the Volga River about 250 kilometres northeast of Moscow, crashed shorty after takeoff, killing 37 players and coaches.

The team vanished from the KHL for the season and is now being rebuilt under American coach and former NHLer Tom Rowe.

The KHL is in a more buoyant mood this year. There has been no disaster beyond the usual contract disputes with foreign players and the league is suddenly brimming with NHL talent, a few of whom just might stay in the motherland. The KHL is rebuilding organized hockey in Russia after two decades of shocking decay. Whether the mission will truly succeed is an open question.

There is no doubt that hockey is on the official agenda again, thanks to Russia's overwhelming desire to win gold in the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics, to avoid a repeat of the Cherepanov and Yaroslavl disasters and to Vladimir Putin's new-found interest the game. The Russian president, who is 60, took up hockey only recently. He once compared his skills to that of a "cow on ice" but is said to adore the game and has recruited ex-KHL players to coach him.

But some of Putin's own men admit that turning the KHL into a sustainable, fan-pleasing business will be arduous. Sergey Belyakov, deputy minister in the Russian ministry of economic development and an avid hockey player, thinks no one should expect miracles from the KHL in the near future. "The NHL has almost 100 years of history, the KHL five years," he says. "It is not a commercial business and we have no history of making money."

The KHL teams are controlled by an eclectic mob of state and private owners that make you wonder whether Russian pro hockey is business, charity or vanity project. Certainly, the ownership structure would be unimaginable in the NHL.

Take SKA Saint Petersburg. There is a direct line from Putin to the team. Putin is the head of government, which controls Gazprom, one of the world biggest energy companies and natural gas exporters, which in turn owns the Saint Petersburg team. If the same ownership thread were replicated in Canada with the Maple Leafs, the Leafs would in effect be a crown corporation. Dynamo Moscow is owned by the Russian ministry of internal affairs. Tretiak's old team, CSKA Moscow, is owned by Kremlin-controlled Rosneft, Russia's biggest oil company.

Various oligarchs, lesser tycoons, local governments and industrial corporations control or sponsor the other KHL teams, though the paucity of financial reporting makes it hard to tell who owns what exactly.

With the resurrection of Lokomotiv Yaroslavl this year, the KHL has 26 teams. Twenty are Russian. The other six are in Belarus, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Ukraine, Czech Republic and Slovakia. More foreign expansion teams are possible.

Moscow has four teams. The city's hockey glut, atrocious traffic and competition from other forms of entertainment, from soccer to wild nights at the Hungry Duck, the notorious bar and nightclub where anything goes, means that the Moscow arenas almost never sell out. The ones in the smaller cities tend to play to bigger houses because competing entertainment is scarce but also because local sponsorship gives those cities a sense of pride in their hockey teams. Rowe says the Yaroslavl arena, which is big and modern and feels like a proper NHL arena, always sells out.

Most of Russian teams play in terrible stadiums that they do not own, depriving them of crucial revenue streams. The stadiums are too often small, dark, dirty, lack concessions and corporate boxes and generally are not alluring to fans. Tickets that cost \$10 or less are too cheap to add to the bottom line. "In Chicago, it costs \$20 just to park," Tretiak says.

TV revenues are pathetic. The league runs KHLtv, a subscription channel. But it generates only about \$4-million (U.S.) a year. That's a bucket of popcorn compared to the NHL, which last year signed a 10-year, \$2-billion (U.S.) broadcast agreement with NBC. The deal averages out to \$200-million (U.S.) a year.

If there is one thing that unites the owners, it's their willingness to suffer losses for the greater cause. But what is that cause?

The answer, it appears, is a mix of corporate social responsibility and the deft kissing of Kremlin butt.

Again, take SKA Saint Petersburg. After the Soviet Union's collapse, Russia's second city suffered massive deindustrialization and soaring unemployment. The team and its arena rotted away for lack of money. Many of Gazprom's senior executives come from Saint Petersburg and launched a mercy mission. The company bought the team from a group of local businessmen in 2008, revived it and sexed up the off-ice entertainment. "They have dancing girls, cheerleaders, great game-show music, laser shows on the ice, everything," says Dementiev, the KHL agent in Moscow. "They sell out every game."

Kochevrin, the KHL commerce vice-president, explains that Gazprom's rescue of Saint Petersburg was an exercise in "marketing and corporate-social responsibility ... the company had to give something back." The implication is that Gazprom, which enjoys a gas-export monopoly and made a net profit of almost \$45-billion (U.S.) in 2012, can afford to air-drop a few rubles into the community. Call it guilt money.

Balyakov, the deputy minister, is somewhat less subtle in his analysis of the hockey owners' motivation. "They want to show the prime minister that they are doing something for Russian sport and culture," he says. "I cannot say it's a bad thing."

Pleasing Putin and his No.2, Dmitry Medvedev, has never been a bad strategy for Russia's money men. For his part, Tretiak approves the use of Russian hockey as a social tool. "Ice hockey is not just a sport, it is for the

health of the nation," he says. "It has a big social role so that kids do not just hang around in the streets."

Off to its best start

The KHL loves the NHL lockout. Tretiak is thrilled to see some of the Russian NHL players in action in their home country before the Olympic team is assembled for the Sochi 2014 Olympics. He predicts that the NHL will not stop them from breaking away to join Team Russia in the middle of the season. "Anything can happen, but most [of the NHL's Russian] players have said they will go," he says. "I don't think the NHL will spoil it."

The KHL is thrilled because the star presence of Malkin (who was the NHL MVP for the 2011-12 season), Ilya Kovalchuk, Pavel Datsyuk and Nail Yakupov is luring fans. Some KHL games are being carried on the ESPN3 network, boosting the Russians' exposure in North America.

The KHL would be even more thrilled if the NHL players and owners cannot break the stalemate, forcing the NHL to kill the entire season. If that were to happen, the NHLers would stay put on Russian ice. If the KHL is really lucky, a couple of the NHL players will break their contracts and come home for good, though that is unlikely given their lavish salaries (Ovechkin has threatened to quit the Capitals if any new collective bargaining agreement slashes his income; Malkin says he's going back to Pittsburgh when the lockout ends).

There is no doubt that the KHL is off to its best start since it commenced play in 2008. Even Yaroslavl, a team that was on hiatus last year, and which is devoid of superstars, has managed to put the plane crash tragedy behind it. Under coach Rowe, the team went on an early winning streak and was, in early November, ranked second in the KHL's 14-team Western Conference.

But no one – not Tretiak, not the KHL's commerce men, not Putin's hockey-savvy ministers – is under the impression that the KHL is about to displace the NHL as the most glamorous, watchable and financially sustainable league any time soon. It will be years, perhaps decades, before the clapped-out arenas are replaced, before the league generates decent revenues and before salaries rise to the point that every Russian hotshot's dream is to stay put instead of bolting to the NHL.

After the Dynamo-Sibir game in Moscow, Nikita Zaitsev, the lanky defenceman who scored Sibir's winning goal, was under no illusion that the KHL is the place to be. "All young Russian players want to play in the NHL," he says. "It's the best league in the world."

An agent later told me that Zaitsev was bound to get drafted by the NHL. Watching him play that evening, I agreed; he was dazzling. As soon as the NHL lockout ends, the talent flow will reverse itself and the KHL's biggest problem – how to keep first-rate players in a second-rate league – will return.

Toronto Globe And Mail LOADED: 11.10.2012

644011 NHL

Ugly mood descends on lockout talks but sides still talking

DAVID SHOALTS

Acrimony blew into the NHL labour talks on Friday as the main session between the full negotiating teams lasted less than three hours.

There were conflicting reports of just what the NHL owners offered in their latest "make-whole provision" to pay 100 per cent of existing players contracts and what the players are demanding for their share of revenue in the first year of a new collective agreement. The day ended with accusations on the ownership side, through the media, that NHL Players' Association executive director Donald Fehr did not fully explain the owners' latest proposal to the 725 members of the union.

How much revenue sharing should the NHL have?

This was flatly denied by Fehr, who held a press conference Friday night after the owners' accusations surfaced. He said he keeps the players informed and any proposal from the owners "is in front of players who are in the room."

Ron Hainsey of the Winnipeg Jets, a member of the NHLPA bargaining committee, flanked Fehr at the press conference and backed up his assertion. "Every player is welcome in every meeting," Hainsey said.

Another member of the bargaining committee, Pittsburgh Penguins forward Craig Adams also brushed aside the allegations. "If anybody is suggesting [Fehr] is holding information back, it's totally untrue," he told the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review.

Despite the ugly mood that descended on the talks Friday after cautious optimism earlier in the week, Fehr expected negotiations to resume tomorrow. He also said the owners and players are not as far apart on the key economic issues as the NHL is letting on, which surprised most observers.

Now that there is a broad agreement the owners and players will eventually share the NHL's hockey-related revenue 50-50, the sticking point is the players' demand to be paid in full for their existing contracts. According to several reports, the owners offered this week to pay the players in full if they went immediately to a 50-50 split.

The players would get paid 100 per cent of the value of their existing contracts over two years. In the first year, the owners offered to pay \$149-million (all currency U.S.) and an additional \$62-million in the second year. Both payments would be deferred for one year to allow the owners to absorb them easier.

The owners' offer assumes the make-whole provision will not be necessary in the third year for two reasons. One is that the majority of current player contracts will be up by then and the other is that continued revenue growth will cover the contracts.

Fehr said Friday night that offer still means "players won't be able to receive every dollar of their deal."

There was also controversy over what the players are said to be asking in the first year of a new agreement. The New York Post reported the union demanded the \$1.883-million in salaries the players received in the 2011-12 season when they received 57 per cent of HRR, plus five per cent more to account for revenue growth. There were reports this was demanded even if the league is unable to play a full 82-game schedule this season.

Fehr said the players are seeking \$1.883-billion but only an additional 1.75 per cent per year, which would be compounded over the length of the agreement. He said the union was not actually looking for this amount this season, it just wanted to establish it as part of a new economic system. Once that was done, the player salaries would be pro-rated for this season to account for any lost revenue because of a lockout-shortened schedule.

Significant differences also remain in the areas of free agency, salary arbitration and contract lengths.

Owners Ted Leonsis of the Washington Capitals, Jeremy Jacobs of the Boston Bruins and Craig Leipold of the Minnesota Wild, who have all been prominent in the negotiations, all left Friday's meeting with suitcases, indicating they will not be attending Saturday's talks.

But Bettman said he is prepared to continue negotiating as long as the union is also willing. "Whatever it takes," he said. The commissioner declined to discuss the specifics of Friday's session.

There were three meetings on Friday, which covered three separate topics. One was the NHL schedule and critical dates, the second was player pensions and the third was the core economic issues.

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644012 Ottawa Senators

Chabot forced to cancel charity game

By Allen Panzeri,

Unable to get enough players to participate, John Chabot had to cancel Monday's exhibition by locked-out NHL players at Fort William Gardens in Thunder Bay.

He said he'll try to re-schedule it at some point if the lockout drags on, but the odds are slim.

Chabot, who has been coaching a group of Ottawa Senators at their informal practice sessions during the lockout, said a lot of people from outside the Thunder Bay area were making plans to attend the game.

He had to guarantee the game on Friday and couldn't.

"We felt that we could not ice a roster that would be attractive and of full value to the hockey fans in Thunder Bay," he said.

"Our roster of skaters suffered a series of setbacks including injuries, family situations and locked-out players involved in current CBA negotiations."

The players played before a group of 4,800 fans in Cornwall last week.

They had 18 players for that game. Chabot wanted at least 20 for Thunder Bay.

"Cornwall was fantastic, but it was a situation where everyone was within a couple of hours' drive," he said.

"We can't fly up there and expect guys to be on the ice for an hour."

Senators defenceman Chris Phillips, who played in Cornwall and was also set to go to Thunder Bay, said it was OK having nine players a side in Cornwall but that "it was right on the edge."

At the moment, the group's longer trip to the Northwest Territories and Yukon, scheduled to begin on Nov. 18, is still on.

Whether that trip goes will depend on the success or failure of negotiations for a new collective bargaining agreement, and on whether Chabot can get a confirmed group of players.

The plan for the NWT trip would see the group play in Yellowknife on Nov. 18

They'd then have a day off on Nov. 19 to visit Deline, a community on the western shore of the Great Bear Lake, about 544 km northwest of Yellowknife.

They'd play in Inuvik the next day, stay overnight, and play in Whitehorse on Nov. 21. Then they'd fly to Vancouver and home.

## KEEPING FINGERS CROSSED

Ottawa Senators captain Daniel Alfredsson was happy to see the two sides talking in an effort to reach a new collective bargaining agreement.

But after reading the memo that NHLPA executive director Donald Fehr sent to the players on Thursday night, describing how far apart the sides remain, he wasn't optimistic there will be an early settlement. As scheduled, Alfredsson will be away on a family vacation next week.

"Until something substantial comes out that (says) we're working on the agreement and just have to finalize it, it's obviously good that they're talking, but I can't say I'm getting my hopes up until we get to that point," he said on Friday.

"We're all encouraged there are talks going on and that they're just not meeting for a coffee, but as far as getting optimistic or encouraged, until we get to the point when both sides say we're working toward an agreement, then I'll get encouraged."

With his new business, Big Rig Brewery, Senators defenceman Chris Phillips hears firsthand from disgruntled fans. And having hockey on the TVs in his bar might sell a few more pints.

So there's nothing he'd like to see more than a settlement.

"It's a game we've grown up with and loved, but at the end of the day it's a business," he said.

"It's unfortunate. It's not good for anyone when this happens.

"I think as a fan myself, it's frustrating. It's hard for everyone that hockey isn't on."

Ottawa Citizen LOADED: 11.10.2012

644013 Ottawa Senators

Ottawa Senators defenceman Chris Phillips not holding breath for new CBA

By Don Brennan

Included on Chris Phillips' agenda Friday — after the weakest turnout for a union brothers skate at Sensplex yet — was a haircut and a night at the Ottawa Wine and Food Festival.

Of course, he would have preferred to be sipping champagne in Times Square — and the less talk about cuts the better — but he knows that won't be coming any time soon.

Phillips, the Senators player rep, isn't even sure whether he'll have to make the trip to New York when and if the NHL and NHLPA finally settle their dispute. He just doesn't expect that any deal signing is imminent.

"They're moving in the right direction right now, but I don't think we all should get too excited about a press conference announcing a deal that's going to be done (Friday)," Phillips said shortly before noon. "There's a lot of work to be done. Even behind closed doors, once they shake hands, I would assume there's a lot of work to be done before we get started."

Before hands shake, more compromises almost certainly have to be made. All the way around.

"We're definitely willing to move, but it depends on what you're talking about," said Phillips, who was aware the 'make whole' proposal and "a host of other issues" were to be discussed Friday. "Both sides probably feel the same way. (They probabably feel) that they have things in the offers or proposals that they can possibly bend more on, in order to get other things, issues they feel are more important.

"It's really difficult if both sides feel the same way about the same issues. It's going to be a lot harder to get that deal done."

Meanwhile, more and more of the general public is tuning out.

"As a fan myself, what's frustrating is I guess (the) hype of everytime they get together," said Phillips. "I guess that's a big reason of why they've tried to do it quietly. It's a big long agreement and it takes a lot of work to sort through everything, to come to an agreement. It's not going to happen overnight. And we keep getting built up that they're talking, so there's going to be a deal tomorrow, and that's just not the case.

"It's hard for everybody that there's not hockey right now."

Ottawa Sun LOADED: 11.10.2012

644014 Ottawa Senators

Local organizers cancel charity hockey game in Thunder Bay

Staff

A local group has cancelled a charity hockey game that was scheduled for Monday in Thunder Bay.

John Chabot, who has been on the ice with Senators and other locked-out NHLers at the Sensplex since the middle of September, made the decision to cancel the game Friday because of low roster numbers.

A capacity crowd watched a charity game Monday night in Cornwall.

"We are very disappointed to announce that the game in Thunder Bay had to be cancelled," Chabot said in a statement. "We felt that we could not ice a roster that would be attractive and of full value to the hockey fans in Thunder Bay. Our roster of skaters suffered a series of setbacks, including injuries, family situations and locked-out players involved in current CBA negotiations."

There was no word on whether the group still will attempt to go to the Northwest Territories for a series of games later this month.

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644015 Ottawa Senators

Ottawa Senators prospect and 67's graduate Shane Prince playing close to home in Binghamton

By Aedan Helmer

Shane Prince is loving life back in his home state.

Born and raised in Spencerport, N.Y., a suburb of Rochester, Prince found his path to the pros in the OHL. He was drafted by the Kitchener Rangers and traded to Ottawa in the midst of his sophomore season, turning into a key cog in the 67's offensive machine with back-to-back 88- and 90-point seasons

Nearly every weekend, his family, with dad Dan and younger sister Olivia, would make the five-hour trek across western New York to the Canadian capital to follow Prince through a junior career with more highs than lows.

That trek is a little easier now, as the Binghamton Senators forward prepares to make his home debut Saturday with a full cheering section at the Broome County Veterans Memorial Arena.

"It's only about two hours from Rochester to Binghamton, so (Dan) will definitely be here and I have a ton of family and friends coming to the game as well. It's definitely convenient to be that close to home, and to be that close to family and friends. Not a lot of people get that opportunity," said Prince, who celebrated his 20th birthday early (he turns 20 next Friday) by making his pro debut in Norfolk last Friday. He registered his first point, an assist, the following night.

Prince was hurt on the opening day of scrimmages in the B-Sens training camp on an "awkward collision" with a teammate, but since returning he's made an immediate impact on the team's top line with Mika Zibanejad and Andre Petersson, a line that was first formed in the Senators' summer rookie camp in Ottawa.

"My role is to help out offensively, and obviously you have to play a defensive game as well, but it was good to get on the board. I'm trying to play more gritty, the AHL is a different league and you have to play harder and get in the corners ... That's my role with those two guys, who are more skill guys," said Prince, who was never known for his toughness with only 43 PIMs in 142 career OHL games, but has started to mix it up early in his AHL career.

"I'm not afraid to play that (gritty) game at all, and sometimes it's going to be your turn to answer the bell and get in there to stick up for your teammates. It's important to have a team that's not going to get pushed around, and when you come into other teams' rinks they know it's going to be a tough game."

If he needs to pick up any pointers along the way, former 67's teammate and current Binghamton housemate Corey Cowick could certainly help.

Known as a finesse player and a premier power forward in his junior days, Cowick was forced to adapt his game when he turned pro, splitting time between the AHL and ECHL, where he posted 76 PIMs and a handful of fights in 31 games for the Elmira Jackals in his rookie year.

"It's been great living with Cowick," said Prince. "I love the house. It's an old house right in Binghamton and we have a nice setup, with me upstairs and Cowick downstairs. We get along really well."

## ICE CHIPS

B-Sens coach Luke Richardson's line juggling saw Prince make his debut at left wing on the top line, with RW Petersson and Mika Zibanejad shifted from the wing to his natural centre position. RW Jakob Silfverberg was moved to the fourth line with LW Cowick and C Pat Cannone ... Prince and D Chris Wideman made their professional debuts in last Friday's 4-3 win at Norfolk that snapped the Calder Cup champion Admirals' 19-game home win streak, dating back to last season. The B-Sens face their division rivals for the third time in seven days Saturday in Binghamton ... The Senators continue to be cautious with a mysterious muscle pull that has sidelined D Jared Cowen for the last seven games. "We want to be cautious so it doesn't lead to anything else," said Richardson, who didn't elaborate on the nature of the injury ... RW Mark Stone is expected to return to the lineup after missing six games with an upper body injury... Having their ECHL affiliate Elmira an hour down I-86 is proving fruitful for the injury-riddled B-Sens. Rookie LW Darren Kramer was sent down to the Atlantic Divisionleading Jackals on Wednesday and scored his first pro goal in the first period the same night in a 6-3 loss to the Florida Everblades ... Kitchener Rangers LW Matt Puempel will suit up for Game 4 of the Subway Super Series in Sarnia on Monday after playing Game 3 in Guelph on a line with Philadelphia Flyers' first-rounder Scott Laughton and Zack Mitchell of the hometown Storm. D Cody Ceci was paired with Storm captain and Toronto

Maple Leafs prospect Matt Finn in a 2-1 loss to Team Russia that snapped an 18-0 streak for Team OHL at the series... C Robbie Baillargeon and his Team USA mates are off to the final at the World Jr. 'A' Challenge in Yarmouth, N.S., for the fourth time in the past five years.

THREE STARS

Stefan Noesen, RW, Plymouth (OHL)

Three goals and an assist in three games vs. division rivals help the red-hot Whalers take over top spot in West division.

Chris Driedger, G, Calgary (WHL)

Three straight wins with a sparkling 1.30 GAA and .955 SV% so far in November for Eastern Conference-leading Hitmen.

Robin Lehner, G, Binghamton (AHL)

A shutout turns into a 1-0 shootout loss as B-Sens starter makes 34 saves against W-B/Scranton.

Ottawa Sun LOADED: 11.10.2012

644016 Philadelphia Flyers

NHL talks continue amid mixed signals from Donald Fehr

Staff

Donald Fehr, executive director of the NHL Players' Association, gave two different spins on the labor war with the league.

In a letter he sent to players before Friday's meeting with the NHL in New York, Fehr said there was a "significant gap" between both sides.

After the meeting, however, he changed his tune, saying the NHLPA does not feel it is as far apart on core economic issues as the NHL says.

In any event, the league and the union seem no closer to an agreement than they did in the summer.

Friday marked the fourth straight day the sides had met, with hockeyrelated revenue, revenue sharing, and pensions among the chief issues. The league and the players' union may meet Saturday.

"Whatever it takes," said Gary Bettman, the NHL commissioner, when asked about the weekend plans.

In his letter to the players, which was released by TSN and NBC Sports, Fehr said the owners want "an immediate reset" to a 50/50 split in hockey-related revenue, and he noted that it would "significantly reduce the salary cap."

The players earned 57 percent of the revenue in the last collective bargaining agreement.

Earlier in the week, the players' union said it did not want a 50/50 split until the third year of the CBA.

The league has been under the impression that most players are ready to consummate an agreement if revenues are split 50/50 and all contracts are honored in full. That's exactly what the owners have offered the players, a source told the Minneapolis Star Tribune. The source added that Fehr did not include that information in his memo to the players.

Latest Flyers Videos

Late Friday night, Fehr said he did not hide any information from the players, hinting that some communication was made in a conference call.

In the letter, Fehr voiced his displeasure with several of the owners' proposals, including salary arbitration rights, extending unrestricted free agency to eight years, and limiting contracts to a maximum of five years.

"Individually, each is bad for players; taken together they would significantly reduce a player's bargaining power and give the owners more leverage over a player for most if not all of his career," Fehr wrote.

NHL players averaged about \$2.5 million in salary last season.

On Twitter, a fan had this message to the NHL and the NHLPA: "Please, both sides, just go away. We don't care anymore."

The lockout reached its 55th day on Friday.

Philadelphia Inquirer / Daily News LOADED: 11.10.2012

644017 Philadelphia Flyers

Fehr memo spreads more gloom

Sam Carchidi

The NHL labor war is no closer to an end.

In fact, in a memo Don Fehr, executive director of the NHLPA, sent to the players on Thursday, the gap between both sides seems just as lengthy as it was before this week's lengthy round of negotiations.

Here, in part, is Fehr's letter, which was obtained by TSN in Canada:

No new proposals were exchanged on pension issues, but we will discuss this issue again tomorrow (Friday). We did receive a proposal on revenue sharing in response to the proposal we made this week, but this subject still needs considerable work.

In addition, we received a revamped proposal covering players' share and cap issues, their so-called "make whole", and player contracting issues. The owners finally did formally give us their "make whole" idea, which in dollar terms is similar to the discussions Bill Daly had with Steve Fehr a few days ago. While a step forward, a significant gap remains. Moreover, at the same time we were told that the owners want an "immediate reset" to 50/50 (which would significantly reduce the salary cap) and that their proposals to restrict crucial individual contracting rights must be agreed to. As you know, these include - among other things - losing a year of salary arbitration eligibility, allowing the team to file for salary arbitration in any year that the player can file, extending UFA eligibility to age 28 or 8 seasons, limiting contracts to 5 years, and permitting only 5% year to year variability in player contracts. Individually each is bad for players; taken together they would significantly reduce a player's bargaining power and give the owner much more leverage over a player for most if not all of his career.

In short, the concessions on future salary we have offered (at least \$948 Million to \$1.25 Billion over five years, depending on HRR growth) are not enough. We are still being told that more salaries must be conceded, and that very valuable player contracting rights must be surrendered. So, while we are meeting again, and while some steps are being taken, there is still a lot of work to be done and bridges to be crossed before an agreement can be made.

We will review today's discussions over night and tomorrow morning before meeting again with the owners. Following our meeting tomorrow with the league, we will be able to provide a broader update.

As always, please contact us if you have any questions or comments.

Best regards.

Don

Philadelphia Inquirer / Daily News LOADED: 11.10.2012

644018 Philadelphia Flyers

Labor talks break down over 'make whole' issue

Tim Panaccio

Don Fehr's memo to players

Pro Hockey Talk received a copy of NHLPA director Don Fehr's post-meeting letter to players from Nov. 8:

Today, we met with the NHL off and on over several hours. A number of matters were discussed, including our proposal for a new pension plan, revenue sharing, the players' share and salary cap issues, and the owners' "make whole" concept. Present today were Chris Campoli, Mathieu Darche, Ron Hainsey, Johan Hedberg, Manny Malhotra, and Kevin Westgarth (David Backes was present for part of the day), as well as Mathieu Schneider, Joe Reekie, Steve Webb and Rob Zamuner.

No new proposals were exchanged on pension issues, but we will discuss this issue again tomorrow (Friday). We did receive a proposal on revenue sharing in response to the proposal we made this week, but this subject still needs considerable work.

Talks between the NHL and the NHLPA nosedived Friday over the union's major issue of how to "make whole" existing contracts.

CSNPhilly.com reported on Thursday that the mood in the discussions had turned negative and that both sides were trying to prevent a breakdown in the 55-day lockout.

League representatives left their building in midtown Manhattan Friday, obviously not in good spirits after a long day in which the majority of the talks involved a smaller group working on the pension fund.

When it came to the real issues -- "make whole" -- talks lasted two hours and things didn't go well -- again -- much like Thursday.

One participant, who has been involved in every CBA meeting, was asked where things stood after Friday.

"I don't really know," he replied.

Union executive director Donald Fehr said the players "have things to consider," but would not commit as to when the two sides might meet again.

At this point, it appears it is up to the union to initiate the next meeting.

"We'll meet tomorrow morning internally," Fehr said. "I don't know what the next step is."

Fehr also said he doesn't feel both sides are as far apart on core economic issues as the NHL thinks.

Another source said that Boston Bruins hardline owner Jeremy Jacobs, who had missed the previous two meetings, returned on Friday and the tone of the discussions changed instantly.

Coincidence? Probably not.

All the optimism that accompanied these talks when the week began has faded. In fact, NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman now plans to fly to Toronto for the Hockey Hall of Fame ceremonies on Monday.

For the first time this week, Bettman spoke after the meetings.

"I don't want to raise or lower expectations," Bettman told reporters. "I won't be happy until we get to the end result and that means we are playing again."

He also told reporters he wasn't sure there was any point to staying behind to meet and wasn't sure when the union next wanted to talk either.

Bettman added he would do "whatever it takes" to meet with the union this weekend.

So, there's no guarantee there will be any discussions this weekend.

Friday marked the fourth consecutive day of genuine collective bargaining between the two sides.

The union wants all contracts guaranteed at full value.

The Minneapolis Star Tribune reported that the league would guarantee existing contracts at \$1.883 billion or their 57 percent revenue share from last season.

To do that, the players agree to an immediate 50-50 split, but the reduced portion of their salaries (12.3 percent) would be deferred at least one year and perhaps two. It would be repaid with interest from one year to the next and that by Year 3, every contract would be made whole.

The paper said the NHL was "perplexed" why Fehr had not communicated that to the players in his memo he sent out Thursday night (see sidebar box).

"With their make-whole proposal, players won't be able to receive every dollar of their deal." Fehr said.

Fehr denied that later. Ron Hainsey, who has been a regular on the negotiating committee, backed Fehr's integrity and added every player is welcomed to attend any meetings to see for themselves.

"It's clearly a tactic to drive a wedge between Don and the players," Chicago Blackhawk Steve Montador said. "It's nothing but a reiteration of how strong we are. It's laughable really, that the league would resort to tactics like this. They locked us out when they didn't have to, and we didn't want it, we've conceded massive amounts of dollars in their favor (this time and 7 years ago) and we say enough is enough, and now this. They're trying anything now."

Friday's talks began around 10 a.m. on Friday and were divided into morning and afternoon sessions, with the morning session about pension funds.

The first session ended shortly before 1 p.m. with an hour's break.

Donald Fehr, and brother Steve, who is special counsel, did not participate in the talks until the afternoon session.

During the morning session, an internal memo sent to players from Donald Fehr was published by NBC Sports in which Fehr explained just how far apart the two sides were, and how many concessions in millions the owners still want from the players.

From Fehr: "In short, the concessions on future salary we have offered (at least \$948 Million to \$1.25 Billion over five years, depending on HRR growth) are not enough. We are still being told that more salaries must be conceded, and that very valuable player contracting rights must be surrendered. So, while we are meeting again, and while some steps are being taken, there is still a lot of work to be done and bridges to be crossed before an agreement can be made."

Late Wednesday, Bettman sent his Board of Governors a memo indicating a breakdown in the talks seemed imminent because of the disagreement on "make whole."

All throughout Thursday, that's what people expected, but the two sides bargained and agreed to talk on Friday when things went awry.

"We're trying and we've tried everything," said one person, representing the league.

Comcast SportsNet.com LOADED: 11.10.2012

644019 Pittsburgh Penguins

Fehr memo says 'a lot of work' yet for union, NHL

By Rob Rossi

After four days of negotiations in the Big Apple, neither the NHL nor its Players' Association have bit on resolving a labor dispute.

Morning and afternoon sessions wrapped Friday with little progress made on big issues dividing the sides.

There is no new labor agreement, and a lockout will hit Day 56 on Saturday, because there exists no common ground on when to begin a 50/50 split of revenue, how to honor current players' deals, contractual issues such as free agency, and alterations to an owners' revenue-sharing system.

"We're still not to the point where either side really likes the other's ideas," Penguins union rep Craig Adams said.

NHL commissioner Gary Bettman said he would do "whatever it takes" to meet again with the NHLPA, including skipping Hockey Hall of Fame festivities in Toronto on Monday. However, neither said there are plans to continue negotiations into the weekend — though Saturday has not been ruled out.

The NHLPA's negotiating and executive committees were to conduct a conference call Friday night. Several Penguins players said their understanding of where labor negotiations stand is that the NHL has only made concessions from its opening bargaining offer from July. Players have maintained that stance for months.

The NHL reported a record \$3.3 billion in revenue last season, but Forbes Magazine reported that 18 clubs lost money, including the Penguins at about \$250,000.

Though offers were made at the meetings this week in New York, which occurred daily from Tuesday through Friday, the sides have publicly stated they are far apart.

This was the longest stretch of consecutive negotiations since owners enacted a lockout of players when the last labor deal expired Sept. 15. Games through November and the New Year's Day Winter Classic outdoor game, and all surrounding events, have been canceled.

The league has not canceled the All-Star Game because there is hope at least 60 games could be played if the season begins during the first week of December.

Union executive director Donald Fehr did not express optimism in a memo sent to players Thursday night.

"While we are meeting again, and while some steps are being taken, there is still a lot of work to be done and bridges to be crossed before an agreement can be made," Fehr wrote.

Adams said Friday he felt comfortable describing sessions this week as "actual negotiations." Any break in negotiations now was unlikely to signal this lockout would end like the last one, which forced the cancelation of the 2004-05 season, Adams said.

Rob Rossi is a staff writer for Trib Total Media. He can be reached at rrossi@tribweb.com or 412-380-5635.

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644020 Pittsburgh Penguins

NHL lockout: Talks go on hold; key issues linger

By Shelly Anderson

If nothing else, the NHL made one concession Friday.

Commissioner Gary Bettman said he would remain available all weekend and beyond to resume talks with the NHL Players' Association, even if it means staying in New York and skipping the annual Hall of Fame festivities Monday.

"Whatever it takes," Bettman said.

Beyond that, it's difficult to discern much meaningful progress after four days in a row of hours-long meetings between the league and the union. Ideas and offers have been exchanged, but it does not appear an agreement on a new collective bargaining agreement and an end to the lockout are close.

The key issues remain revenue sharing and a way for players' contracts to be honored in full despite their share of revenues dropping from 57 percent under the expired CBA to a 50-50 split with the owners.

NHLPA executive director Donald Fehr said he didn't believe the sides are as far apart as the league believes on the latter issue, referred to as the "make whole" concept.

Bettman said the NHL is awaiting word from the NHLPA on a resumption of talks. The union has "some things to consider," said Fehr, adding that it will hold internal meetings this morning.

For some, the one bright note is that the sides are meeting.

"We don't agree on everything, but it feels like we're making progress," Penguins forward and NHLPA representative Craig Adams said after skating with nine teammates at Southpointe.

Adams has consistently characterized himself as an optimist, and he remains convinced that an agreement to end the lockout can be reached.

"We haven't gotten a deal done yet, so I don't want to promise anything," said Adams, who attended the Tuesday meetings. "I feel progress is being made. The discussions that I have been at or heard about have been good. The tone is good."

Adams went through a lockout that wiped out the 2004-05 season. Players with a lot less experience are watching, waiting and willing to learn as they go.

Penguins center Joe Vitale, who has just one full NHL season on his resume, is among the latter group.

"It's not something where I'm timid," Vitale said. "I think it's more that I'm not as educated about it as these guys are. I'm still learning what's going on. You put the trust in the older guys, the guys who have been around for a while."

Vitale has wavered between optimism and pessimism. After very little face-to-face contact between the league and players over the first seven weeks of the lockout, talks have dominated the past week -- but haven't produced huge gains.

"At first, I was optimistic," Vitale said. "But, then you see the facts and the numbers crunched and see that we are kind of far apart. Then you get a little down. But the fact that there's dialogue still there is good."

According to a memo players received Thursday night from Fehr, the players this week have made proposals for "a new pension plan, revenue sharing, the players' share and salary cap issues, and the owners' 'make whole' concept."

The NHL previously wanted players to be paid back in deferred salary under its "make whole" proposal. At one point this week, the union offered to keep contracts intact and use a phase-in to get them down to around 50 percent by the third year of a new CBA.

Fehr wrote that union members "were told that the owners want an 'immediate reset' to 50/50 [which would significantly reduce the salary cap], and that their proposals to restrict crucial individual contracting rights must be agreed to. As you know, these include -- among other things --losing a year of salary arbitration eligibility, allowing the team to file for salary arbitration in any year that the player can file, extending [unrestricted free-agency] eligibility to age 28 or eight seasons, limiting contracts to five years, and permitting only 5 percent year-to-year variability in player contracts. Individually each is bad for players; taken together they would significantly reduce a player's bargaining power and give the owner much more leverage over a player for most if not all of his career."

The memo did not include information about a reported counter-offer from the NHL, which led to reports that the league is upset with Fehr for perhaps withholding information from the players he represents. Players, though, have consistently praised Fehr for keeping them up to date.

NOTES -- The Penguins at Southpointe had a large enough group -- nine skaters plus a ringer -- to have a five-on-five scrimmage for the first time in weeks. Besides Adams and Vitale, the participants from the club were defenseman Matt Niskanen and Ben Lovejoy; forwards Pascal Dupuis, Chris Kunitz, Matt Cooke, Tyler Kennedy and Sidney Crosby; and goaltender Marc-Andre Fleury. Crosby centered a line with Kunitz and Dupuis.

Tribune Review LOADED: 11.10.2012

644021 San Jose Sharks

Setoguchi returning to Bay Area

Kevin Kurz

Although it appears Ryane Clowe won't be playing for the San Francisco Bulls any time soon, there will still be a couple of NHL'ers skating this weekend at the Cow Palace, including one who is very familiar to the Bay Area.

Devin Setoguchi made his debut with the ECHL's Ontario Reign on Wednesday at home against San Francisco, recording a pair of assists in a 3-1 win. The teams meet again on Saturday.

The former Sharks forward's debut was delayed a bit as he had to clear up some issues with his work visa, but he's now a full-time member of the Reign. He spoke with the San Bernardino Sun earlier this week about his decision, and his reasons for playing essentially mirror what Clowe told CSNCalifornia.com on Thursday.

"It's nice to get in here and get in full practices, get the good sweat on, a good workout, get back to being involved in certain situations that you wouldn't be in your normal day skates," Setoguchi said.

Like Clowe, Setoguchi was hoping that the NHL season would have started by now.

"I didn't want to have to come here. Don't take that the wrong way, but I never wanted to have to do that. We (the NHL Players' Association) wanted to stick together and hopefully have it resolved sooner rather than later. Right now it's later rather than sooner."

The NHL and NHLPA were meeting for the fourth consecutive day on Friday, although reports suggest there hasn't been a whole lot of progress.

Besides Clowe, the Bulls have signed Edmonton Oilers defenseman Theo Peckham, who has 154 games of NHL experience. The 6-foot-2, 235-pounder has four goals and 13 assists for 17 points in his pro career, along with a whopping 382 penalty minutes. He made his Bulls debut on Wednesday in Ontario.

The 24-year-old Peckham and Clowe have a bit of a history, having dropped the gloves during a game on Jan. 13, 2011, according to hockeyfights.com (Clowe was adjudged the winner of the fight by 85 percent of that site's users, although play-by-play man Randy Hahn referred to it as more of a wrestling match).

The Bulls host the Stockton Thunder on Friday before Ontario visits on Saturday. Both games begin at 7:15 p.m. Giants playoff hero Sergio Romo will drop the ceremonial first puck on Friday.

Winchester finds a home

Brad Winchester, who almost certainly won't be back with the Sharks next season, has found a home for the lockout (and perhaps beyond).

According to a report, Winchester will join the Finnish team TuTo in the second tier Mestis league. That's the same league where forward Tommy Wingels is currently plying his trade for KooKoo.

The pair could get a chance to catch up when TuTo and KooKoo meet on Dec. 12 (say that three times fast).

Winchester, 31, signed a one-year deal with the Sharks just prior to last season after a preseason tryout. He's an unrestricted free agent after putting up 10 points (6g, 4a) in 67 games with San Jose in 2011-12.

Comcast SportsNet.com LOADED: 11.10.2012

644022 Tampa Bay Lightning

Lots of talking, little progress in NHL standoff

By ERIK ERLENDSSON

Despite several marathon negotiating sessions, little traction was made in talks to settle the nearly two-month-old NHL lockout.

The discussions have been described by some as "spinning the wheels."

"Yeah I think it's fair," said Lightning forward B.J. Crombeen, who is the acting team player representative and a member of the NHL Players' Association negotiating committee.

"We were all hopeful again making moves in their direction that we would get some movement in ours, but that really hasn't been the case. I guess all you can really do is try and stay positive and hope that talks will lead to something and that they actually make a significant move because there are a lot of gaps to fill."

In a memo circulated to the players Thursday night by NHLPA executive director Donald Fehr, the message was clear that little, if any, progress has been made despite meeting for four consecutive days in New York.

"A significant gap remains," Fehr said in the statement. "While we are meeting again, and while some steps are being taken, there is still a lot of work to be done and bridges to be crossed before an agreement can be made."

The Players' Association had internal discussions and a conference call with the union's executive board and negotiating committee Friday night to determine what step to take next.

"We all feel that there is a deal there to be had and it is just a matter of them realizing it and make a move in our direction," Crombeen said. "I think that everyone in the world knows that negotiations are give-and-take and you can't just take everything.

"I think everyone is hopeful that it leads to something. I think everyone can see from everything that's been made public how much we have given up and how little we've gotten. It's hopeful that they realize that and they realize that there is a deal there to be made."

Tampa Tribune LOADED: 11.10.2012

644023 Tampa Bay Lightning

Lightning to host Battle of Badges charity game between Tampa Bay-area police and firefighters

Posted by Damian Cristodero

The Tampa Bay Lightning on Nov. 17 at the Tampa Bay Times Forum will host a charity hockey game called Battle of the Badges. Tampa Bay area police and firefighters will face off along with Lightning alumni, including former captain Dave Andreychuk and team founder Phil Esposito. Proceeds benefit the Gold Shield Foundation.

Here is the announcement from the team:

The Tampa Bay Lightning will host the Battle of the Badges, presented by Bright House Networks, a charity hockey game, on Saturday, November 17 at the Tampa Bay Times Forum with festivities beginning at 3 p.m. The game pits Tampa Bay-area police and fire departments against each other on the ice at the Times Forum along with Lightning alumni and personalities to benefit the Gold Shield Foundation.

The event will get started at 3 p.m. with a used equipment sale, where fans and hockey players alike can find game-used items at a discounted price, on the promenade patio outside Gate A. Beginning at 3:30 p.m., Lightning alumni and personalities will sign autographs for all those in attendance on the promenade patio outside Gate B. The doors to the Tampa Bay Times Forum will open for the Battle of the Badges at 4 p.m. for a youth hockey game between two local teams, the Police Athletic League and the Scorpions, with the puck for the Battle of the Badges dropping at 5 p.m.

"It is an unbelievable honor to share the ice again with these heroes from our local police and fire departments," vice president of fans and business development Dave Andreychuk said. "We have done a number of charity games with them in the past and I can speak for myself, as well as the rest of the alumni, when I say we're all looking forward to doing it again for another great cause."

"Bright House Networks is proud to support the Tampa area's Finest and Bravest in their mission to keep our communities safe," said Joe Durkin, senior director of corporate communications for Bright House Networks. "We are honored to partner with the Lightning and the Tampa Bay Times Forum to bring this exciting match up to the ice to benefit the departments' charities."

Lightning personalities playing for Team Police include Tampa Bay Founder and Hockey Hall-of-Famer Phil Esposito, Stanley Cup captain Dave Andreychuk, alumni Chris Dingman, assistant coach Martin Raymond, video coach Nigel Kirwan and assistant equipment manager Clay Roffer. Lacing up the skates for Team Fire will be alumni Jassen Cullimore and Stan Neckar, assistant coach Dan Lacroix, head athletic trainer Tom Mulligan and assistant equipment manager Rob Kennedy.

The event will be hosted by Lightning television play-by-play announcer Rick Peckham and will feature enter to win contests, appearances by ThunderBug and the Lightning Girls, live in-game interviews with players, police and fire vehicles on the West Plaza, celebrity coaches and more. There will be a 50/50 raffle as well as donation boxes located throughout the arena with all proceeds going to the Gold Shield Foundation.

Tampa Bay Times LOADED: 11.10.2012

644024 Tampa Bay Lightning

Lightning's B.J. Crombeen agrees sides have been spinning their wheels in latest CBA talks

Posted by Damian Cristodero

There was much optimism surrounding what has become extended negotiations between the NHL and its locked-out players, but bad vibes have quickly overwhelmed the good feelings. Those became even more acute after Players' Association executive director Don Fehr's memo to players that characterized significant gaps between the sides and "a lot of work to be done" to get to a new collective bargaining agreement.

That is not good news for those who believe the league wants a shortened season (perhaps 74 games) going by Thanksgiving or the beginning of December. Some even characterized the 18 hours of negotiations over three days (Friday was the fourth day) as a spinning of wheels, something Lightning right wing B.J. Crombeen said is a "fair" assessment.

"It's obviously frustrating," Crombeen, a member of the union's negotiating committee, said Friday after a skate with teammates at the Ice Sports Forum in Brandon. "We all feel there's a deal there to be had. It's just a matter of them (the owners) realizing it and making a move. I think everyone in the world knows negotiations are give and take. You can't just take everything."

The basic stumbling blocks that have caused games through Nov. 30 and the Jan. 1 Winter Classic to be canceled still seems to be there.

The league wants a 50-50 revenue split with the players. The players, who last season received 57 percent of revenues, accepted a 50-50 split but want it phased in gradually. The players also want existing contracts honored. The league has proposed a "make whole" provision that would reimburse players for any immediate loss of income -- reports say players salaries could go down 12 percent with an immediate 50-50 split -- but the details are unclear.

There are many other issues as you can read in Fehr's memo http://www.tsn.ca/nhl/story/?id=409136

But players, who took a 24 percent pay cut after the 2004-05 lockout, believe they already have given up enough. Fehr's memo states the players' proposal returns \$948 million to \$1.25 billion in revenues over the life of a five-year collective bargaining agreement.

"Everyone can see from everything that has been made public how much we've given up and how little we've gotten," Crombeen said. "It's hopeful they realize that and realize there's a deal there to be had. It's just a matter of them giving some things."

"It kind of seems like they're waiting around, waiting for something to happen rather than make it happen, and we feel like we're trying to make it happen, so hopefully it leads to something," Crombeen added. "They're talking. Whether it's spinning their wheels or not, they're talking, and maybe something will pop into their minds or something will get done. All you can do is try to stay positive."

Tampa Bay Times LOADED: 11.10.2012

644025 Toronto Maple Leafs

Sundin put team above everything else

DAVID SHOALTS

HALL OF FAME CLASS OF 2012 Spotlight shines on the set-up man as Oates receives his call to the Hall

Hall of Fame Roy MacGregor: The Wayne Gretzky of hockey writing

But his former teammates, friends and coaches remember him most fondly as a person.

"He was a great guy," said Pat Quinn, co-chairman of the Hall of Fame's selection committee and Sundin's coach with the Maple Leafs from 1998 to

2006. "He never considered himself more important than the group. I've been around star players who were that way, but not him.

"He wanted everybody to succeed and was happy when they did."

A lingering memory of Sundin is his high-definition smile, which would light up the scoreboard video screen whenever the Leafs scored and he was on the ice. It did not matter if it was his goal or someone else's, Sundin's joy was evident.

"It was that leadership ability he had where it was always inclusive where everybody was together," said CBC broadcaster Glenn Healy, a former teammate of Sundin's with the Maple Leafs. "There was nobody higher than anyone else. If we won, he was the first guy to hug the trainer. That's totally the way he was in every respect."

Healy and Quinn, who didn't agree on much when they were with the Leafs, both say Sundin was one of the greatest captains in Leaf history. Both of them say it was evident that Sundin's parents, Tommy and Gunilla, did an excellent job raising him in Bromma, a suburb of Stockholm. But, Healy added, Sundin "didn't have to be taught to be genuine, he just was."

Sundin honestly took more joy in the success of his teammates and the team than he did in his own accomplishments. It was all part of his belief in the team above all. Unfortunately, those Leaf teams always fell short of lasting success, but Sundin does have that Olympic gold medal, and Sweden also won three world championships with Sundin on the team.

"There's all these great statisticians who want players to play by the minute," Quinn said. "If someone doesn't get 22 minutes [of ice time per game], it's terrible. But Mats didn't care about that. If the team was doing well, he was happy with whatever minutes he had. It was his concept of a team, to get everybody involved."

As captain of the Maple Leafs from 1997 through 2008, Sundin had the highest-profile job in Toronto, but no Leaf captain before or since kept a lower profile. He guarded his private life from the media that circled him constantly. This, too, was part of his unassuming nature, one that always made him quickly answer "an electrician" when he was asked what occupation he would have taken up if he could not have been a hockey player.

"For years, he lived in an apartment on Bay Street that was less than a thousand bucks a month," Healy said. "You'd look at the furniture inside and swear someone handed it down to him. There were pieces of art on the wall and even Van Gogh couldn't tell you what they were. They were hideous. But it didn't matter to him."

It also didn't matter (at least, he never uttered a word of complaint to anyone) whom he played with, a constant source of angst for the fans and media. From the time Sundin arrived in the blockbuster trade in which beloved icon Wendel Clark went to the Quebec Nordiques in 1994 right through his messy departure in 2008, the Leafs were never able to find a star winger to play beside the big centre.

Sundin ran up all those points and goals despite playing with a series of journeymen. That, too, is a testament to his greatness as a player. Some superstars would have complained to management about playing with lesser players, but not Sundin.

He summed up his philosophy of the team above all several months ago when his selection for the Hall of Fame was announced and he looked back on the most painful period of his career. The fans and much of the media wanted Sundin to waive his no-trade clause in 2007-08 so the rebuilding Leafs could trade him for prospects and draft picks. Sundin refused and endured much criticism until he left as a free agent, putting in a final 41 games with the Vancouver Canucks before retiring in 2009.

"When you're 22 or 23, it's kind of just about winning the championship," Sundin said. "And as you grow older, it's a cliché, but you're enjoying the journey, the travel and the grind of getting together as a group in the fall and just build up for a goal in the spring. It was kind of the thing that was great, the long-term commitment."

Toronto Globe And Mail LOADED: 11.10.2012

644026 Toronto Maple Leafs

NHL lockout talks: Don't buy the drama, Cox argues

By Damien Cox

Two things seem abundantly clear.

As much as people want the NHL and NHLPA to be close to a deal on a new collective bargaining agreement, they're not. At least, there's no real information or evidence that should lead you to believe that an agreement is at hand. There's lots of guessing and media speculation, but little real information.

What about the fact they're still meeting in New York? Sure, that's good. But it doesn't mean they're agreeing on anything at all.

The second thing you have to avoid is believing that we are at a critical stage, or at the brink, or that D-Day is upon us, or any of the terms bandied about to suggest the talks are at a pivotal moment.

They're not.

The 1994-95 lockout was ended on Jan. 11. The 2004-05 season was cancelled (finally) on Feb. 16, and there were even talks after that.

We're not even in mid-November yet. Given history, how can anyone possibly say we're at a make-or-break point? That's just phony drama, mostly generated by the media, with little basis in fact.

Right now, both sides are bleeding, and both are assessing on a day-to-day basis how much more they want to bleed, and measuring their losses against the possible gains, and calculating how far they can push the other side for maximum advantage.

That's all this really is at this point. Math, with some poker thrown in. Some want to, as is always the case, turn this into a morality play, something about honour or hypocrisy or doing the right thing.

It's about math. How much has been lost compared to how much can be gained.

In practical terms, of course, the talks that have been going on this week should have been taking place in August, but for a variety of reasons have mostly to do with perceived bargaining strengths and weaknesses on both sides, they didn't.

All that can really be hoped for at this point is that the talks in recent days have clarified positions and started to sketch the outlines of a possible deal. This is complicated stuff. The "make whole" provision, for example, is really about taking a new CBA and then exempting a whack of contracts from that new deal. The concept is one thing, the implementation of such a concept is quite another.

All you can really say is that talks are better than no talks. Period, full stop.

Toronto Star LOADED: 11.10.2012

644027 Toronto Maple Leafs

NHL should use labour talks to reinvent the draft

By Damien Cox

It would appear that not only does Nathan MacKinnon enjoy the limelight, he likes it even more when it comes with a little added heat.

Such was the case, after all, in Val d'Or, Que., on Wednesday night when the 17-year-old MacKinnon skated out as a member of a QMJHL all-star team to take on Russia in the second game of the CHL Subway Super Series. Two nights earlier, the Russians had spanked the "Q" by a 6-2 score, and the highly touted MacKinnon laid a bit of an egg with a pointless, minus-4 performance.

The Russians, it should be noted, arrived for this year's competition with a veteran-laden squad that includes both Nail Yakupov and Mikhail Grigorenko, plus goaltender Andrei Vasilevski, a first-round pick of the Tampa Bay Lightning.

That MacKinnon, a leading candidate to be the No. 1 pick in next summer's NHL draft, was expected to lead the charge was probably unfair. But that comes with the marquee billing, and the young man appears used to it.

With the Quebec league having dropped five straight games to the Russians in the decade-old Super Series, the Val d'Or game took on some extra significance, and all eyes were again on MacKinnon.

Let's just say he passed this test. Brilliantly.

A four-point performance in a 5-2 QMJHL victory, including a couple of pretty set-ups to Florida Panthers prospect Jonathan Huberdeau, was the kind of noteworthy, bounce-back performance that NHL talent evaluators love to see. MacKinnon certainly outshone Yakupov, last year's No. 1 overall selection.

This, needless to say, was only one of many evaluation tools NHL teams will use to measure the potential of the young centre, who right now is in a neck-and-neck battle with Portland defenceman Seth Jones, son of former Raptors forward Popeye Jones, for the prestigious No. 1 slot next summer.

A native of Cole Harbour, N.S., just like Sidney Crosby, MacKinnon is also staring down a scenario similar to the one Crosby experienced back in 2005.

Back then, after the 2004-05 NHL season was wiped out by labour troubles, the NHL put in place a weighted lottery in which all 30 clubs had a shot at the top pick.

Each team started with three balls, and then one ball was taken away for every year in the previous three they had either made the Stanley Cup playoffs or been awarded the first overall selection. Every team got at least one ball

It was probably the most memorable and exciting draft in NHL history. Four teams — Buffalo, the Rangers, Columbus and Pittsburgh — got the maximum three balls, and the Penguins ended up getting their mitts on Crosby.

Right now, with NHL and NHL Players' Association representatives slugging it out at meetings in New York, it's not at all clear whether an agreement will be reached in the near future, or at all.

Another Crosby-like lottery, then, is at least possible to sort out which teams get MacKinnon and Jones, which begs the question: Why not do it that way every year?

It certainly creates far more intrigue. In '05, the Pens finished 30th overall, Columbus was 27th, the Rangers were 25th and the Sabres finished 18th.

Buffalo just missed the '04 playoffs, but theoretically, and with the right bounce, might have landed Crosby. Instead, they drafted 13th and selected Marak Zagrapan, who has yet to crack the NHL. Anaheim had only two balls in the lottery and won the second pick, taking Bobby Ryan.

Wouldn't this be preferable to the current system? For the past three years, the Edmonton Oilers have been utterly dreadful, and for their futility have been rewarded with the top pick in the draft. But why the reward? The notion that the draft should help bad teams improve is quaint, but really doesn't stand up against any analysis.

Minnesota, for example, drafted third overall in '05 and blew the pick on Benoit Pouliot. The Wild were bad then and are still bad, although that might change if this season ever gets started and Ryan Suter and Zach Parise actually suit up in the Twin Cities.

The Kings got the 11th pick in '05 and took Anze Kopitar after Ottawa had taken Brian Lee, Chicago had selected Jack Skille and the Blue Jackets had grabbed Gilbert Brule. Kopitar, of course, sipped from the Cup last June.

Draft order, particularly outside of the No. 1 pick, historically has meant little in terms of "helping" bad teams get better. Or, more accurately, there are many more crucial factors involved than simple draft order.

If the NHL and its players union want to put something in these CBA talks that would actually excite the fans, put a new, Crosby-like lottery proposal on the table.

Lord knows the fans won't be getting anything else out of this mess.

Toronto Star LOADED: 11.10.2012

644028 Toronto Maple Leafs

Hockey Hall of Fame inductee Pavel Bure 'most electrifying player' Canucks ever had

### Mark Zwolinski

Pavel Bure is in Toronto for the Hockey Hall of Fame induction this weekend while on the other side of Canada, a mild controversy rages over whether the Vancouver Canucks will honour him with a jersey retirement ceremony.

Bure will be enshrined in the Hall along with former Maple Leafs captain Mats Sundin, Adam Oates and Joe Sakic, and there likely isn't anything in the hockey world that will ruin the moment for the 41-year-old native of Moscow

Reports in Vancouver said the team had finally agreed to retire the jersey Bure wore during his seven years of sensational play and apparent discontent as a Canuck. Bure forced a trade in 1998 by holding out during training camp, then vowed he wouldn't return to the city even if the team hoisted his jersey to the rafters of the Rogers Arena.

Canucks GM Mike Gillis, who was Bure's agent when he first signed with Vancouver, met with the player two years ago to begin the bridge-mending process and to discuss the jersey retirement ceremony. Reports about the ceremony — which many in hockey feel is long overdue — coincided with the Hall of Fame weekend but have not been confirmed by the team.

However, one report quoted former Canuck Gino Odjick as saying team owner Francesco Aquilini was to fly to Toronto to inform Bure that the jersey ceremony was indeed being planned in Vancouver.

Bure's Canucks career was marked by fabulous play and frequent reports of problems with management over money and the way he was being treated by the team.

The "Russian Rocket" would leave Vancouver but continued to have an outstanding career, five times scoring more than 50 goals. Knee injuries dampened the tail end of his career, but at his peak, he had back-to-back 60-goal seasons and led a Canucks roster coached by Pat Quinn (who is now on the Hockey Hall of Fame selection committee) to the 1994 Stanley Cup final.

"Pavel certainly ranked up there, and when he was on the attack, there was nobody better," Quinn told a Vancouver radio station back in June when the Hall of Fame unveiled this year's inductees.

"If the Canucks are wise at all, they'll come out and ask him to be there. If you're going to recognize anybody, you probably should recognize the most electrifying player we've ever had in uniform. We've had some great players, but nobody, nobody was as electrifying as him."

Bure finished his career with a .623 goals-per-game average — fifth best in NHL history — and reportedly is now working towards a law degree in Russia.

His comfort level in Vancouver was never certain, but those who sat beside him in the locker room say Bure, who came to Vancouver as a 19-year-old, was often intimidated by all the press and fan attention he received.

"He sat between me and Igor Larionov in the dressing room," former Canuck Geoff Courtnall said.

"I loved Igor, he was a phenomenal teammate, so I guess Pavel had two guys who he respected. I just love the kid myself. . . . I helped him find his apartment, I introduced him to Mike Gillis (an agent at the time) and he was thankful. He was just one of those kids who, I knew, if he was comfortable, he'd help us win, so I did my best to make him feel comfortable."

Courtnall recalled a Bure who also had trouble with English at first, especially understanding how to verbalize the nuances of what he felt.

Once he achieved stardom, Bure became a target on the ice. Courtnall said a game against Dallas during the 1994 playoff run exemplified the kind of rough treatment Bure overcame on the way to becoming one of the game's all-time great scorers.

"They were killing him out there, slashing him, hacking him," Courtnall said. "Craig Ludwig and Shane Churla, all their tough guys were doing everything they could to stop him. Ludwig cross-checked him in the neck and Churla knocked him down and cross-checked him. . . . Pavel got so pissed off. The next time he was out on the ice, Churla was (in the faceoff circle) with the puck and Pavel hit him so hard, he knocked him out. That showed me the kind of competitor Pavel was."

Some reviews of that hit characterize it as a cheap shot; others say Bure needed to make a statement. Regardless, he was arguably the greatest goal-scorer of the 1990s next to Wayne Gretzky, and definitely ranks as one of the most exciting players of his time.

"Certainly the most electrifying player I ever played with," Courtnall said.

Toronto Star LOADED: 11.10.2012 644029 Toronto Maple Leafs

NHL lockout: NHL says Donald Fehr only reason deal with players not done

Kevin McGran

The NHL ramped up the pressure on NHLPA executive director Donald Fehr on Friday, making it known they're increasingly frustrated with his bargaining style after the latest talks aimed at saving the season ended poorly.

The Minnesota Star-Tribune, citing sources, said the NHL believed it had given the players almost all they had asked for, but feared that Fehr wasn't passing that information on based on the leak of a Fehr memo to his membership in which Fehr said there was a "considerable gap" in the positions of the two sides.

Until Friday, the league had been very quiet about negotiations. But Friday, all bets were off and the league was leaking its offer to various media, perhaps so the players could read for themselves without Fehr filtering the information

The league has promised to honour all existing contracts and guarantee players their \$1.883 billion (U.S.) share — or 57 per cent of last year's revenue and the league believed it had given the association almost all it wanted on revenue sharing — the NHLPA's core issues.

In exchange for going to 50-50 immediately, players would have the reduced part of their salaries (12.3 per cent) deferred one or two years, "and the owners will pay them back, plus interest, and it would not go against their share and the league is guaranteeing it no matter where the revenue of the league goes," one source told the Star Tribune.

The NHLPA says the league owes far more than what it is promising, and covering two years doesn't honour it or "make whole" the contracts that extend beyond 2013-14.

The league has also made the point that if Fehr is so concerned about revenue sharing helping the competitive balance of the league, then he should accept their argument that limits on contract length and front-loaded contracts are also to help the competitive balance.

Fehr told reporters in New York that he fully communicates with players and argued the NHL's offer isn't good enough. Players routinely praise Fehr's communication. All players are invited to the talks. Typically about 10 are present.

"If anybody is suggesting that Don's holding information back, that's totally untrue," Craig Adams of the Pittsburgh Penguins told the Pittsburgh Tribune Review.

One key sticking point is getting paid in full — for an 82 game season — even if the schedule is only 70 games. The players feel the owners did the locking out and should bear the brunt. The league wants to pro-rate salaries if there is a shortened season.

Even through 23 hours of bargaining this week, it's clear both sides are feeling pressure. The players — as well as their agents — aren't getting paid, money that could well be lost forever.

Equally, some owners are getting antsy. Revenue lost by the successful teams is gone also. And the league is facing heat from NBC, which needs live sports programming.

Molson-Coors was the first of the league's 23 sponsors to go public with their complaint that the lockout was hurting beer sales but that doesn't mean that there isn't grumbling behind the scenes.

"The frustration level is growing," said Brian Cooper, a former executive at Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment and now president of S&E Sponsorship Group.

"Just like with fans, the sponsors are saying: 'This is really threatening our business. It's really affecting what we bought into, which was the brand of NHL hockey. And when we come out of this, how tarnished is the brand going to be? We pay for equity and if this equity is less valuable, then why are we paying the same amount of money."

A date many have circled is Nov. 23 — Black Friday. That Friday of American Thanksgiving was to have featured Boston against the Rangers on NBC. That day may mean more to sponsors: it's the most important Christmas shopping day on the U.S. calendar and hockey's sponsors want their goods on people's minds.

To get playing by then, the league needs a deal this week. But the lockout could have long-lasting ramifications for the league in its dealings with sponsors and its ability to generate revenue.

"Just as cost certainty is important for the league, product certainty is important for sponsors," said Tom Mayenknecht, owner of Emblematica Brand Builders and host of the The Sport Market on TSN 1050. "When you can't have product certainty because a league is subject to potential lockouts every seven or eight years, it's not good business for sponsors because of association."

The league is believed to be working on a shorter schedule should a deal be struck. It would be a variation of the one that already exists, with other games squeezed in on off-days and added in April.

Sponsors have an effect on the length of the season. They pay annual fees based on an 82-game season and playoffs and would get refunds of some sort for every game not played.

"They would get a pro-rata reduction in their usual fee," said Cooper. "That's why you saw the NBA come out of a work stoppage (last year) and jam 66 games out of 82 into a shortnened season."

Toronto Star LOADED: 11.10.2012 644030 Toronto Maple Leafs

Marlies win without Kadri, Colborne

By Lance Hornby

Nazem Kadri and a couple of other high-profile Marlies found themselves with extra time to see the state capitol here on Friday.

Kadri, Joe Colborne and defenceman Mark Fraser were all healthy scratches against the Texas Stars.

No. 1 goalie Ben Scrivens also sat in favour of Jussi Rynnas, but that was a predetermined call by coach Dallas Eakins as the Marlies play three games in three nights.

A 3-0 win over the Texas Stars was the second straight night that Eakins issued a challenge, either verbally or through his lineup card, and had it pay off

After a 6-4 win in Houston on Thursday, he made good on a threat to make laggards pay, criticizing linemates Kadri and Colborne, two players considered among the better Leafs prospects. They were a combined minus-three and stranded up ice on at least one goal. Kadri, the former firstround Leafs pick, has no goals and three assists in nine games and still has puck control issues. Big Colborne is also scoreless in nine, with four helpers.

"Colborne's line looked like it had nothing going," Eakins had said Thursday. "With this many players (four extra forwards because of the NHL lockout), it's a constant flow of who is going in, who is going out. Other nights it will be (a fatigue issue) where we're not going to be playing you three in three."

But it was a slip in play with the duo as well as Fraser that led to the decision. Fraser, who signed a two-way Leafs deal this summer, is usually inseparable from Korbinian Holzer as a blueline tandem.

"(Kadri and Colborne) are not playing up to their capabilities and everybody has seen that so far," assistant coach Gord Dineen said Friday morning. "We're trying to keep energy in our lineup. Maybe it's good sometimes to sit up there and watch."

Eakins ended up praising the scratches for "not walking around (dragging) big lips".

"There's an adjustment period to having this many players, being in and out of the lineup and how it's going to work. I think our guys are getting it."

Brad Ross and Jerry D'Amigo came back in Friday, while Dylan Yeo and Simon Gysbers replaced Fraser and Jesse Blacker. Kadri and Co. could be back Saturday for the game in San Antonio.

### **GREAT FINISH**

Finland won't win many wars against Texas, but Friday night in Austin was an exception.

Rynnas and Leo Komarov combined to pull a 10-gallon hat down on the heads of the Texas Stars, a 3-0 win that enlivens the burgeoning goaltending battle for the Marlies.

"We both were singing the national song in the dressing room," Rynnas joked.

With help from strong positional play from his friends, Rynnas made 31 saves for his second shutout in three starts. Should Eakins now stick with Rynnas, who has allowed just three regulation goals in three games, go back to Scrivens after he played well in the third period Thursday in Houston, or turn to little-used third goalie Mark Owuya? That would give the Marlies a shot at a rare trifecta, three wins, three goalies, in three nights.

"I'm kicking that around," Eakins said. "My vote would be Mark, because Jussi has also been travelling. But I'll talk to the (staff)."

Eakins warned Scrivens on Thursday morning that his job was now being threatened by inconsistent play and Rynnas is a great Plan B.

"I've been challenging shooters a bit more this year," Rynnas said.

Komarov, the Estonian-born, Finnish-raised winger, has had a great trip to the Lone Star state, with a goal Thursday on a nice tip, a sharp-angle strike in the first period Friday, followed by a power-play tap-in. That's four goals for the projected Leafs checker, the most by a forward, just after Eakins put the call out for anyone not named Jake Gardiner to start hitting the net. Ryan Hamilton ended it on a third-period breakaway. The Marlies had only 15 shots on Cristopher Nilstrop.

## GOOD TIMES RETURN?

Eakins takes the nine goals in the past two games as a hopeful sign the Marlies are re-discovering the killer instinct they showed last season. Too often, Toronto has been the team on its heels.

"We have a bunch of forwards who haven't been quite rewarded yet. A forward might get two excellent chances to score in a game. But a lot of times you get one. And you have to be ready for that chance, you have to expect it. What we've found (examining recent game video) is that our guys are surprised that the pass was there or that the rebound was there. That's a little lack of focus and something we're trying to fix."

# MARLIE MINUTIAE

The Marlies have now won consecutive games for the first time this year ... The club assigned forwards Andrew Crescenzi and Jamie Devane to San Francisco of the ECHL on Friday ... As well as St. Croix being on the Texas trip, senior advisor Cliff Fletcher and pro scout Rob Cowie are riding the bus ... Fletcher's arrival in Toronto as GM, his hiring of coach Pat Burns and the Doug Gilmour trade all figure prominently in the new book A Season In Time. Author Todd Denault chronicles major NHL events from the 1992-93 season, when the Leafs' long playoff run, Wayne Gretzky and Mario Lemieux were huge stories ... The Marlies get a couple of days off after their game Saturday before facing the Oklahoma City Barons, stacked with all the young Edmonton Oilers prospects.

Toronto Sun LOADED: 11.10.2012 644031 Vancouver Canucks

'Russian Rocket' Pavel Bure was my hero

By Daniel Wagner,

Pavel Bure's rigorous preparation included skating with two parachutes strapped to his back for resistance.

Pavel Bure ruined me as a hockey fan.

I was seven years old when Bure made his debut with the Vancouver Canucks. I was nine when he scored the game-winning overtime goal in Game 7 against the Calgary Flames in the first round of the 1994 playoffs and led the team in scoring en route to the Stanley Cup Final. And I was 14 when he was traded to the Florida Panthers.

Those were the primer years of my development as a hockey fan, the time when passions, loyalties, and expectations are defined for the rest of a person's life. In those prime years, I watched Bure skate faster than seemed humanly possible, while controlling the puck with perfect precision and shooting with pinpoint accuracy. How could anyone else compare?

Canucks fans have been spoiled in recent generations. My generation had Bure, ensuring that the numerous speedsters with lesser hands that came after him would forever be judged for not being him. Then came Naslund, whose sublime wrist shot soured fans on the lesser snipers that followed.

Now, Canucks fans have the Sedins, whose style of hockey is entirely unique and impossible to duplicate. Young fans who are growing up with the Sedins as the offensive stars of the Canucks are bound to be disappointed when future top line forwards are unable to complete a simple backhand, cross-ice, tape-to-tape saucer pass over the sticks of four opposing players while being cross-checked to the ice by a fifth.

Bure was a once-in-a-generation talent, whose ability to stickhandle at top speed was unreal and whose desire to score goals was unmatched. Knowing that hockey can be played like that, with that speed, finesse, and passion, how can you not be disappointed when you see it played any other way?

Growing up, my friends and I loved the Canucks. We idolized Trevor Linden, loved Jyrki Lumme, and thought the world of Kirk McLean. My favourite player was Cliff Ronning, mainly because I was the shortest kid in my school and took inspiration from the pint-sized scorer. But Bure was the Canucks in the 90s. To us, to the kids who loved nothing more than to see goals being scored, Bure was the team. He was the reason you watched the games.

Any kid who was lucky enough to get Bure in a pack of hockey cards crowed about it on the playground. We were jealous of the lucky few whose parents bought them official Bure jerseys.

In NHL video games, where speed was everything, you would always get the puck to Bure when you were playing as the Canucks. Any moment that Gino Odjick or Dave Babych had the puck was excruciating, but as soon as Bure had the puck, a world of possibilities was opened.

Seeing Bure leave the Canucks was devastating. I knew very little of what was happening behind the scenes at the time, or even the parts of it that were being hashed out in public. During the 1994 playoff run, I was too busy explaining that my brother's old Flying-V jersey "was so" a Canucks jersey to my classmates to worry about the rumours that Bure had apparently refused to play in the playoffs without a new contract. The disputes between Bure and Canucks management over the years never reached our ears; all we knew in the end was that Bure wasn't playing and was demanding a trade.

Linden was already gone. McLean had faltered and been traded. My beloved Cliff Ronning had signed with the Phoenix Coyotes in 1996 and Jyrki Lumme followed his lead two seasons later. Now Bure was on his way out. The Canucks that my friends and I had grown up with were no more.

Bure ruined me as a hockey fan, but seeing his tenure with the Canucks also made me a more mature hockey fan.

He made me realize how fleeting our time is with the players that come through the NHL and our favourite teams.

At nine years old, I thought 1994 would happen every year, that Bure would go on flying and racking up goals for another decade or more with the Canucks. At the time, I couldn't imagine that he would get just one more shot at the playoffs in Vancouver.

So now I appreciate what we have while it's here. There will never be another Bure, but there will also never be another Daniel or Henrik Sedin.

There will never be another Alex Burrows. There will never be another Roberto Luongo. Other players might come along with some superficial resemblance, but it won't be the same.

Bure belongs in the Hockey Hall of Fame and I'm happy to see him getting his due. In my opinion, he also deserves to see his number raised in Rogers Arena, but I'm just a kid who didn't know what he had until it was gone.

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644032 Vancouver Canucks

Canucks' Russian Rocket reluctant to return the love

By lain MacIntyre,

VANCOUVER — The problem with Pavel is really our problem. He was just being himself. We wanted him to be more.

Fourteen years after holding out on the Vancouver Canucks to force a trade, Pavel Bure's impact here is reflected by his first-name recognition. Say "Pavel" on Canada's West Coast and everyone knows who you mean.

The Russian Rocket. Fabulous player. Shame about the person. Wish he'd stayed longer. Or not.

One of the most prolific goal-scorers in National Hockey League history, Bure will be inducted Monday into the Hockey Hall of Fame in Toronto despite a career shortened by knee injuries.

Bure failed a physical in 2003 and retired as a New York Ranger at age 32. He finished with 437 goals in 702 games for a strike rate of .623 that is third all-time behind only Mike Bossy's .762 and Mario Lemieux's .754.

Bure played 24 fewer NHL games than Cam Neely and 45 more than Bobby Orr — other Hall-of-Famers whose careers were halted by injuries. Bure's elevation to official hockey immortality was purely a statistical argument. Did he play enough games and score enough goals to qualify for the Hall of Fame? The selection committee, co-chaired by former Canuck coach and general manager Pat Quinn, decided Bure deserved induction this year alongside Joe Sakic, Mats Sundin and Adam Oates.

It's a sparkling class.

Bure's story is being retold in various places: the Canucks' heist of Bure in the sixth round of the 1989 draft (after the team picked Brett Hauer, before they chose Jim Revenberg) due to head scout Mike Penny's savvy homework; Bure's electric debut after showing up on the Canucks' doorstep in 1991; his explosive speed and five 50-goal seasons and his debilitating battle against injuries.

It's a nice story, a simple one.

But it's a little more complicated out here where Bure spent seven seasons, grudgingly as it turned out, and never returned the love and adoration showered upon him in a city where fans have not seen another Canuck like him, before or since.

When the franchise celebrated its 40th anniversary a couple of years ago, they retired Markus Naslund's jersey and christened a "Ring of Honour" by celebrating four other famous Canucks. Bure was not among them.

Canucks management, led by Bure's former agent, Mike Gillis, asked the Russian over dinner in Miami if he was interested in being honoured in Vancouver. Bure said no.

You may recall that he once claimed to a reporter, while walking out on the final year of his Canucks' contract: "I love the fans here and I love the city. I want to spend some time here in the summer. It's a beautiful place and the fans have treated me really well. I really want to thank them for the seven years they supported me."

But Bure never returned to Vancouver, except as a visiting player. He said this week he hasn't been to Vancouver in a decade. This isn't surprising because he spent his summers as a Canuck in Los Angeles. And as for thanking the fans, his reluctance to be honoured by the organization shouts volumes. Given what we know, it would embarrassing to phone Bure now and coax from him a repeat of that expedient pledge from 14 years ago.

Bure had one close friend on the Canucks, Gino Odjick, never invested emotionally in the community and, according to The Province, first asked for a trade in 1993 because the team wouldn't renegotiate his rookie contract.

He was upset about false reports that he threatened to hold out before the 1994 Stanley Cup Final, was understandably angry the Canucks tried to pay him in Canadian dollars instead of American ones, was frustrated by the team's refusal to adhere to a lockout clause in his contract, and upset that Quinn wasn't present when Bure showed up to sign a \$24.5-million US, five-year contract that made him one of the five highest-paid hockey players in the world.

And, of course, the team kept promising to trade him and wouldn't.

"Every time I asked to be traded, they always agreed to," Bure complained to a reporter after his February 1999 move to the Florida Panthers. "Nobody ever said: 'We're not going to trade you.' But they always lied."

Yes, shame on the Canucks.

While adored by fans as he became one of the richest players in hockey, Bure had to suffer through a four-year stretch that saw the Canucks play 10 rounds of playoffs and get within one win of the Stanley Cup. Bure played four playoff games after he left Vancouver.

It was just business to Bure, numbers. Fair enough. But shame on us, then, for loving him and expecting anything more from what turned out to be a one-way relationship.

There was never an issue about Bure's breathtaking speed and talent and hunger to score goals.

No one who saw him rocket through the Winnipeg Jets on his debut at the Pacific Coliseum on Nov. 5, 1991 will forget it.

"If everybody I've met since that game who said they were there were actually in the building, the crowd would have been 250,000," Quinn said this week. "He was lightning in a bottle. He just seemed to have fun out there. He was a hard worker. His training was second to no one. He wanted to be the best scorer and certainly was the best we had on our team."

It seems ironic that Quinn, cast by some as the miserly villain who victimized Bure and helped drive him away, strongly supports the player's inclusion in the Hall of Fame. He believes Bure wanted out of Vancouver because he was private person who didn't like the spotlight and wanted to be able to "disappear" when he left the rink.

"I don't know that he had an affinity for any organization," Quinn said. "I always liked Pavel. I liked his attitude and I liked the way he played. I wish he had opened up a little more (for the public) but that was not who he was. I can't blame him for that."

Maybe we should all strive to be so generous. The same, of course, could be said for Bure, who has never expressed regret about how things ended in Vancouver nor even hinted at a desire for reconciliation. He seems content with the way things stand.

Bure is the most exciting player and most divisive player in Canucks history. He scored enough goals to earn a place in the Hall of Fame. In Toronto.

But to be honoured here, numbers aren't enough. When the Canucks retired jerseys belonging to Stan Smyl, Trevor Linden and Markus Naslund — all of them selfless captains — it was the bonds between franchise and player, between player and town, that were as celebrated as lofty statistics.

Bure showed up when he had to, left when he could. He always played hard for his team. But 14 years after Bure left and never looked back, what is there to celebrate about his relationship with the Canucks or the community?

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644033 Winnipeg Jets

Fehr's note to NHLPA indicates players' bargaining power at issue

By: Tim Campbell

WINNIPEG -- The pessimism and negativity is out there but at least one member of the Winnipeg Jets doesn't think it belongs just yet.

Bryan Little said after this morning's workout at the MTS Iceplex that the continuation of negotiating sessions in New York outweighs any interpretation of the memo sent to players late Thursday by NHLPA executive director Donald Fehr.

"I looks like there's progress finally," Little said today. "It's not a done deal by any means but it's great that they're meeting and meeting on consecutive days to figure this thing out. Before, the two sides weren't even talking."

Fehr's memo outlines some of the issues and the differences between the sides, confirming that no agreement appears close.

"I'm concerned a bit (about the gap) but at least they're talking," Little said. "They could call it quits and not talk again for a while but they're hammering it out trying to figure something out, trying to find some way to close the gap."

Here's the text of Fehr's Thursday note to players, which has gone public:

"Today, we met with the NHL off and on over several hours. A number of matters were discussed, including our proposal for a new pension plan, revenue sharing, the players' share and salary cap issues, and the owners' make whole' concept. Present today were Chris Campoli, Mathieu Darche, Ron Hainsey, Johan Hedberg, Manny Malhotra, and Kevin Westgarth (David Backes was present for part of the day), as well as Mathieu Schneider, Joe Reekie, Steve Webb and Rob Zamuner.

"No new proposals were exchanged on pension issues, but we will discuss this issue again tomorrow (Friday). We did receive a proposal on revenue sharing in response to the proposal we made this week, but this subject still needs considerable work.

"In addition, we received a revamped proposal covering players' share and cap issues, their so-called 'make whole,' and player contracting issues. The owners finally did formally give us their 'make whole' idea, which in dollar terms is similar to the discussions Bill Daly had with Steve Fehr a few days ago. While a step forward, a significant gap remains. Moreover, at the same time we were told that the owners want an 'immediate reset' to 50/50 (which would significantly reduce the salary cap) and that their proposals to restrict crucial individual contracting rights must be agreed to. As you know, these include -- among other things -- losing a year of salary arbitration eligibility, allowing the team to file for salary arbitration in any year that the player can file, extending UFA eligibility to age 28 or eight seasons, limiting contracts to five years, and permitting only five per cent year to year variability in player contracts. Individually each is bad for players; taken together they would significantly reduce a player's bargaining power and give the owner much more leverage over a player for most if not all of his career.

"In short, the concessions on future salary we have offered (at least \$948 million to \$1.25 billion over five years, depending on HRR growth) are not enough. We are still being told that more salaries must be conceded, and that very valuable player contracting rights must be surrendered. So, while we are meeting again, and while some steps are being taken, there is still a lot of work to be done and bridges to be crossed before an agreement can be made.

"We will review today's discussions over night and tomorrow morning before meeting again with the owners. Following our meeting tomorrow with the league, we will be able to provide a broader update.

"As always, please contact us if you have any questions or comments."

"Best regards.

"Don"

Winnipeg Free Press LOADED 11.10.2012

644034 Websites

ESPN / These talks will define Bettman and Fehr

By Scott Burnside

As the two warring sides re-entered conference rooms on Friday, the fourth straight day of negotiations, in a no-longer-secret location in Manhattan, it struck us that for two groups that have suffered varying crises of leadership, this is where the rubber meets the road.

The road to where? Oblivion? Redemption?

Neither NHL commissioner Gary Bettman nor NHLPA executive director Donald Fehr has distinguished himself thus far in terms of charting a course to a successful resolution to the current lockout of the NHL's players.

Strategies on both sides have been at best curious and at worst deeply flawed.

Were it not so, wouldn't we have had a deal weeks, even months ago? Or at the very least, had leadership plotted differently, would we not have seen the current series of in-depth talks, the first of their kind in the process, take place long ago?

There is no shortage of critics of both men, and all you need to do is take a passing glance at Twitter to get a sense of the underlying anger and disappointment at how this has unfolded.

Without going over every burp and hiccup along the way -- and there have been many ominous noises emanating from both sides in this tedious process -- only the significantly brainwashed believe that blame for the current situation lies more squarely on one side than the other.

What should be of greater import is how much damage has been done to the sport and how that damage can be repaired.

Those ideas of damage and damage control may be a bit vague, but there is nothing vague about the answers, and they lie firmly in the hands of Fehr and Bettman.

They are the ones who have the power to keep the process moving, to keep it on track. Or the power to take the air out of not just these talks but any chance at a season at all.

No one suggests Fehr and Bettman have to like each other. The players who are in attendance don't have to like the owners or deputy commissioner Bill Daly. But they have to be able to put all the rhetoric and spin and hurt feelings behind them and stay on point.

It can't be just one side that displays this willingness, or the process will fall apart. Both sides have to have that kind of resolve.

This week has shown, at least for now, that such will exists.

Our lockout crew in New York, Katie Strang and Pierre LeBrun, have reported that the two sides aren't on the verge of a deal, and in fact, there has been some disappointment on both sides as proposals have led to counterproposals leading to Friday's multitiered discussions.

But they continue to meet.

The two sides continue to say little about the current state of negotiations, holding their tongues about why they believe the other side is wrongheaded or stubborn or worse.

That is no small thing if you've followed even a small part of this labor dispute.

Even a leaked memo from Fehr to the players, first obtained by TSN's Darren Dreger, outlined concerns with the owners' response to their offerings, but the language was for the most part neutral, stripped clean of rhetoric.

So kudos to Fehr and Bettman and the rest of those at the tables Friday for channeling whatever emotions might be coursing through them in a direction other than the one that says "detonation this way."

These are the moments that will define this labor dispute, will determine whether there is hockey and how much hockey this season. By extension, these moments will define the leadership of Fehr and Bettman.

There is still enough time to play a meaningful number of games and try to get the game back on a track to prosperity. But it will take continued patience and resolve from the leadership on both sides, the kind of resolve that has been noticeably lacking to this point.

To this point.

ESPN LOADED: 11.10.2012

644035 Websites

ESPN / Shero was one for the ages

By Scott Burnside

PITTSBURGH -- On the wall in Ray Shero's office at Consol Energy Center is a yellowed newspaper clipping showing a hockey fight that took place sometime in the late 1940s between Gordie Howe and some guy named Fred Shero.

From the description in the paper, it was a pretty good tilt. But it is a reminder that while Fred Shero was a defenseman made of good, stern stuff -- he had learned to box while in the Navy -- he would make his mark on the game standing behind some of the game's greatest players, not leaping onto the ice to tangle with them.

From the book shelf behind his desk, Ray Shero withdraws a series of binders that include his father's coaching manuals, drills and notes he sent to players and even to their wives.

There are pictures, too, of the elder Shero with players such as Terry Crisp and assistant coaches such as Pat Quinn, hair longer, curlier, coats and pants denoting that special time in fashion history that marked the 1970s. Each piece of that past is a reminder of not just the life of one of the game's most influential coaches, but the life of a father and how that father passed along his knowledge to a son who carries on both the family name and the family's significant bond with the game.

The pictures and binders also serve as a reminder, in these days leading up to the annual Hockey Hall of Fame celebration in Toronto, of the ongoing injustice that Fred Shero hasn't been so honored.

"I've had really prominent hockey people ask me when my dad was inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame," Ray Shero said recently with a wry grin.

Ray has to tell them that Fred Shero has never been inducted, and there is always an awkward moment of, Gee, how is that possible?

Freddie The Fog

Fred Shero was born a little more than 87 years ago in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Longtime friend Lou Vairo, who worked with Shero when both were with the New Jersey Devils, recalled a trip to Winnipeg years ago, when Shero was looking out the window of the Devils' plane at the rows of houses near the airport. Shero remarked that no one in those houses would have been able to use their bathrooms if it weren't for him. It turns out that, while a player, Shero had spent offseasons digging the ditches that would form the septic system for the housing development.

Although bothered by a bad back, Shero would play until 1957-58, finishing a mostly minor-pro career in Shawinigan, Quebec, where he would meet his future wife, Mariette. Legend has it that longtime NHL netminder Ed Johnston introduced them.

The next year, Shero began a coaching career in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, that would see him become one of the most innovative coaches of his time, a dedicated, sometimes absent-minded coach dubbed "Freddie The Fog."

To Ray Shero, of course, Fred Shero wasn't The Fog. He was "Dad."

Given his father's profession, it's not surprising that young Ray spent an awful lot of his time as a kid in arenas, whether it was in Minnesota -- where his father coached the St. Paul Saints of the old International Hockey League to back-to-back championships -- or in Omaha or in Buffalo, where Fred Shero coached the Bisons to a Calder Cup championship in 1969-70.

Whenever he's had the chance, Ray, now the general manager of the Pittsburgh Penguins, has taken his family past the modest homes in which he grew up as a kid. There's always a quiet joke about whether the teams Grandpa worked for ever paid him any money.

On weekends or when there was no school, Ray would make sure he was up early because his dad always went to the rink early. The youngster would wait patiently in the kitchen while his dad made coffee.

"I'd be sitting there waiting and hoping he'd say, "Want to come to the rink?"" Shero recalled. "He was a great dad that way. It's how I try to be with my kids."

When Ray was younger, it meant heading to the Aud in Buffalo, where he would skate before or after the team worked out. When he was older, it

meant trips to the Spectrum and the legendary Flyer teams of the mid-1970s. Sometimes Hall of Fame netminder Bernie Parent, who lived nearby, would drive Fred to practice. Sometimes, if Fred was busy and Ray was at the rink, Parent would drop the youngster off at home.

Team-First Attitude

Joe Kadlec knows Fred Shero's stats by heart. He should. Kadlec was the Flyers PR guru, a Flyer employee from the day the team joined the NHL in 1967 until he retired full-time, in 2007.

"Just knowing the man and knowing him over the years, everything was for the team," Kadlec said.

Between 1959-60 and 1975-76, Shero-coached teams would win six pro hockey championships and go to the finals three more times.

He was the first coach to lead an NHL expansion team to a championship, and for a city passionate about its sports to the point of mania, Shero and those Cup-winning teams remain larger-than-life figures after back-to-back Cup wins in 1974 and 1975 and a trip to the Stanley Cup finals the following year.

The Flyers have not won a championship since.

Shero got the Flyer job after winning a CHL championship with the Omaha Knights in 1970-71. Flyer president Keith Allen sold owner Ed Snider on Shero, even though Shero wasn't a known quantity and had played sparingly in the NHL.

The first season, the Flyers missed the playoffs on the last day of the regular season when netminder Doug Favell muffed a long shot against the Buffalo Sabres in the waning seconds of the game. The Flyers ended up tied with Pittsburgh with an identical won-lost-tied record but lost the tiebreaker on goals-for.

Ray Shero recalled going to school the next day and being heckled.

"'Hey, Shero, your old man and Favell blew it," Shero recalled kids saying. "I was like, man, these Philly crowds are tough."

Fred Shero

Fred Shero taught his assistant coaches that the two basic principles to coaching were patience and repetition.

Kadlec recalled hearing Shero mumbling to himself in the coaches' room after that final game.

"He was saying, 'I'm going to do it my way from now on," Kadlec said.

In the offseason, Shero told management he needed help -- he wanted to hire an assistant coach, something no other NHL team did at the time. It was a mark of Shero's belief in his own systems and way of coaching that he would buck the standard, even though he must have had precious little currency at that the stage in his NHL coaching career.

But the Flyers went for it, and so Shero hired Mike Nykoluk, with whom Shero had played near the end of his playing career with the old Winnipeg Warriors of the Western Hockey League.

The two won a WHL championship together but didn't have much communication after that until the summer of 1972, when the Flyers approached Nykoluk about joining Shero's staff.

The Flyers made it clear this was an experiment and not necessarily a long-term gig. But Shero and the team never looked back; Nykoluk became the first non-playing, full-time assistant coach in the league.

"He and Fred were just perfect together," Kadlec said.

The following season, the Flyers not only made the playoffs but defeated Minnesota in six games to give the team its first playoff victory. The Flyers lost to eventual champion Montreal in the second round, but captain Bob Clarke won the Hart Trophy and Rick MacLeish became the first Flyer to score 50 goals, and the Broad Street Bullies became a force under Shero.

"The players couldn't wait to get back for the next season, they were so excited," Kadlec said.

What struck Kadlec was that everything was done with a purpose. Every drill, every meeting.

"Everybody was involved. Everybody had a hand in it," he said. "I never saw him cut up the players, and the players knew that."

Crisp was part of those Flyer teams and would later join Shero's coaching staff en route to his own successful head-coaching career.

"I love talking about Fred Shero because he's one of the most interesting guys I've ever worked with in hockey," Crisp said. "He was 20 years ahead of his time, he was so far advanced in his thinking."

Crisp ended up a Flyer after being acquired from the New York Islanders during the 1972-73 season.

"I was like, "What the hell does Fred Shero and the Philadelphia Flyers want with Terry Crisp on that hockey club?" Crisp said. "[Shero] said, 'Well, you're one of the best penalty killers in the NHL and we're going to need one "

The coach, as usual, was right.

Fred Shero

Fred Shero led the Flyers to back-to-back Stanley Cup wins in 1974 and 1975 and a trip to the finals the following year.

Shero explained that not all players were created equal, that Crisp was not going to get the same ice time that captain Clarke or Reggie Leach or MacLeish did, but that Crisp was going to play an important role nonetheless.

"I said, 'OK, that's OK with me.' That was our beginning," Crisp said. "Every day with Freddie was an adventure. Everyone felt important."

Vairo, a longtime executive and coach with USA Hockey, knew Fred Shero by reputation when the two of them roomed together in Russia for a summer hockey symposium in the mid-1970s. But when they were done, the two men were close friends and would continue that friendship until the day Shero died in 1990.

Vairo recalled a night when he was unable to sleep and how Shero explained that he was of Russian heritage and that he could lead them to a local cafe. The two saw a long line of people on a nearby street and joined, Shero telling Vairo he was sure there would be some good coffee and pastries at the end of the line.

But when the line turned the corner, they were confronted by a horse-drawn cart selling cabbage.

"I said, 'Oh, you've got the Russian blood, all right," Vairo recalled.

Crisp remembered Shero returning from Russia with all kinds of new drills and insights into how he wanted to coach, including a drill in which the players would jump over a net lying on its face.

"We laughed at him and said, 'You can't do those drills," Crisp said.

The Flyers, a team chock-full of characters and strong personalities, might not have been the ideal group for such thinking, but the results speak for themselves -- their successes have left an indelible mark on the sporting landscape in Philadelphia, just as Shero left an indelible mark on the game of hockey.

Crisp recalled how, one day, Shero had the boys turn their sticks upside down to do their normal drills, including passing and shooting.

Finally, an exasperated Clarke went to Shero and suggested in a profanity-laced tirade that the drill made no sense.

Right, Shero said. And it took you 12 minutes to figure it out, the coach replied.

Sometimes Shero would send soccer balls or tennis balls onto the ice.

Often players would find notes in their gloves or in their dressing room stalls encouraging them to work harder or offering instruction on how to be better players.

One day, a famous note went home to the players' wives outlining ways for them to be the best mates they possibly could. Ray Shero still has a copy in his binder of memories. So does Crisp.

Let's just say it wouldn't pass muster today.

At the bottom of the note, Shero promised that shortly he would provide the players with a similar list of ways in which they could be the best husbands possible.

"That one never got sent out," Crisp said.

### Always Seeking An Edge

The quirkiness that became part of Shero's personae belied a razor-sharp mind that constantly worked to make his team better, to seek out an edge, even though his squads might have been outmatched on paper.

The first year the Flyers won the Cup, in 1974, they faced the Big Bad Bruins from Boston and the game's greatest defenseman, Bobby Orr, in his prime. In the 19 games against Philadelphia before the start of the finals, the Bruins had gone 17-0-2.

Nykoluk recalled that the traditional game plan against Orr was to try to keep the puck away from him. Yet Shero had a different idea.

"Freddie said, 'I think we should shoot the puck in his corner and make him work for it," Nykoluk said.

By the end of Game 6, "he was just a whipped player," the assistant coach said. Late in the game, with Clarke on a breakaway, a fatigued Orr was forced to take a penalty on the play, sealing the Flyers' first Cup win.

On the chalkboard, in the Flyer dressing room Shero had written, "Win today and we walk together forever."

He was right.

"The night we won the first Cup, in '74, the whole building was going crazy, but he had to be the calmest person in the building," Kadlec recalled of Shero.

Crisp played for Shero for five years and won two Cups. His first year after retiring, Kaldec and Pat Quinn joined Shero's coaching staff.

The first thing Crisp asked for when he walked into Shero's office was the book of quotes.

Shero looked baffled.

Crisp explained he wanted to see the book of quotes that were the source of Shero's famous sayings.

The coach explained that there was no book; he got the words of wisdom off the little cardboard tabs on the ends of tea bags.

## Fred Shero

Fred Shero was "one of the most interesting guys I've ever worked with in hockey. He was 20 years ahead of his time he was so far advanced in his thinking," Terry Crisp said.

Shero taught Crisp there were two basic principles to coaching: P and R.

Ah, dealing with the media, that's important, thought Crisp.

No, Shero said. Patience and repetition.

The patience to repeat a drill 999 times and then more patience to do it the 1,000th time if that's what it took to get it right.

Although Shero's successes as a coach will always be tied to his time in Philadelphia -- he would earn a Jack Adams Award as coach of the year in 1974 -- Nykoluk recalls that occasionally out for a drink or dinner, Shero would wonder aloud about the possibilities of returning to the team for whom he'd played in the NHL, the New York Rangers. That was his team and Shero quietly coveted a chance to coach it.

That opportunity came about after the 1978 season.

Ray Shero recalled being mortified at the prospect of (A) moving to New York and (B) his father coaching the Rangers.

"I hated the Rangers. I was a Flyer fan," he recalled.

Ray ended up avoiding the ignominy of having to wear Ranger blue by attending prep school and then moving on to St. Lawrence University, where he played well enough to get drafted by the Los Angeles Kings in

He recalled his parents' watching one of his college games in which he took a penalty during a penalty-killing situation, putting his team down 5-on-3. St. Lawrence went on to win but afterward, when Ray's coach asked his dad what he thought of the game, Fred pushed his glasses up his nose and said that in his 46 years in hockey, that might have been single dumbest penalty ever taken in hockey.

It was the closest Fred Shero came to criticizing his son and, in this case, it was likely well-deserved.

"He never pushed me or my brother to play hockey," Ray said. "He never said to me in the car, 'You've got to do this better, you should have done this.' Never. It wasn't his dream for me to play pro hockey."

Instead, the Sheros insisted their two boys get a college education.

After being drafted, Ray attended the Kings' training camp, but the team had a plethora of centers, and young Shero was told he'd have to report to the farm team in Toledo.

Ray called his father, who told his son, "Well, Toledo. I didn't pay for four years of college so you could go to Toledo."

And so Ray charted a different course in the hockey world as his father's hockey career was entering its twilight.

After two seasons in New York -- one of which saw the Rangers advance to the 1979 finals -- Fred Shero was fired as head coach just 20 games into the 1980-81 season. He would go on to work with the Devils as a color commentator, where he was known as the "Professor of Hockey."

To help with the look the team wanted Shero to promote, he was asked to get a leather valise or kit that would help him look professorial. He brought it everywhere with him, although Vairo, an assistant coach with the team, recalled that Shero would often put the case through the security machine at airports and simply walk away without it.

One day, one of the Devils' staff caught up to Shero with his misplaced bag and asked him what was in it. Shero didn't know. He couldn't recall opening it.

With Vairo's help, they picked the lock and inside found a pencil and three-year-old sports page from the Los Angeles Times.

Another time, the Devils checked into a three-story hotel in Chicago during a vicious snowstorm. Vairo, who was in charge of hotel check-ins, explained to the players and team officials that the keys all had a number, a six or a seven, in front of the real room number so if the key read 7215 the room was actually on the second floor, No. 215.

Vairo and head coach Doug Carpenter met for lunch in the lobby restaurant and suddenly Carpenter spied a man in his overcoat standing with his bags covered in snow outside the hotel.

"Doug says, 'Isn't that Fred?" Vairo said.

Vairo watched as the man circled the hotel, occasionally glancing up.

Sure enough, it was Fred Shero.

After Vairo ushered Shero back into the warmth, the chilled former coach told Vairo he'd gone outside to count the number of floors and was flummoxed to see there weren't seven, as his key suggested.

Another night as the team was headed home to New Jersey from a long road trip, they were delayed in Minnesota. Vairo finally called the team to the flight, but when they landed, Shero's wife was distraught to find that her husband did not get off the plane.

Shero arrived later that night and explained to Vairo that he was watching Devils forward Aaron Broten and was going to board the plane when Broten did. Only the man he was watching wasn't Aaron Broten.

"He could only see the back of his head," Vairo said.

But that was Shero, his mind often elsewhere, no doubt thinking about the game or a practice drill.

A Pioneer

Who knows exactly why Shero hasn't been called on to join the game's greatest players and builders?

In general, coaches have a hard time cracking the Hall's exterior.

Herb Brooks was the last full-time coach to be inducted in the Hall, in 2006, and that was long overdue. Roger Neilson was inducted in 2002, and Glen Sather, back in 1997, rounds out the past three coaches honored by the Hall of Fame. (Jim Gregory did some coaching but not at the NHL level, and he was inducted in 2007.)

Perhaps Shero is paying for the thuggishness of his Broad Street Bullies, although from the same era, Flyers owner Ed Snider, GM Keith Allen,

Clarke, Bernie Parent and Bill Barber are honored members, while announcer Gene Hart is in the broadcasters' arm of the Hall.

Maybe it's that Shero simply marched to the beat of a different drummer.

"In my opinion, he is absolutely a Hall of Famer," said Vairo. "I had a million questions for him and I always got a wonderful, sensible, logical answer. He had a wonderful sense of humor, but let me tell you, he knew everything there was to know about coaching."

Crisp served as an assistant with the Flyers for two seasons, one with Shero before his departure to New York.

Crisp would go on to a successful career coaching at the major junior and minor pro levels before getting a job with the Calgary Flames.

As the Flames prepared to meet the Montreal Canadiens in the 1989 Stanley Cup finals, Crisp found himself in his office late one night. He knew Shero would be awake, so he called, hoping perhaps that Shero would offer words of praise for his protégé.

"So, what do you think?" Crisp asked. "This is my guru, my mentor, remember. And he says, 'The coach who works the hardest will win the Cup."

Crisp was disappointed, but after chewing on the conversation for a while, he understood that Shero was telling him in his own unique way that getting to the finals wasn't the accomplishment.

"What he was telling me was that you haven't worked hard enough yet," Crisp said.

The Flames beat the Canadiens and yet Crisp never got to thank Shero for his help.

"I wish I could have talked to him about what it meant to me," Crisp said.

Shero, who had been diagnosed with stomach cancer in 1983 but had remained well enough to continue his career, died on Nov. 24, 1990. He was 65 and earlier that year had been inducted into the Flyers' hall of fame.

"I used to go over there every day [when Shero was sick]. It was very, very hard seeing that every day, but you wanted to be there to help," Kadlec said. "He was the coach. He was still the coach."

At the time of his father's death, Ray was a player agent living in Boston.

"It was tough. It was your dad. He really suffered at the end," said Shero, whose mother passed away two years ago, also from cancer.

In the end, it won't really change anything for those who knew Fred Shero -- those who grew up with him or played for him or coached alongside him or called him friend -- if he doesn't end up in the Hall of Fame.

"He gave the players the question and let them figure out the answer," Crisp said. "He was the leader of the band, and when he raised his baton, we went to work."

"I do know the contributions he made and the people who he made an impact on," Ray Shero said. "He made the game better and was ahead of his time, for sure."

If the call one day comes from the Hall of Fame, of course Shero will be proud.

"If it doesn't, it's not going to diminish what he did for the game or how proud I am of him," he said.

Plaque or no plaque, it's hard to argue that Fred Shero isn't already a Hall of Famer in spirit and in deed, if not in fact.

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NBCSports.com / EXCLUSIVE: Donald Fehr's post-meeting memo to players — "There is still a lot of work to be done"

Mike Halford

PHT has obtained a copy of NHLPA boss Donald Fehr's memo to union members following Thursday's CBA meetings in New York.

The letter, obtained from an NHL player, suggests the union is displeased with the league's latest offerings.

In addition to the ongoing issues of revenue sharing and the league's "Make Whole" idea, the NHLPA has concerns about the NHL's stance on contract length, unrestricted free agent eligibility and arbitration processes — issues that "significantly reduce a player's bargaining power and give the owner much more leverage over a player for most if not all of his career."

Here is Fehr's letter, in full:

Today, we met with the NHL off and on over several hours. A number of matters were discussed, including our proposal for a new pension plan, revenue sharing, the players' share and salary cap issues, and the owners' "make whole" concept. Present today were Chris Campoli, Mathieu Darche, Ron Hainsey, Johan Hedberg, Manny Malhotra, and Kevin Westgarth (David Backes was present for part of the day), as well as Mathieu Schneider, Joe Reekie, Steve Webb and Rob Zamuner.

No new proposals were exchanged on pension issues, but we will discuss this issue again tomorrow (Friday). We did receive a proposal on revenue sharing in response to the proposal we made this week, but this subject still needs considerable work.

In addition, we received a revamped proposal covering players' share and cap issues, their so-called "make whole", and player contracting issues. The owners finally did formally give us their "make whole" idea, which in dollar terms is similar to the discussions Bill Daly had with Steve Fehr a few days ago. While a step forward, a significant gap remains. Moreover, at the same time we were told that the owners want an "immediate reset" to 50/50 (which would significantly reduce the salary cap) and that their proposals to restrict crucial individual contracting rights must be agreed to. As you know, these include - among other things - losing a year of salary arbitration eligibility, allowing the team to file for salary arbitration in any year that the player can file, extending UFA eligibility to age 28 or 8 seasons, limiting contracts to 5 years, and permitting only 5% year to year variability in player contracts. Individually each is bad for players; taken together they would significantly reduce a player's bargaining power and give the owner much more leverage over a player for most if not all of his career.

In short, the concessions on future salary we have offered (at least \$948 Million to \$1.25 Billion over five years, depending on HRR growth) are not enough. We are still being told that more salaries must be conceded, and that very valuable player contracting rights must be surrendered. So, while we are meeting again, and while some steps are being taken, there is still a lot of work to be done and bridges to be crossed before an agreement can be made.

We will review today's discussions over night and tomorrow morning before meeting again with the owners. Following our meeting tomorrow with the league, we will be able to provide a broader update.

As always, please contact us if you have any questions or comments.

Best regards.

Don

Despite the letter's somewhat pessimistic tone, there are signs for optimism.

Talks have yet to break off — the NHLPA and NHL have met for over 17 hours over the last three days — and the two sides will enter their fourth consecutive day of negotiations on Friday, which were set to begin at 10 a.m. ET in New York.

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