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644317 Buffalo Sabres

Frustrated NHL reportedly requests two-week moratorium on talks, says union leaders have 'no genuine interest' in deal

John Vogl

The NHL lockout is getting worse. The league says it is so frustrated by talks with the NHL Players' Association that it wants to put an official halt on negotiations.

The league asked union officials for a two-week moratorium on negotiations Thursday, according to multiple reports. The sides haven't talked since Sunday after falling further apart on various collective bargaining issues.

"We are extremely disappointed in where we and the players find ourselves," NHL Deputy Commissioner Bill Daly told TSN.ca. "From our perspective, we have made repeated moves in the players' direction with absolutely no reciprocation. Unfortunately, we have determined we are involved with union leadership that has no genuine interest in reaching an agreement. Regardless of what we propose or how we suggest to compromise the answer is 'no.'"

"At some point you just have to say 'enough is enough.'"

NHLPA Executive Director Donald Fehr reportedly will take the league's moratorium request to the players today before responding.

The league has already canceled all games through November, and the window to avoid further cancellations is rapidly closing. In order to start the season Dec. 1, a date that would include seven days of training camp, a new CBA needs to be completed by next Friday.

The sides talked extensively last week, meeting nearly every day. But tempers flared as the weekend approached and negotiations ground to a halt.

"I'm more discouraged now than I have been at any point in the process," Daly told the Canadian Press.

Buffalo News LOADED: 11.16.2012

644318 Buffalo Sabres

Ever the optimist, LaFontaine hopes to see NHL on the ice before Christmas

John Vogl

This is the third lockout for Commissioner Gary Bettman. The first, in 1994-95, resulted in a shortened, 48-game season. The second, in 2004-05, saw the whole year wiped out.

This time, Pat LaFontaine hopes the NHL has learned enough to know that some games are better than none.

LaFontaine, in Buffalo to participate in a Sabres Alumni Association fundraiser Wednesday night, foresees at least some hockey in 2012-13. He played for the Sabres during Bettman's first lockout and can imagine a similar scenario.

"They've obviously done this before," LaFontaine said. "They've obviously lost a season before. But I'm fairly optimistic you'll see some kind of agreement by Dec. 1. I believe that. I feel real strongly that knowing what it

was like to lose a season, knowing what it was like to gain a half-season, they've been through both sides and know the importance of needing to have at least a half-season or more.

"I'm fairly optimistic that we'll see hockey. I hope before Christmas, but I think worst-case scenario – I'm an optimistic person – I see at least a half a season."

Buffalo News LOADED: 11.16.2012

644319 Carolina Hurricanes

No movement in NHL lockout

By Chip Alexander –

The Carolina Hurricanes' Eric Staal, left, Jay Harrison, center, and Cam Ward confer during a pick-up game as some of the Carolina Hurricanes players practice on their own at Raleigh Center Ice in Raleigh, NC on Nov. 14, 2012. The NHL is still not playing because of a labor dispute.

A week ago, the NHL labor talks were lengthy, intense and – at least many hoped and believed – productive.

This week: Nothing.

The NHL and NHL Players Association aren't even talking by phone, much less meeting. The two sides seem firmly entrenched on a collective bargaining agreement, differing on the details and refusing to budge, as the lockout continues and puts the hockey season in jeopardy.

The NHL, which has canceled all games through the end of this month, may soon chop off a few weeks of the December schedule. The 2013 Winter Classic, scheduled for New Year's Day, already has been axed.

Any momentum gained last week, when the two sides met in New York, apparently has been lost. The NHL has let it be known they will not be making any more CBA proposals. The union doesn't like what it has been presented. No meetings are scheduled.

NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly, asked Thursday by The Canadian Press about the CBA stalemate, said, "I'm more discouraged now than I have been at any point in the process."

Unless a season begins soon, the players will lose more money. Their third paychecks for the 2012-2013 season were due Thursday, but there is no pay when there's no play.

Donald Fehr, executive director of the NHLPA, had set a gloomy tone with his comments Friday about the NHL and commissioner Gary Bettman after a fourth straight day of talks last week.

"The owners made it clear that there is no give with respect to any of their proposals," Fehr said. "That unless players are prepared to take – and this is my phrase, not theirs – down to the comma, that there's nothing to do."

Still to be decided is how much the NHL will pay to honor existing players contracts, issues such as lengths of contracts and free agency, and how to handle the financial damage done to the league in a shortened season.

The league has offered to put \$211 million toward contracts to fund the "make whole" provision of their CBA proposal. The league apparently will not consider any further changes to its contracting requests, including a maximum of five-year contracts and unrestricted free agency beginning at age 28 or eight years of service.

"I don't know how you make an agreement if that's their position," Fehr said last Friday.

This week began with the Hockey Hall of Fame festivities in Toronto. NHLPA special counsel Steve Fehr caused a stir at a panel discussion in Toronto when he said, "When the moment is right, the deal could be done very quickly."

The right moment? Hockey fans have been waiting for that since Sept. 16, when the lockout began.

News Observer LOADED: 11.16.2012

644320 Chicago Blackhawks

NHL, players' association not talking

By Associated Press

NEW YORK — Now the NHL and the locked-out players' association aren't even talking by phone.

With the lockout about to enter its third month, communications between the fighting sides have come to a halt with no clear sign of what the next step will be or when it will be taken.

"No, we have not communicated today," NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly told The Associated Press on Wednesday in an email. "No meetings scheduled, and no plans to meet."

After four straight days of negotiations in New York last week, talks broke off angrily Friday night. Discussions resumed on Sunday, solely regarding player contract terms, but that meeting ended after only 90 minutes.

The union contends that the NHL doesn't want to get back together yet.

"The players remain prepared to resume negotiations at any time," NHLPA special counsel Steve Fehr said.

At this point, no decisions have been made to call off any more games, Daly said. So far, 327 games — all those scheduled through Nov. 30 and the New Year's Day outdoor Winter Classic — have been cancelled by the NHL.

More could be coming soon if a deal isn't reached. It is believed that an agreement would need to be in place by the end of next week for the season to get under way on Dec. 1.

That is starting to look unlikely because of the mere fact that the sides are unable to find common ground on the big issues keeping them apart. It is more than just finances preventing a deal. The disagreements over player contract terms have emerged as just big an impasse.

The NHL wants to limit contracts to five years, make rules to prohibit back-diving contracts the league feels circumvent the salary cap, keep players ineligible for unrestricted free agency until they are 28 or have eight years of professional service time, cut entry-level deals to two years, and make salary arbitration after five years.

A few hours into last Friday's session, negotiations broke down over the core economic differences that separate the sides.

A lockout wiped out the entire 2004-05 season.

Daily Herald Times LOADED: 11.16.2012

644321 Chicago Blackhawks

Blackhawks Classics: 1971 vs. Maple Leafs features eight Hall of Famers

TRACEY MYERS

Stan Mikita remembered that picture of Bobby Hull in the newspaper, the one where his former Chicago Blackhawks' teammate held up an oversized check for \$1 million when he signed with the Winnipeg Jets.

Mikita said some were angry at Hull's decision, "crying in their beer," as he put it. But Mikita had a different reaction.

"I got up and genuflected and said 'Thank you, Bobby,'" Mikita recalled. "I keep saying, it's the greatest move ever made by a hockey player, and Bobby Hull was the guy who did it. He gave us a new way of making a living. Now we can ask for more money and if they don't pay us we can go across the street and play for the other team. It was a hell of a move to do that for us and for himself, of course."

Six months prior to that signing in June of 1972, Hull and Mikita were in the midst of their final season together in Chicago, part of a Blackhawks squad that would win the West Division for the second consecutive season.

And on Friday night, Comcast SportsNet relives a classic from that season, the Blackhawks vs. Toronto Maple Leafs from Dec. 11, 1971.

Friday's Classic game featured eight future Hall of Fame inductees, including Mikita, Hull and Tony Esposito. The Blackhawks were in the midst of a 10-game undefeated streak at the time, and would go on to win the West by 21 points.

Earlier this week Mikita sat down with us to talk about those times, from that season to former teammates to his love of Chicago, where he played his entire career.

"The big deal with this whole thing is my wife, Jill. She wanted to know if we belong here or if we'd be happy somewhere else," Mikita said. "I couldn't have drawn it any better than what transpired for our family. Someone said Chicago's a town that never shuts down. They're probably right. Great people."

And as for that 1971-72 team, what made it so good?

"In one word: lucky. But I'm kidding, of course, on that one," Mikita said. "Billy Reay was our coach, and he gave us something to work for and with and put the right people together. All the fellows were on a one-way ticket to nowhere before that. When Billy had his famous talks, that's what turned us around."

Comcast SportsNet.com LOADED: 11.16.2012

644322 Chicago Blackhawks

Rockford won't be slowed by lockout

NINA FALCONE

It's been exactly two months since the NHL's collective bargaining agreement expired, and since then, anger, hostility and little hope have surrounded the negotiations between the league and union. But for some fans, this setback wouldn't slow them down and they've discovered a new outlet to experience the hockey they've been missing.

It was a Wednesday night and the BMO Harris Center was far from sold out. But the fans who were in attendance -- whether they were regulars at IceHogs games or Chicagoans searching for a way to reconnect with the Blackhawks during the lockout -- displayed a deep appreciation for the team and for the fact that these games are much for affordable.

Whether it was participating in chuck-a-puck during the intermission or dancing with others sitting around them when Gangnam Style played over the speakers, IceHogs fans seemed to share the in-game experience with not only the people they arrived with, but also those they didn't even know yet.

"The crowd isn't as full as an NHL game would be," said Jessika Hujar, who's been coming to Rockford, in addition to games in Chicago, for many years. "The tickets are a lot cheaper, which is a plus, and the atmosphere is still the same. We're all here to see the same team and whenever the team scores, everyone's up from their seats cheering. You can come here knowing nobody and before you know it, it's like you know everyone by the time you leave here. It's a really great experience."

There are a lot of NHL season ticket holders here, a lot of those people [from Chicago] now also have season tickets here."

One of those people being Kristin Wolf, a lifelong Blackhawks fan who attended her first IceHogs game at the beginning of this season and has since commuted two hours to see each matchup in Rockford.

"I bought tickets the day before the lockout started. The fans are all very, very dedicated here. At the United Center you have a lot of bandwagon fans. But everyone here is very into the game."

"It's not as loud or as big as a Hawks game would be, but still, the people behind us and around us are funny, everyone's laughing and having a good time," added Laura Menne, who was attending her first IceHogs game that night. "It's the same [general experience] you would get if you were at a Hawks game."

Now the same question continues that many have wondered since the start of the lockout: Will NHL fans come running back whenever the new collective bargaining agreement is in place?

"Part of me doesn't really mind [whether it ends this season]," Wolf said. "I can afford these games and I enjoy them. I'm getting really into here and I don't want to stop coming mid-season, so if the lockout ends it wouldn't really affect me that much because I come here now."

Comcast SportsNet.com LOADED: 11.16.2012

644323 Colorado Avalanche

Avalanche's Paul Stastny signs with German League team

By Adrian Dater

As the NHL lockout drags on, a fourth member of the Avalanche signed with a European professional hockey team.

Paul Stastny, the Avalanche's highest-paid player, signed a provisional contract Thursday with a team in Munich — Red Bull Munchen — and might play his first game with the team Friday night.

Stastny joins Matt Duchene, Semyon Varlamov and Gabriel Landeskog as Avalanche players signing with European teams.

"Off to Deutschland to join the RedBulls of Munich! Bittersweet feeling, hope to be back in Denver soon playing for the Avs," Stastny said in a tweet before boarding a plane bound for Germany.

Stastny, who was entering into his fourth year of a five-year contract worth \$33 million with Colorado before the lockout, posted 53 points (21 goals) in 79 games last season. That was the lowest per-game point average of his six seasons.

"The lockout allows us, even if only for a short time, (to) strengthen a lot," Munchen general manager Christian Winkler told the website EuroLanthe. "The obligation certainly entails also a risk, because you do not know when the lockout ends."

The lockout, entering its 62nd day Friday, shows no signs of ending soon. NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly, in fact, told The Canadian Press: "I'm more discouraged now than I have been at any point in the process."

Daly also told the CP the league may take a two-week break from negotiations, blaming the players.

"I'm disappointed because we don't have a negotiating partner that has any genuine interest in reaching an agreement. Zero interest," Daly said.

Denver Post: LOADED: 11.16.2012

644324 Colorado Avalanche

Is Stan Kroenke the most powerful man in sports?

By The Denver Post

We already knew Stan Kroenke held a bit of power in Denver. In this week's Sports Illustrated, the magazine called him the "most powerful man in sports."

In a lengthy profile, the owner of the NHL's Avalanche, NBA's Nuggets, MLS' Rapids, NFL's St. Louis Rams and Arsenal of the English Premier League was described as a "grounded" Midwesterner who walked 2½ miles each way to a one-room schoolhouse as a kid.

The reclusive mogul, who has turned down many interview requests from local media in the past, did not reveal too much but allowed he hasn't been sick since 2001.

"And I could swear," Kroenke told the magazine, "that (getting sick) came from drinking out of the Stanley Cup."

Arsenal fans in London have complained about the club's American owner, calling him "Silent Stan" and saying he's cheap.

Denver Post: LOADED: 11.16.2012

644325 Columbus Blue Jackets

Blue Jackets: As lockout continues, Boll heads to Finland

By Aaron Portzline

With no end in sight to the NHL lockout, more players are looking for work overseas. Blue Jackets winger Jared Boll is the latest.

Boll has agreed to play for TUTO in Finland's second-tier league, and the contract likely will be completed today or Saturday.

"My bags are packed and I'm ready to go," Boll said. "I've just reached the point here where it's enough sitting around and waiting for stuff to get going."

Boll likely will make his debut next weekend. He said he's looking forward to playing on the wider, Olympic-sized ice surface, and playing in a league that rarely has fights. Since debuting in the NHL five seasons ago, Boll has 113 fighting majors, tops in the league during that span.

"It'll be good for me," Boll said. "There's a lot of skating on the big ice and there's no fighting, so I can just focus on the hockey. I'm going to have fun with that. It'll be nice to play without having that thought in the back of your head, that you have to fight all the time. The goal is to be in the best shape possible for when this does get settled."

TUTO is 13-5-1, third place in the league.

Columbus Dispatch LOADED: 11.16.2012

644326 Columbus Blue Jackets

NHL lockout: Bettman seeks two-week bargaining moratorium

By Aaron Portzline

NHL commissioner Gary Bettman has come up with the most peculiar plan yet to solve the two-month-old lockout.

In a conversation Wednesday with NHL Players' Association executive director Donald Fehr, Bettman suggested a two-week moratorium on collective bargaining talks, even as the 2012-13 season ticks away.

"We have made repeated moves in the players' direction with absolutely no reciprocation," NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly told Canadian sports network TSN last night. "Unfortunately, we have determined we are involved with union leadership that has no genuine interest in reaching an agreement."

"Regardless of what we propose or how we suggest to compromise, the answer is 'no.' At some point, you have to say enough is enough."

The union, after talking to players over the past 24 hours, could respond to Bettman today. If they agree, it would make mid- to late December the earliest time possible to start a shortened season.

The news does not bode well for the 2013 All-Star Game, scheduled to be played at Nationwide Arena on Jan. 27. The fate of the game already might have been determined, though neither the Blue Jackets nor Franklin County, which owns Nationwide Arena, had heard from the NHL as of yesterday.

If the league does reach a new agreement with players and has a shortened season, they will compact the schedule to play as many games as possible. In that scenario, it's hard to envision the league taking a four- or five-day midseason break.

Already, 321 regular-season games and the Winter Classic outdoor game on Jan. 1 have been canceled. With yesterday's news, a new batch of games likely will get canceled within days.

"This just makes you so angry," Blue Jackets winger Derek Dorsett said. "This whole process has been taking from players. Not growing the game, not finding an agreement that's fair, just take and take and take. We're supposed to just say 'yes' to all of their demands, is that right?"

"It makes me angry — for the fans, for the game, for the people who make their living around the game and are really hurting because of this. I can't believe it's reached this point. For our game, it's embarrassing."

Columbus Dispatch LOADED: 11.16.2012

644327 Dallas Stars

Cowlshaw: NHL lockout - owners 'full of it' and players waiting to end up with a bad deal

Tim Cowlshaw

Columnist Tim Cowlshaw answered questions in a chat Thursday. Here are some highlights.

McKenzie ... Do you think there might be an ugly NHL split between the Canadian players with no where to go and the European stars drawing checks right now?

Tim Cowlshaw: haha, no, the Canadian players are welcome to head to Europe, too. Where's Jamie Benn, Hamburg? Last I checked he wasn't German.

Jane ... With the Winter Classic dead, is there any significant date to use as a deadline for the NHL strike or should we just anticipate the World Championships?

Tim Cowlshaw: Great question, Jane. Thing sickens me. Hate to think about it. Owners are completely full of it while players are just going to wait and wait, thanks to Donald Fehr, in order to wind up with a bad deal. The game had been growing since the last lockout, it had had the good fortune of Penguins-Wings and Blackhawks-Flyers and Bruins winning Cups. It had established a neat tradition as you mention, the Winter Classic, made infinitely cooler by HBO. The game, though still not as open as it should be with goalies still looking like they're bouncing around the moon in a Bridgestone commercial, has improved. Now this. Back to square zero.

Dallas Morning News LOADED: 11.16.2012

644328 Detroit Red Wings

Damien Brunner shining on Henrik Zetterberg's team

By Helene St. James

Handcuffed from doing any coaching himself, Mike Babcock eagerly is tracking what his players are doing during the lockout, especially Damien Brunner.

The NHL and the players' association remain at odds over a new collective bargaining agreement. Instead of being hands-on, Babcock is only eyes-on with the Red Wings scattered around various places.

"I try to follow what's going on with our group, the injuries and the development," Babcock told the Free Press on Monday while attending an event at Joe Louis Arena.

The injured include Valteri Filppula (knee), Cory Emmerton (finger) and Patrick Eaves (concussion dating to last year).

There isn't much to check on with Pavel Datsyuk and Henrik Zetterberg, who are dominating in Russia and Switzerland, respectively. But to see Brunner, a guy whom the Wings just signed this summer, have another great season with Zug in Switzerland is fantastic for the organization, all the more so because Brunner is playing with Zetterberg.

Brunner leads the team with 11 goals and 21 assists for 32 points in 18 games.

"I've monitored that real close," Babcock said. "We think he's a real fit. So the more positive things he keeps doing, and especially when you do it with a player like Zetterberg -- I mean, if Z thinks you can play, and he wants to play with you, that's pretty good."

The Wings originally had planned to bring Brunner, 26, to Grand Rapids so he could get acclimated to the smaller ice surface of North American hockey. But given how he's thriving in Switzerland, and that there's no end in sight to the NHL lockout, management decided Brunner may as well stay with Zug.

"Actually it's worked out great, with Henrik Zetterberg going there, they're playing on the same line, and it looks like they found chemistry over there," general manager Ken Holland said. "The plan now is ... when and if we look like we're close to a CBA and getting up and running, he'll come and maybe play two or three games in Grand Rapids."

Detroit Free Press LOADED: 11.16.2012

644329 Detroit Red Wings

Red Wings prospect Marek Tvrdon out for season due to blood clot in his shoulder

Ansar Khan

Detroit Red Wings forward prospect Marek Tvrdon is out for the season due to a blood clot in his left shoulder, but was relieved to learn it is not a career-ending condition.

Tvrdon, 19, is expected to be able to begin his pro career with the Grand Rapids Griffins next season.

Tvrdon, the leading scorer for the Vancouver Giants of the Western Hockey League, had a procedure Monday to remove the clot.

"I was really scared when the doctor say I can maybe never play hockey anymore," Tvrdon told the Vancouver Sun. "The Detroit Red Wings were scared. My agent was scared. Now I feel better because they tell me I can still play hockey."

The Red Wings selected Tvrdon in the fourth round of the 2011 entry draft (115th overall) They signed the native Slovakian to a three-year contract in July.

Tvrdon likely will need surgery once the cause of the blood clot is determined.

"Marek had a small blockage isolated to a single vein in his left shoulder," Giants general manager Scott Bonner said in a statement on the team's Web site. "It was completely and rapidly dissolved and he is doing very well.

"Marek is under the excellent care of numerous specialists and he is recovering quickly. He will not be returning this season, but he is expected to have a full recovery and future career as a hockey player."

Tvrdon has had an injury-plagued junior career. He appeared in only 12 games in 2010-11 before undergoing season-ending shoulder surgery.

The Red Wings like his size (6-foot-2, 210), strength and offensive ability. He was leading the Giants with 22 points in 18 games, after picking up 31 goals and 43 assists in 60 games in 2011-12.

Michigan Live LOADED: 11.16.2012

644330 Detroit Red Wings

Red Wings 'Ask Ansar' questions: Readers wonder what it would take to remove Gary Bettman

Ansar Khan

The league has expanded by six teams during his tenure, in many Sun Belt markets where it seemed inconceivable 30 years ago that the NHL could survive (many hockey fans would argue that's not a good thing).

The league signed a 10-year, \$2 billion TV contract with the NBC Sports Group in April 2011. The outdoor games have been a huge success. There are many more American-born players in the NHL than ever before (about 23 percent of the league).

The league achieved its "cost certainty" with the implementation of a hard salary cap in 2005-06.

So, what will be Bettman's legacy?

Most probably will remember him as the commissioner in charge during three work stoppages, including the only season cancellation (2004-05) of any major sports league.

And the vitriol many fans spew toward Bettman surely will increase if another NHL season is scrapped.

Several M-Live readers, in the latest installment of "Ask Ansar," wonder what it would take to have Bettman removed from office.

Question: I was just wondering who decides the new commissioner if a deal is not reached. The reason for the question is because I heard of some fans boycotting the NHL until Bettman is gone. --Matty.

Answer: Matty, I hate to break it to you, but there will be no new commissioner, whether the season is canceled or not. Bettman is here is stay. He's not going to be fired, and when you're making \$8 million a year and have the power to shut down a league every time a collective bargaining agreement expires, there's little motivation to resign.

Q. Who has the power to fire Gary Bettman? Seems the NHL has been in turmoil ever since he took office. Many people, including myself, have come to be less and less enthusiastic about hockey with all the lockouts, changes to the game, and selfish owners. Not exactly sure who could take over as commissioner of the NHL at this time, but I believe it's time for a change, not on the ice or locker rooms, but in the front office, on the nameplate outside the commissioner's office. --N15bluliner.

A. Bettman signed a five-year extension in November 2010. It would take a vote of no less than three-fourths of the owners to have him removed.

Q. The longer the lockout continues the more people will lose interest and not return. This is all a big joke and Bettman is just a puppet and does not know what to do. Time to get new blood in there! --Robin.

A. Bettman does what the owners tell him to do, for the most part. He needs the approval of only eight owners to accept or reject any labor proposal from the players union. The league claims all 30 owners support this lockout. We can't know for sure since the league has prohibited owners and team executives from commenting about CBA issues. But, if three-fourths of the owners told Bettman to do what it takes to get an agreement, we would have a deal.

Q. From all that I have read and heard, the players and fans have one common enemy, Gary Bettman. The level of hate regarding this man is epic. The players could win over the fan base by saying to the owners, "We will take less if you would remove Mr. Bettman as commissioner." Have you heard anything along these lines? --David.

A. No. If the players made that kind of proposal, my guess is the owners' response would be, "We'll keep Bettman, and you will take less money anyway and like it."

Q. Do you think it's time for Gary Bettman to be forced into retirement? -- Rich.

A. From the fans' and players' standpoint, yes, because his tenure has been marked with labor strife. But he only needs to please his bosses, at least a segment of them. I said this during the last lockout and I'll say it again: If the owners get what they want in this new CBA, they're not going to fire Bettman, they would be more inclined to give him a raise and build a statue in his honor.

Q. What are the possibilities the union doesn't make it out of this lockout? Basically, if there is an impasse, can't the owners start bringing in replacement players? Or does another league altogether start up to compete with the player-less NHL? Seems this has happened in the past, if memory serves me correctly. Didn't Gordie (Howe) play for a league that was competing with the NHL for a while? Are we looking at history repeating? Is this a union-busting ploy? Eventually the union would run out

of money without the players getting paid. Then the players would cross the line. This is another lost season, isn't it? --Jim.

A. A lot to digest there, Jim.

The union will make it out of his lockout. There will always be a players union, but it might be weaker, which seems to be the owners' agenda. So yes, I think the league would like to bust the union.

If there is an impasse, can the league unilaterally impose its own labor rules? That is a legal question I can't answer. I don't think the NHL would consider bringing in replacement players after the season. Then again, if it is able to, maybe the league opens its doors in the off-season and says, "Whoever wants to play by our rules is welcome," assuming there is no CBA.

No rival league will be formed. It happened in 1972 with the World Hockey Association, but this is a different era. It would take too much money. Some tried to form a new WHA during the 2004-05 lockout, but it was a joke that few took seriously and it failed miserably before it even got off the ground.

Q. I heard several "experts" predict in September the lockout would end early to mid-December. What is your opinion on when we will see hockey again? Also, I read your report on Pavel Datsyuk and you asked if Pav would be back after his contract expires. I don't believe he will, I think he will return to Russia, but I'm hoping I'm wrong. What do you think Pav will do? -- Ben.

A. Your guess on when the lockout will end is as good as mine. I am surprised it has lasted this long. Heading into this mess, I really thought they would be playing by Christmas. They still might get it settled in time to start up in December, but I doubt it. If the season is salvaged I think it would start in January. That's what happened in 1995, when they played a 48-game season.

I share your opinion on Datsyuk's future. I have a feeling he will finish his career in Russia after his contract expires in 2013-14. But, that's just pure speculation on my part. Datsyuk keeps his cards close to the vest.

Q. What exactly does the "Make Whole" provision mean? From what I've read I think it has something to do with not honoring the contracts they made earlier this year? --Claudia.

A. The owners want to reduce the players' share of hockey-related revenues from 57 percent to 50 percent in the first year of the new CBA. The union has shown a willingness to move in that direction but wants all current contracts honored in full. The owners' "Make Whole" provision attempts to address this issue.

I asked a player to explain it in layman's terms. He said it amounts to whose share of the pie that money will come from. He said under the owners' first "Make Whole" proposal, "players would be paying players." The league has since moved in the union's direction, agreeing to pay a chunk of what it would cost to honor contracts in full. But they haven't settled on this issue.

Thanks for the questions. We'll do this again in a few weeks. Hopefully, we can talk more about hockey than labor issues.

Michigan Live LOADED: 11.16.2012

644331 Detroit Red Wings

Red Wings scouting report: Streaky Johan Franzen needs to display more consistency

Ansar Khan |

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

Johan Franzen

Position: Right wing/Left wing

Age: 32

Height/weight: 6-3/223

How acquired: Selected in third round (97th overall) of 2004 entry draft.

Contract: Eight years remaining on an 11-year deal that has a salary-cap hit of \$3.95 million.

2011-12 stats: 77 games, 29 goals, 27 assists, 56 points, plus-23 rating, 40 penalty minutes.

Career stats: 472 games, 150 goals, 125 assists, 275 points, plus-86 rating, 288 penalty minutes.

What he's doing during the lockout: He's skating with several teammates at a suburban Detroit rink.

Strengths: He has a good combination of size and skill. Good hands enable him to score in traffic around the net. He has a tremendous wrist shot that requires little recoil. He is capable of scoring goals in bunches and can elevate his game in the playoffs. He handles the puck well. He skates well for a big man.

Weaknesses: For his size and skill set, he should be one of the game's premier power forwards. But he takes too many nights off where he makes little impact. Needs to play with more intensity on a consistent basis. Despite his size and strength, he gets roughed up a lot, and he doesn't dish it out enough.

2011-12 in review: Led team in goals for second year in a row... Led team in power-play goals (11) and game-winning goals (10). ... Tied for team lead in plus-minus rating with career-best plus-23. ... Had the most missed shots on the team (100). ... Had just one point (a goal) in five playoff games. ... Recorded second career regular season hat trick Nov. 8 vs. Colorado (he has three in the playoffs). ... Missed five games due to back spasms March 17-26.

2012-13 outlook: Franzen talked after the playoffs about the team needing to have more fun and get some joy back. He could do his part by playing with more intensity, like he did prior to last season. He'll probably play on Pavel Datsyuk's line again, which will assure him of getting plenty of scoring chances.

Do you expect Franzen to score in the 30-goal range again? Should he be more productive? Or do you think his best days are behind him?

Michigan Live LOADED: 11.16.2012

644332 Edmonton Oilers

Sagging Oklahoma City Barons look at weekend tilts as opportunity to move up AHL standings

By Mike Baldwin,

OKLAHOMA CITY — If the American Hockey League playoffs started Friday, the Oklahoma City Barons would be left out.

Not exactly the start that was expected for a roster some labeled an AHL dream team.

In ninth place in the Western Conference, the Barons view a two-game series against the Milwaukee Admirals on Friday and Saturday at the Cox Convention Center as an opportunity to move up the standings.

Edmonton Journal: LOADED: 11.16.2012

644333 Edmonton Oilers

Nail Yakupov blasted by NHL insider: "Is that all there is?"

David Staples

Nail Yakupov blasted by NHL insider: Is that all there is? Every hero needs an arch enemy and it appears that first overall draft pick Nail Yakupov of the Edmonton Oilers may have found one in sports writer Damien Cox of Sportsnet.

Cox, known for his incendiary opinions, was on the case of Yakupov on Wednesday night, after Yakupov was ineffective against Team WHL in the Subway Series.

"Oiler fans gotta be wondering watching Yakupov tonite – is that all there is?" Cox tweeted.

And later, during the shootout: "Now that was one lame SO attempt by Yakupov. Oy. Shinkaruk shows him how to do it."

The obvious response to Cox's shot is: Leafs fans gotta be wondering watching their team since 1968 — is that all there is?

But no need to get snippy here.

The fact is that Oilers fans aren't wondering. Why would we be?

A sample size of one game might be enough to get a Toronto sports writer wondering about a young player's merit, but that's not the practice in Edmonton.

Yakupov did have a weak game according to one of hockey's most discerning pair of eyes, the Cult's Bruce McCurdy, a member of the Oilers analytics team.

McCurdy's report on Yakupov in this tight-checking game: "There was little room to manoeuvre throughout the night, with the key to successful puck-handling being to move it along as quickly as possible. Yakupov defied this convention late in the third period with one terrific rush in which he took on about four Canadians, but was eventually cornered, forced to pull up, and make a good pass back to the point. The path to the net was mighty hard to navigate. His best shot came on a one-time blast from out near the blue line, and while he showed his quality time and again with short bursts and sharp passing, he created little that seriously troubled Brossoit."

Bad games happen, even to great young players.

And, as Yakupov's agent Igor Larionov told the Journal's Joanne Ireland, it's unlikely Yakupov will dominate in this series, because the Canadians are keying on him, the one major threat to score on the Russian team.

"When he plays in Edmonton, there will be five guys (who are dangerous) and you can't shadow all five. It's like playing the KLM line. It's impossible," Larionov told Ireland.

When it comes to Yakupov, the Subway Series is a good test, but the real test has been his play in the KHL.

So far, Yakupov has more goals than Alex Ovechkin, Pavel Datsyuk or Evgeni Malkin. Only eight other KHL players have more than Yakupov's ten goals in 13 games. Every other player ahead of Yakupov on the list has played more than 20 games.

So that, as Oilers fans know, is what there is with Yakupov.

Edmonton Journal: LOADED: 11.16.2012

644334 Edmonton Oilers

Edmonton Oilers' Fab 5 can't wait to do it in the NHL

By Robert Tychkowski,

Even after scoring an overtime winner in Abbotsford, Justin Schultz's shoulders still sagged a little when he found out where he and the Edmonton Oilers should have been playing that Saturday.

If there wasn't a lockout, Schultz, Taylor Hall, Jordan Eberle, Ryan Nugent-Hopkins and Nail Yakupov would have been in Pittsburgh's splashy new arena, taking on Sidney Crosby, Evgeni Malkin and the Penguins.

Ouch.

"It's definitely crappy," the prized free-agent catch said of the missed opportunity. "You want to be playing at the highest level possible and it's my dream to play in the NHL, so it kind of sucks."

For everyone. After watching six straight years of miserable, losing hockey, Oilers fans thought they finally had something entertaining and competitive to cheer for this winter.

And after spending their entire brief NHL careers in a cellar, Hall, Eberle and Nugent-Hopkins thought two more impact players might be enough to finally push this team into the sunlight.

With Yakupov tearing up the Russian league and Schultz needing about a week to establish himself as one of the best defencemen in the AHL, it would have been nice to see what the Oilers could do.

Instead, another one of Gary Bettman's nuclear winters shelved everything.

If you hate this, Edmonton, you're not alone: the Fab Five hates it, too.

"I feel bad for the fans because they know that these guys are coming in and how well they're doing in the other leagues," said Hall.

"It really does suck because I think this year, after I see how well Schultz and Yakupov have done, is really the year where we turn the corner and make some strides as an organization.

"There's still a couple pieces that we need to add, but with the players we have now, the young players, born from 1990 to 1993, it's a pretty tight span and all these players are all coming in with the same attitude — they want to win."

Schultz and Yakupov were going to fill two of Edmonton's biggest needs — an offensive defenceman and a sniper who loves to shoot the puck. The Oilers aren't a finished product by any stretch, but this is a good start and they really wanted to see how it stacked up in Pittsburgh, New York or Vancouver.

Not Abbotsford.

"Hopefully it ends soon so we have enough of a season to prove ourselves," said Hall. "Because I really think the guys we had coming in were going to make an impact."

Being frustrated that they're not in the NHL doesn't mean they're hating Oklahoma, though. Quite the opposite. The kids believe they have the best situation of the entire lockout landscape — playing together in a tough, North American league.

"I think it's good that we're all playing here," said Eberle. "There's a lot of the core pieces of the Oilers who are here that are going to be able to lead the team in the future. Hopefully getting some more wins and bringing that winning attitude back to Edmonton.

"Everyone wants the NHL to start, but the best-case scenario is that we're here. Everybody recognizes that."

Like the Boys on the Bus 30 years ago, they're forging chemistry and friendships that will make them closer and stronger. Hall and Eberle live together in OKC, in the same building as roomies Schultz and Nugent-Hopkins.

It's a lot better than being stranded down there by yourself.

"It's building chemistry with the guys, not only on the ice but off the ice," said Schultz. "We all get along well, we all hang out, we live in the same spot. It's a great thing for us and we're going to make the most of it.

"It's definitely nice. We all have the same interests, we hang out together and I think it translates on the ice pretty well."

Edmonton Sun: LOADED: 11.16.2012

644335 Edmonton Oilers

Justin Schultz picked the Edmonton Oilers for a reason

Staff

Being able to grow up with a handful of elite teammates is one of the biggest reasons Justin Schultz chose the Edmonton Oilers in the first place.

"It was probably THE biggest reason. I was looking at what's best for my hockey career and I felt that all these young guys here give me a chance to improve myself and grow up with a team around my age and hopefully have a lot of success.

"We want Stanley Cups, hopefully a couple of them, that's what you dream of when you're a kid. I think we have the talent here to do it. Start building chemistry down here and when we get up there we're going to be older and more experienced and we can play a number of years together and have a lot of success."

Oklahoma City isn't exactly what Schultz meant when he said he wanted to be playing alongside Taylor Hall, Jordan Eberle and Ryan Nugent-Hopkins, but it's the thought that counts.

"I didn't really know what to expect coming in, but as soon as I started skating with him in the summer I was pretty excited to have him a part of our team," said Eberle, who's equally excited that Schultz feels the same way about Edmonton.

"I think it's big that he recognized the direction we're going and chose here. He had the option to go anywhere he wanted. It wasn't too long ago that free agents wouldn't sign here, right? To recognize that we're headed in a good direction, and where he would fit in, maybe it shows other free agents to maybe take a second look at us.

"People are starting to recognize the way we're building, the young talent we have."

The only thing missing is Nail Yakupov ... and Edmonton.

"He's doing unreal," said Schultz. "I can't wait until we can all come together and play in the NHL."

Edmonton Sun: LOADED: 11.16.2012

644336 Florida Panthers

Panthers' Versteeg off injured list, helping college by coaching

By Harvey Fialkov, Sun Sentinel

Panthers forward Kris Versteeg has been taken off the NHL injured list and has joined his teammates as being officially locked out, a Panthers spokesman confirmed Thursday.

Versteeg had been the lone Panthers player allowed to use the team training facility and medical staff in Coral Springs because he had been rehabilitating his surgically repaired hip. The injury occurred last season, so Versteeg was eligible to collect his first few paychecks in October.

"I met with the team doctor on Monday and he cleared me to play," Versteeg said by phone.

Versteeg, the team's third-leading scorer with 54 points in his first season with the Panthers, has returned to his Canadian hometown of Lethbridge, Alberta to serve as an unofficial assistant coach at the University of Lethbridge.

"I want to be with my family. I've been away from them rehabbing in Florida for so long," Versteeg said. "Maybe if I hadn't been rehabbing I'd be going to Europe to play, like a lot of the other players. The team has been struggling, so it's a good opportunity to see the game from the other side. I'm leaving my options open, too. If [NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman] keeps mucking it up like he's done in past seasons, I'll either go to school or Europe."

Versteeg, 26, didn't attend college, instead choosing to play three seasons of junior hockey for the Lethbridge Hurricanes of the Western Hockey League from 2002-05.

Versteeg will skate and work out regularly with the Pronghorns. In case the season is canceled, Versteeg has enrolled at the university, where he would be studying sociology and business in the second semester.

"I haven't been to school since 2004, so it might kick my butt," Versteeg joked. "It's frustrating not playing the game you love."

Sun Sentinel LOADED: 11.16.2012

644337 Los Angeles Kings

Down on the "farm" with Dwight and Jordan-Part 1

Posted by Jim Fox

I caught up with Dwight King and Jordan Nolan recently and had a chance to look back to last year and the successes...to discuss what is happening now and also to give me a scouting report on some of their Monarchs teammates...in Part 1 they discuss their day with the Stanley Cup, sharing it with friends and family and help they have received from family members on the road to the Cup!

JF: Take us through what you did when you had the Stanley Cup.

Jordan Nolan: Me and my brother picked up the Cup at about seven in the morning and then brought it back home and into Garden River with my parents, took some pictures with the family and then we actually brought it to the graveyard...my dad's parents grave site and we had some aunts and uncles there and it was pretty emotional...so that was definitely nice to do and then after that we had some pictures and we just showed the youth of Garden River and then after that we had a little parade and started it at our community center...there was a few hundred people there all wanting to get a first look at the cup when we entered into town...then we did a parade, that took an hour and half and stopped for pictures as this one landmark in the community and then we did pictures and autographs for about two hours, which took us to about 2 o' clock. After that we had family over at the house for a bit, took some more pictures, so it was definitely a busy morning and afternoon. But after that, I rented a bus, I had 10 buddies in town so my buddies and my brother we took a ride to the city and showed my buddies Sault Ste. Marie and took some pictures on the water and we really just spent the afternoon just hanging out with the Cup and just doing normal things and then at night time from 6 to 8, we had a banquet at a hotel in town for all of the volunteers who helped out at the parade and family and friends from out of town came to take pictures with the Cup and then after that we rented another bus to fit more people and we went to Boston Pizza and a few other restaurants and bars throughout the night. Then it headed off to Kevin Westgarth...he sent car and he picked it up at 12 midnight...so it was a long day.

Dwight King: I got it in the morning (Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan) , I started off with just a family meal at my brother's acreage...from there did some picture taking with just family...then went to town and did a public viewing for the community at the rink where I played growing up so a lot of people got to come to and see that. I actually went to see my grandmother, she lives in town at the lodge and stopped in the new rink just outside of town on the way home and came back to the farm, went for a ride with the horses with my dad around the racetrack and had a big extended family, friends kind off party/dance to end the evening.

JF: Can remember any reactions from non-family members...people that were kind of awed when they saw the cup...anything that stands out?

Jordan Nolan: Not too many stories...one I do remember...I picked the Cup up at 7 in the morning and I put it in the front seat and I was driving home and one of my buddies—I guess he was driving by me that morning and he sent me a quick text me saying the Cup looks good in the front seat of your car, that was probably one of the weirdest things. Other than that, just my friends and just how excited they were for the day and the night, so that's pretty much it.

Dwight King: I mean everyone was just taking it all in. Obviously with the presence of the Stanley Cup, there are a lot of pictures being taken and I think everybody enjoyed the history behind it and being able to see it in person and touch it...so I think everybody enjoyed it. I mean there's a lot of passionate hockey fans around the area where I grew up, I couldn't name anybody in particular but there was a lot of big smiles and some priceless expressions on people's faces when they did get the moment. I think being able to watch a lot of the people come in for the pictures, it was special to see...even the kids being able to see it for the first time, it was something I will never forget.

JF: Obviously your father (Ted) played and he coached...what did you learn from your dad along the way that helped you last year on your journey to winning the Stanley Cup?

Jordan Nolan: I can't think of anything specific about the difference between last year and the past few years. I obviously struggled when I was playing junior hockey...I wasn't as good as I should have been and I didn't work as hard as I should have, so my dad told me to really just focus for about three years and dedicate everything you have to hockey and if this is what you want to do make sure you do it the right way and have no regrets once your done so that's really just what I did, pretty much when I got called up to LA, I knew that's where I wanted to play, that's what my dream was...to play in the NHL and try and win the Stanley Cup, obviously when I first got called up I wasn't thinking about winning the Stanley Cup, I was thinking about staying there so I really just dedicated everything I had on ice and off ice I put the hard work into the gym and I really just gave it my all. I made sure that Darryl liked me. I made sure that I worked hard for the team and did everything for the team. It was definitely an exciting time in my life and I was just trying pretty much help the team out, stay in the lineup, just work my hardest—I knew that this doesn't happen every day. My dad said, just stay confident. Just keep working and hopefully you can become a Stanley Cup Champion.

JF: Your older brother DJ plays...what do you think you've learned from DJ along the way that really helped you last year in your journey to the Stanley Cup Championship?

Dwight King: He's helped me in my whole life growing up, especially a brother who set the path I followed...from moving away from home to playing in the same midget organization, the same junior organization, being drafted and making that transition from the AHL to NHL. I think it's just the fact that he was there to just talk me through...the ups and downs of a season for a hockey player can be tougher when you're younger and I guess the advice and the support that he's given me over the years...I'm very appreciative of that.

JF: Is there anything special about sharing the experience with him because he's still on his journey to try to win. Is there anything there that makes it so much better because you guys are brothers?

Dwight King: Yeah, obviously when you share the memory with someone who has put in the time, hasn't been rewarded the same but has the same dream, the same fire to achieve what any hockey player aspires to get to and have him be totally supportive in the role of a brother has made it special for me to share with him and for him to enjoy just as much as I have, knowing that he'd like it that way and I would be in the same situation if he were in my shoes.

LA Kings Insider: LOADED: 11.16.2012

644338 Minnesota Wild

Gophers' Erik Haula: He's a Finnesotan

Article by: MICHAEL RUSSO

Finland-born Erik Haula has put down hockey roots in Minnesota as a prep star and a Gopher. Next, he might have a future with the NHL's Wild.

He doesn't have blond hair. He's not stoic and private. He doesn't routinely chow down reindeer meat and go for daily saunas. His accent is barely noticeable.

He grew up watching American football, went to high school in Minnesota, goes to college at the University of Minnesota, and hopes to someday play for the Wild 8 miles away at Xcel Energy Center.

Erik Haula may have been born in Pori, Finland, but if you didn't know any better, you'd think he was born and bred in Minnesota.

"I hear a lot from people: 'You don't have an accent. No chance you're really from Finland.' I promise, I am. I just feel like a Minnesotan," said Haula, 21, the Gophers' often overshadowed, high-scoring, high-speed junior second-line keskushyökkääjä (center). "I've been here almost five years now -- one-quarter of my life. I love it in Minnesota, and hopefully I have a long future here."

The Gophers "were on him" from the moment he came abroad to Shattuck-St. Mary's at age 17. After being Shattuck's second-leading scorer with 84 points in 2008-09, Haula played for the Omaha Lancers of the USHL, where he was fifth in the league with 72 points.

644339 Minnesota Wild

NHL's Bill Daly: "Maybe they should get a reality check"

Posted by: Michael Russo

It appears as if the NHL and NHL Players' Association are about to take a two-week moratorium.

After NHLPA Executive Director Donald Fehr reportedly told NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman he didn't know how to proceed from here, Bettman suggested taking a two-week break from negotiations.

In an email to the Star Tribune, Deputy Commissioner Bill Daly said: "I find it incredible that the Union is suggesting that we are somehow "close" to a deal. They have utterly refused to negotiate for months. They have made essentially one proposal -- five times. They continue to request a "guaranteed" Players Share as part of the next agreement and we repeatedly tell them maybe they should get a reality check. And in the mean time, maybe they can make their position clear to us on 50-50, on the make-whole and on Player Contracting issues."

I sent an email to the NHLPA seeking response. From special counsel Steve Fehr:

"Of course everyone on the players' side wants to reach an agreement. The players have offered the owners concessions worth about a billion dollars. What exactly have the owners offered the players? We believe that it is more likely that we will make progress if we meet than if we don't. So we are ready to meet. If indeed they do not want to meet, it will be at least the third time in the last three months that they have shut down the dialogue, saying they will not meet unless the players meet their preconditions. What does that tell you about their interest in resolving this?"

Talks broke off Sunday after a 90-minute meeting in New York. It followed four days of meetings last week that ended poorly Friday during a short meeting and heated exchange between a few players and owners.

Games have been canceled until Nov. 30. Next week, the NHL will likely have to cancel a fresh slate of games -- likely at least the first half of December.

Players missed their third paycheck Thursday.

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644340 Minnesota Wild

Blake Geoffrion, former Nashville Predators forward, released from hospital

Josh Cooper

Last Friday, former Predators forward Blake Geoffrion was having emergency surgery for a depressed skull fracture.

On Wednesday, he took a walk for about 30 minutes and was discharged from Montreal General Hospital. Though his recovery is supposed to be long and arduous, he's on the right track.

"He's happy to be out of the hospital and into some nice, fresh air, and take a hot shower and put some fresh clothes on," said his father, Danny Geoffrion. "He's just following the doctors instructions to take it easy, and that's what he's doing."

Blake, who grew up in Brentwood, was playing for the Hamilton Bulldogs in an American Hockey League game on Friday at Montreal's Bell Centre.

He went airborne as Syracuse Crunch player Jean-Philippe Côté delivered a hit, and when he landed, the bone two inches above his left ear hit Côté's skate and fractured.

The frightening nature of the injury and the surgery made the positive developments of the last few days even more remarkable to Blake's family.

In three years with the Gophers, the second non-North American in school history is the active leading scorer with 84 points, led the Gophers with 49 points last year, and is fourth in the WCHA this season with a team-high 11 points heading into this weekend's border battle with Wisconsin.

Yet, just like the 2009 seventh-round pick is always the forgotten Wild prospect when names like Mikael Granlund, Charlie Coyle and Jason Zucker roll off the tongue, it's fitting that Haula routinely takes a back seat to former Minnesota Mr. Hockey's Nick Bjugstad and Kyle Rau.

"Probably because he's not from here and people didn't grow up watching him," Gophers coach Don Lucia said. "We have our appreciation for our home-grown here, and maybe build them up a little bit more than maybe they should. But Erik's been probably start to finish so far this year our best player."

American roots

One of Haula's first introductions to sports was football. Not football, as in soccer -- American football.

His father, Tomi, was the longtime head coach of the Turku Trojans in the eight-team Vaahteraliiga, the highest level of the American Football Association of Finland.

As a kid, Erik was the water boy. Each team had two American imports who didn't play past college, so they'd live with the Haulas, and that's how Erik learned English.

"The league honestly isn't as bad as you'd think, but it's nowhere near the NFL," said Haula, a huge New England Patriots and Tom Brady fan who says the Vikings have grown on him.

As a teenager, Haula decided he wanted to chase his NHL dream in Canada or the United States, but when his parents insisted he get his college education, he decided Shattuck-St. Mary's, the prep school in Faribault, provided the best route.

"I'm really happy with the choices I've made so far," Haula said.

Besides Haula's obvious speed, playmaking skills and vision, Lucia raves about his defensive play and "high compete factor."

"All Erik's done is quietly work on becoming a better player," Lucia said. "He's a very good prospect and one of the top players in college hockey."

In the shadows

The Wild has several high-end, potential top-six forward prospects on the horizon, including Granlund, another Finn whom Haula routinely gives the grand tour to whenever in Minnesota. But with so many Wild blue-chippers coming, some wonder where (or even if) the 5-foot-11, 187-pound Haula fits in the Wild's future.

Director of player development Brad Bombardir adores Haula and "won't pigeonhole" his eventual role "as long as he keeps progressing."

Always driven, Haula gained motivation when he slipped to 182nd (the first pick of the final round) in the 2009 NHL draft despite being ranked 57th among North American skaters on the NHL Central Scouting list.

Inside Montreal's Bell Centre with his dad, Haula was scared, embarrassed and thought he came a long way for nothing before finally hearing his name.

"It was one of those moments I'll never forget -- sitting there in a suit, thinking you might not get drafted and both sweating to the max and just looking around ... hoping," Haula said. "Back then might not have gone the way I expected it to go, but now I look back, maybe it kind of fuels me. That's why I don't care [being overshadowed on the Gophers]. I know my role on the team, and I'm happy with it. And people can say or think what they think. I just focus on being the best player I can be."

Those who know Haula say this confidence is another example of being more Minnesotan than Finnish.

"You can really see that he has spent a lot of time in North America," said Samuel Savolainen, a Minnesota-based writer for the Finnish sports magazine Urheilulehti. "He is so much more social and confident in front of the media. Finnish kids his age are usually a lot more shy. They are kind of shy also to express their goals and dreams. Not Erik. Having gone to Shattuck-St. Mary's and the University, he is practically more of a Minnesota product than a Finnish one."

Star Tribune LOADED: 11.16.2012

"Everything else is pretty much normal," Danny said. "He gets little headaches here once in a while, but considering what he has been through, it's almost a miracle he got out yesterday when they were inside his brain Friday."

The Predators selected Blake in the second round of the 2006 draft, and he made his NHL debut in February of 2011. Last season, the Predators traded him to the Montreal Canadiens as part of a deal that sent defenseman Hal Gill to Nashville.

Blake's great grandfather and grandfather — Howie Morenz and Bernie "Boom Boom" Geoffrion — are in the NHL Hall of Fame.

Pioneer Press LOADED: 11.16.2012

644341 Montreal Canadiens

Geoffrion out of hospital, making progress

By Brenda Branswell,

MONTREAL — What a difference a few days makes.

Blake Geoffrion was released from the Montreal General Hospital on Wednesday, following his emergency surgery last weekend for a depressed skull fracture.

The 24-year-old Hamilton Bulldogs forward has managed to walk around downtown Montreal briefly with his fiancée, Katelyn, and his mother, Kelly, and have a bite of lunch.

As he recovers from the surgery, Danny Geoffrion said his son is "doing great."

He's expected to make a full recovery from the injury that happened at the Bell Centre Friday when he was checked by Syracuse Crunch defenceman Jean-Philippe Côté.

He skated off the ice on his own, hunched over, and was rushed to hospital in an ambulance.

Blake says he gets tired quickly, which is normal, Geoffrion said.

He slept for about three hours after his short walk downtown.

"It's just total rest and then it's just one day at a time," Geoffrion said.

"It's tough on him."

"He just can't believe that this has happened.

"And that's what is so tough mentally. He's just asking himself the 'why' question."

The only advice he can offer as a father, Geoffrion said, is to stop asking that question because there's only one person who knows the answer "and he's a little bit bigger than all of us."

"So all you've got to do is ... guide your ship as best as you can and just ask God for direction and all this will be answered down the line, depending on whatever happens with him."

Blake has had concussions in the past. His father said earlier this week that he doesn't know what the future holds — "nobody knows at this point" — and that one of the surgeons said it wouldn't be a bad idea for Blake to take the rest of the season off until he fully recuperates.

Blake has an upcoming appointment with David Mulder, the Canadiens' head team physician and chief surgeon.

"He's hoping that he'll get some clearance to be able to go home," Geoffrion said.

Toronto Globe And Mail LOADED: 11.16.2012

644342 Montreal Canadiens

Four points for Gionta in Habs' fantasy win

By Pat Hickey,

WINNIPEG - The Canadiens enjoyed their most productive night of the season as they pulled away to a 5-0 lead midway through the game and went on to defeat the Winnipeg Jets 7-3 Thursday night at the MTS Centre.

"That's the kind of game we've been looking for," Canadiens head coach Michel Therrien said. "We put the pressure on them and forced them to take penalties and we scored four goals on the power play. And we got two other goals by taking advantage of turnovers in the neutral zone."

Rene Bourque opened the scoring at 1:36 of the first period and Alexei Emelin, Max Pacioretty and Tomas Plekanec added power-play goals before the period was over.

Brian Gionta made it 5-0 before Dustin Byfuglien ended backup goaltender Peter Budaj's shutout bid at 16:13 of the second period. P.K. Subban added another power-play goal at 18:49 of the second period. The Canadiens went 4-for-8 on the power play.

Eric Fehr and Evander Kane scored for Winnipeg early in the third period, while Scott Gomez gave Montreal the final margin of victory with a goal at 19:12. Kane's goal came on the power play as Winnipeg went 1-for-5 with the extra man.

"We had balanced scoring tonight," said Canadiens captain Gionta, who had three assists to go with his fifth goal of the season. "Seven different guys scored goals and 13 guys picked up at least one assist. It was good to see Patch back in the lineup."

The one disappointing note for the Canadiens was the loss of Louis Leblanc with what appeared to be a shoulder injury late in the second period. Leblanc, who had an ice bag on his shoulder as he waited for the team bus, said he didn't think it was a serious injury and added it wasn't the same shoulder that was surgically repaired in 2011.

The win gave Budaj two wins in as many starts.

"It's not easy win when you don't play a lot, but the guys gave me a big lead and they didn't allow too many shots," Budaj said.

That wasn't the case for Winnipeg goaltender Ondrej Pavelec. He gave up five goals on 26 shots before being replaced by AI Montoya, who stopped 14 of the 16 shots he faced.

The Canadiens are in Denver to face the Colorado Avalanche Saturday and return home to play the Nashville Predators on Monday.

Toronto Globe And Mail LOADED: 11.16.2012

Montreal Canadiens

Four points for Gionta in Habs' fantasy win over Jets

Posted by Stu Cowan

WINNIPEG – The Canadiens enjoyed their most productive night of the season as they pulled away to a 5-0 lead midway through the game and went on to defeat the Winnipeg Jets 7-3 Thursday night at the MTS Centre.

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Montreal Gazette LOADED: 11.16.2012

644343 Montreal Canadiens

Blake Geoffrion out of hospital

Posted by bbranswell

Hamilton Bulldogs forward Blake Geoffrion was released from the Montreal General Hospital on Wednesday after undergoing surgery last weekend for a depressed skull fracture.

"You almost have to think it's a miracle," Danny Geoffrion said about his son's recovery.

Blake has to take it easy and avoid heavy-lifting. His son says he gets tired very quickly, which is normal, Geoffrion added.

Blake managed to walk around in downtown Montreal on Wednesday for half an hour and have lunch with his fiancée, Katelyn, and his mother, Kelly, Geoffrion said.

Blake was injured when he was checked by Syracuse Crunch defenceman J.P. Côté. He skated off the ice on his own, hunched over, and was rushed to hospital where he underwent surgery for the skull fracture.

"He just can't believe that this has happened. And that's what is so tough mentally," Geoffrion told The Gazette.

"He's just asking himself the 'why' question."

Blake is scheduled to see David Mulder, the Canadiens' head team physician and chief surgeon, next week.

"He's hoping that he'll get some clearance to be able to go home," Geoffrion said.

Montreal Gazette LOADED: 11.16.2012

644344 New Jersey Devils

With Contract Talks Stalled, More Cancellations Are Expected

By JEFF Z. KLEIN

The N.H.L. and the players union failed to communicate for a fourth consecutive day Thursday as the league lockout hit another grim milestone, the two-month mark, with no talks scheduled and more game cancellations imminent.

"I'm more discouraged now than I have been at any point in the process," Bill Daly, the deputy commissioner, told The Canadian Press.

Last week, the league and union bargained for six straight days, ending with a brief, contentious session last Sunday. But union officials reported significant progress on revenue sharing, full payment of existing contracts and other areas.

"One thing Bill Daly and I agree upon is that when the moment is right, the deal could be done very quickly — one day, three days, whatever," Steve Fehr, the union's No. 2 official, said Monday.

But Fehr cautioned that significant differences remained in how the owners and players would achieve a 50-50 split in overall revenues; players' contract rights, including free agency; and who pays for the damage caused by the lockout.

Those differences seem to have caused the talks to break down this week.

The biggest gap is in player contract rights, where Commissioner Gary Bettman has not budged from his original proposals, which would limit contract lengths and increase the playing time requirements for achieving free agency and salary arbitration.

The N.H.L. has canceled 327 games during the 61-day lockout: the entire October and November schedule as well as the Jan. 1 Winter Classic. The next round of cancellations are expected to claim games through the first half of December. The Jan. 27 All-Star Game in Columbus is believed to be facing imminent cancellation, too.

"I think as a practical matter we are obviously closer to having to make decisions on further cancellations," Daly said Thursday via e-mail.

On Thursday, N.H.L. players also missed the third biweekly paycheck they would have received if the regular season had started as scheduled on Oct. 11.

This post has been revised to reflect the following correction:

Correction: November 15, 2012

An earlier version of this article misstated the number of consecutive days the N.H.L. and the union have not spoken. Thursday was the fourth day in a row, not the third.

New York Times LOADED: 11.16.2012

644345 New Jersey Devils

NHL lockout links: Games through Dec. 15 could be canceled soon

By Charles Curtis, NJ.com

Remember last week, when there were consecutive days of meetings, news pouring out about some resolutions made in lockout talks between the owners players?

That's all gone now. It's been replaced by pure silence.

The Associated Press reported the two sides aren't speaking at all. By now, everyone knows what's next: canceled games. "It is believed that an agreement would need to be in place by the end of next week for the season to get under way on Dec. 1," the AP wrote.

When exactly might we hear about another round of cancellations? Sports Business Journal's Chris Botta tweeted, "Source: if there isn't a deal in place in next 7days, NHL will cancel games thru Dec. 15."

Newsday's Steve Zipay noticed Madison Square Garden scheduled a benefit concert for victims of Hurricane Sandy for Dec. 12, which was supposed to be a Canadiens-Rangers tilt. So the cancellations may already be in the works.

But there's worse news. Botta also said the next round of games to be on the chopping block could be the rest of them -- that is, another lost season.

CBSSports.com's Brian Stubits didn't think that would be the case. "Remember the last time we went through a lockout, the season wasn't called off until mid-February. Granted, that does seem a bit late and it wouldn't surprise me if the deadline weren't pushed up this time around. But two months earlier? Doesn't seem necessary," he wrote.

The clock continues to tick.

In other lockout news:

- ESPN's Pierre LeBrun looked at the situation the owners and players are in now and said neither side will "win" the lockout when it's over, with the league taking a long-term hit no matter what happens.

He also said the NHL is waiting for the NHLPA to come back with "new ideas or a new proposal to reignite things." LeBrun also reported an owner told him that if Thanksgiving passes without a "tentative deal," the season would be in jeopardy, though LeBrun doubted that. On the players' side, he wrote: "I can't think of very many NHL players who are willing to sacrifice an entire season of hockey just so they can make a point to commissioner Gary Bettman."

- The Atlantic's Armin Rosen looked at how fans and writers are keeping themselves busy during the lockout. Distractions include faux leagues, recaps of NHL games that aren't actually happening and rants from fans as they watch the lockout continue.

Star Ledger LOADED: 11.16.2012

644346 New Jersey Devils

Devils' Cam Janssen organizes Hurricane Sandy benefit game

Rich Chere

Devils right winger Cam Janssen had planned to be facing the Islanders Saturday night at Nassau Coliseum. Months ago he hoped a lengthy labor battle between NHL owners and players would be avoided so that a full season could be played.

That, of course, did not go as the popular enforcer wished. But while home in St. Louis, aware of the devastation in New Jersey created by Hurricane Sandy, Janssen got an idea to play a charity game benefiting first responders impacted by the storm.

The game, featuring a number of NHL players, will be held at the Hardees Iceplex in Chesterfield, Mo. Those unable to attend the game can make donations via responderrescue.org/donations.html.

"It's going to be awesome. I felt with the people I know and the people I trust in this town we could pull this off," Janssen said. "So I just started making phone calls. I put the pedal to the metal."

St. Louis Blues players T.J. Oshie, David Backes, Andy McDonald, Kevin Shattenkirk, Scott Nichol, Alex Pietrangelo, Barret Jackman and Jamie Rivers will join Janssen and Jamal Mayers (Blackhawks), Jim Campbell and Chris Butler (Flames). The two goalies will be Ty Conklin and Brian Elliott.

Also taking part will be guys Janssen played with while growing up. Most played college and junior hockey.

"My whole premise is to have as fast-paced, legitimate an NHL game as possible," Janssen said.

The event is called Cam Janssen Fights Sandy—Hockey Helps Rebuild.

"It came about when I was sitting on the couch watching the Weather Channel and flipping back and forth to the news," Janssen said. "It kind of popped into my head and I discussed it with my fiancée, Kate. We didn't know what was going to happen with the NHL stoppage, so we said this might be a good time frame."

He didn't want to wait because he hopes the lockout will soon come to an end.

"I think we're going to be playing. When, I don't know. Time is running out here, but I have faith in everybody that is doing their part," Janssen said of the negotiations for a new collective bargaining agreement.

He has continued skating and working out in St. Louis with limited options to play elsewhere.

"It's tough for a guy like me with the role that I play. If I make the choice of going anywhere, it's going to be somewhere I get ice time," Janssen explained. "I really don't have too many options, to tell you the truth. If I did, I would be playing."

Janssen hasn't seen Sandy's impact firsthand.

"I haven't been down there since the devastation but I've been (to the Jersey Shore) before and know what it looks like. You see the pictures and talk to people that live there. The devastation is unimaginable," he said.

During the hockey season he lives in West Orange and says his place suffered minor damage compared to most.

While he waits for the NHL to get its act together, Janssen will use his talents to help first responders.

Star Ledger LOADED: 11.16.2012

644347 New Jersey Devils

Devils owner lends Prudential Center ice to high school hockey team after Sandy

David Giambusso

NEWARK — The New Jersey Devils may not see much ice time this year, but that doesn't mean their rink is going to waste.

Devils owner Jeff Vanderbeek is opening the doors to the Prudential Center for the East Side High School hockey team.

The Red Raiders' regular rink at the Ironbound Recreation Center is still not back on line after Hurricane Sandy.

"They haven't been able to get the ice down," said Keith Veltre, who with fellow teacher Dennis Ruppe, founded Hockey in Newark — a Devils-sponsored program that teaches the game to Newark students.

As high schools around the state get ready to take the ice, Newark's team was looking at a delay in its practice schedule. The team can practice as long as needed at The Rock, Veltre said.

"It essentially saved our season," he added. The Devils also lent their practice rink to East Side last year after Hurricane Irene.

Vanderbeek said he took a lot of pride in the program which has already helped send a few Newark students to college.

"We're very committed to this program," he said adding he hopes it will one day foster an NHL first-round draft pick.

"It's also making sure for kids that there's something they can do with their idle time," Vanderbeek said.

Star Ledger LOADED: 11.16.2012

644348 New Jersey Devils

SEASON ON ICE: NHL's deputy commissioner Bill Daly discouraged with progress of talks as season is in jeopardy

By Pat Leonard

The NHL is days away from canceling at least part of its December schedule. There are no more meetings with the players' union planned. Then on Thursday, when the Canadian Press asked Bill Daly whether these negotiations had put the entire 2012-13 season in jeopardy, the NHL's deputy commissioner responded:

"I hope not. But I'm more discouraged now than I have been at any point in the process."

Daly's quote cued suspicion that his despondence was only a negotiating tactic – an indirect attempt at pressuring the union to make a deal quickly, rather than an implication that this lockout could cost hockey another full season.

Unfortunately, while it is an understandable first impulse to doubt the intentions of the NHL's 30 owners – and while commissioner Gary Bettman has muzzled them from speaking to the media under penalty of million-dollar fines – calling their bluff on canceling a second season in eight years may be unwise.

Daly has been honest throughout these negotiations. It is difficult not to take him at his word, even if the same cannot be said about Bettman and his 30 silenced enforcers. Furthermore, as TSN's Darren Dreger tweeted on Tuesday: "Players keep telling me they're optimistic a deal will get done, while owners tell me they have no confidence in that."

Do you know why that's the case? Because the players, in a sense, are winning.

First, the NHL has mishandled several pivotal junctures of these negotiations: It made an arrogant, aggressive and unreasonable first proposal on July 13; refused three NHLPA proposals in 10 minutes on Oct. 18, without even pretending to review the offers in more depth; and gave owners and GMs permission to speak to players during a 48-hour October window without notifying the union, a clear attempt to undermine union boss Don Fehr.

Secondly, in calling the NHL's bluff on worrying about a cancelled season, the union correctly could point to October as an example of the league's 'imaginary' deadlines. The NHL said after making a proposal Sept. 16 just prior to the lockout that it would not be the next party to make an offer, then on Oct. 16 caved and came back with a fresh, less severe proposal.

In the NHL's current offer, the players are still the 'losers' – they're the ones who would give up money and contract rights, which is why there is no deal yet. But in the scheme of these negotiations, by forcing this into the winter, Fehr and the players are 'winning' by causing the NHL's owners to backtrack on their initial demands. In that sense, the NHL is still paying for its initial July offer, which started the negotiations too far from a reasonable middle ground.

The point here, though, is while 30 NHL owners cannot speak publicly, what do you think they would say if they could? Do you think they would calmly express optimism over a deal – like many players do – or do you think they would be furious that their agenda is slowly being gutted by an experienced labor leader and a unified constituency? By all off-the-record accounts, last week's New York meetings went south in part due to the presence on Tuesday and Friday of Boston Bruins owner Jeremy Jacobs – one of the men driving this bus toward the cliff, who has a reputation for speaking his mind in the spirit of victory rather than compromise.

Primarily because the NHL's headquarters are in Manhattan, I have had the opportunity to stake out the majority of negotiations during this lockout, which reached Day 61 on Thursday and showed no signs of slowing down. Whenever there is a dark period in the talks, I and many others often find signs of optimism in player comments, back-channel meetings and the eventual resumption of negotiations.

But when meetings resume, the words and voices and faces and tone of these men do not indicate compromise is close. The owners already have lost their patience with Fehr. Daly told the Sports Business Journal on Tuesday: "We're done making proposals." He declined comment on Wednesday when NHLPA special counsel Steve Fehr released the brief statement: "The players remain prepared to resume negotiations at any time."

As pointed out by Renaud Lavoie of RDS, this NHL lockout could mimic the path of last winter's NBA lockout, in which the owners and players reached a deal on Dec. 8, 2011 and opened on Christmas Day despite commissioner David Stern's doom-and-gloom warning on Nov. 14 that the entire season had been "in jeopardy." But if the NBA's labor history can be used to predict the fate of the 2012-13 NHL season, the NHL's own history certainly is even more relevant. And in 2004-05, while the San Antonio Spurs were on their way to a third NBA championship in seven seasons, the NHL cancelled its entire season over a lockout. It is still the only North American professional sports league to do so.

Some argue that the NHL would never cancel a full season again because the league wouldn't recover from its resulting losses in money and credibility with fans. However, the NHL's owners arguably could be just as willing to cancel the 2012-13 season, since they have tangible evidence

that revenues increased from \$1.2 billion between 2003-04 and 2011-12 despite the cancelled 2004-05 season. If pushed to that point, the owners may ask: Why can't we just do that again, since we now also have a guaranteed NBC contract that will put games back in every American home the second hockey resumes?

"It's not looking good," Sidney Crosby told the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette on Thursday. "As bad it's looked at some points, I've always tried to find little glimmers of hope that one day everyone will wake up and find a way to do it. But that hasn't been the case so far."

Canceling another NHL season seems unthinkable, but daring the league's 30 owners to do it should be, also.

New York Daily News LOADED: 11.16.2012

644349 New York Rangers

Bettman reportedly suggests two-week moratorium on CBA talks, NHLPA bristles, same-old NHL in latest labor chatter

By Pat Leonard

The Canadian Press reported late Thursday night that NHL commissioner Gary Bettman has suggested a two-week moratorium on the stalled collective bargaining negotiations, in response to union boss Don Fehr's statement in a phone conversation on Wednesday that he didn't see how the sides could proceed from their latest impasse.

NHLPA special counsel Steve Fehr responded to Bettman's suggestion with a predictable statement about how the union is ready to meet and that Bettman's statement indicates the league is not - the same old games from one party that wants too much and another party that is seemingly blind to the fact that a cancelled season really isn't that far away.

Rather than recount the whole story for you, please go read it here yourself, written by Chris Johnston, one of the select group of reporters who has diligently covered this entire lockout and who is likely just as sick as I am of terms such as "revenue," "Make-Whole," "50-50," and "player contracting rights."

Then, go read my column here on how it's dangerous for critics (and the union) to doubt that the NHL's owners will cancel another full season. Then go read or do something else to forget about all of the doom-and-gloom of our hockey ramblings!

New York Daily News LOADED: 11.16.2012

644350 New York Rangers

Brad Richards, Scott Hartnell, NHLers to suit up for Atlantic City charity exhibition game to benefit Hurricane Sandy victims

By Pat Leonard

Rangers forward Brad Richards has volunteered to help Hurricane Sandy victims with his own hands, he's hosting a Staten Island hockey clinic with Rangers teammates to benefit Sandy victims on Friday, and now he's teaming up with the Philadelphia Flyers' Scott Hartnell and several other NHL stars to play a charity exhibition game in Atlantic City, according to CSNPhilly.com.

The game, known as Operation Hat Trick and sponsored by Caesars Atlantic City, will take place on Nov. 24 at 7 p.m. at Boardwalk Hall and will benefit the Empire State Relief Fund, the New Jersey Hurricane Relief Fund and the American Red Cross. Tickets range from \$20 to \$100 and go on sale at 10 a.m. Friday at the Boardwalk Hall Box Office, www.ticketmaster.com, all Ticketmaster locations, or by calling 1-800-736-1420.

New York Daily News LOADED: 11.16.2012

644351 New York Rangers

Locked-out Rangers, Flyers to play game for charity

By LARRY BROOKS

Rangers and Flyers will join forces when locked-out NHL players skate for the benefit of victims of Hurricane Sandy in a charity exhibition game presented by Caesars Atlantic City at Boardwalk Hall next Saturday night, Nov. 24, at 7:00.

All proceeds from the event, which is known as "Operation Hat Trick," will go directly to the Empire State Relief Fund, the New Jersey Relief Fund and the American Red Cross.

The Rangers' Brad Richards will be captain of one team, and the Flyers' Scott Hartnell will be captain of the opposing squad.

"If we have an opportunity to make a difference for people, we're definitely going to do what we can to take advantage of that," Richards told The Post. "[Retired NHL player] Todd Fedoruk called and asked me if I'd take part in this, and I'm happy to do it.

"I'm part of New York now. I know a lot of people who were affected by the storm, so whatever I can do, and whatever players in the area can do, we're going to do what we can.

"We're not playing, but we feel a sense of responsibility to our communities," said Richards, who will participate in a youth hockey fundraiser at Staten Island this afternoon with at least a half-dozen of his Blueshirt teammates. "It's a privilege to be in this position, really."

Brian Boyle, Jeff Halpern, Steve Eminger, Bobby Ryan, James Neal, Simon Gagne, James vanRiemsdyk, Braydon Coburn, John Carlson, Kimmo Timonen, Jody Shelley and Ville Leino are among those NHL players who are confirmed to play in Atlantic City, with others expected to join.

Richards, who lives in lower Manhattan and lost power in the aftermath of the storm, had a message for fans who are angered and frustrated by the lockout that has reached 62 days without an end in sight.

"Whatever the fans feel, it's 100-percent warranted," Richards said. "The fans are the reason the NHL is what it is, and they have every right to be frustrated.

"But the players are, too. We're frustrated, big time. We want this over with so we can get back onto the ice and play. Definitely there are a lot of people being hurt here and we're all sorry for that."

Tickets for the event range from \$20-to-\$100, the highest price tickets applying to the first two rows behind the glass. Tickets for the event go on sale today at 10 a.m.

New York Post LOADED: 11.16.2012

644352 New York Rangers

Rangers hold benefit skate for Staten Island

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — Just because there are no NHL games on the schedule for the foreseeable future, doesn't mean the Rangers aren't getting on the ice.

Today, many of them will head to Staten Island, in fact, for a charity skate.

Center Brad Richards has organized a benefit skate to help in the relief efforts on Staten Island after superstorm Sandy. Richards, who signed with the Rangers last off-season, and led them to the No. 1 seed in the Eastern Conference, has partnered with a high school team to organize "Skating for Sandy."

Defensemen Steve Eminger, Dan Girardi and Marc Staal will join forwards Carl Hagelin, Brian Boyle, Ryan Callahan, Marian Gaborik and Richards at the Staten Island Skating Pavilion.

Response from the Staten Island community has been good. The event will, in fact, feature two afternoon sessions, one at 3:30 and one at 4:40 p.m.

"We are going to keep this one," Richards said, "for just the kids."

The NHL lockout began on Sept. 15, and has already forced the cancellation of 327 games, including the Winter Classic between the Maple Leafs and Red Wings at Michigan Stadium. The league's other big midseason event — the Jan. 27 All-Star Game at Nationwide Arena in Columbus — is also expected to be canceled in the near future.

Bergen Record LOADED: 11.16.2012

644353 NHL

Bettman suggests to NHLPA that sides take a break in negotiations

By Chris Johnston,

TORONTO -- After a lockout spanning almost nine weeks, the only thing the NHL and NHL Players' Association are talking about is taking a break.

Commissioner Gary Bettman has suggested placing a two-week moratorium on stalled collective bargaining negotiations, multiple sources told The Canadian Press on Thursday night. The offer came after Bettman received a phone call from Donald Fehr on Wednesday in which the NHLPA executive director said he didn't know how the sides could proceed from their current stalemate.

Rather than providing an immediate answer, Fehr told Bettman he would need to bounce the idea off his membership before responding. The union has repeatedly taken the position that it would prefer to meet rather than having breaks during the labour dispute -- and suggested again Thursday it will continue to favour that position.

"We believe that it is more likely that we will make progress if we meet than if we don't," NHLPA special counsel Steve Fehr said in a statement. "So we are ready to meet. If indeed they do not want to meet, it will be at least the third time in the last three months that they have shut down the dialogue, saying they will not meet unless the players meet their preconditions.

"What does that tell you about their interest in resolving this?"

The potential freeze comes with talks already having fallen silent after a busy stretch of meetings last week in New York. By the time negotiations broke off last Sunday, it was clear that distrust and some bad feelings had made their way into the bargaining room.

The sides have been unable to agree on proposed changes to player contract rights and how to share revenue, and will also need to sort out how they pay for the damage of a lockout that reached 62 days on Friday.

Pessimism has grown while losses have started to mount. On Thursday, players missed their third paycheque of the season while the league moved closer to making another round of game cancellations, prompting some to suggest the entire year could be in danger.

Asked about that possibility on Thursday morning, deputy commissioner Bill Daly replied: "I hope not."

"But I'm more discouraged now than I have been at any point in the process," Daly added.

The NHL is expected to start wiping games beyond Nov. 30 off the schedule early next week. There had previously been hope for a shortened 68-game season starting Dec. 1, but that now appears to be gone.

In total, the lockout has already forced the cancellation of 327 games, including the Winter Classic between the Maple Leafs and Red Wings at Michigan Stadium. The league's other big mid-season event -- the Jan. 27 all-star game at Nationwide Arena in Columbus -- is also expected to be formally cancelled in the near future.

Earlier this week, Steve Fehr indicated that he thought a new CBA could be finalized soon after a breakthrough was made in negotiations.

"One thing Bill Daly and I agree upon is that when the moment is right the deal could be done very quickly," he said Monday. "One days, three days or whatever."

It will likely be much longer before real traction starts being made in negotiations.

Instead, the sides will continue inching closer to a make-or-break moment. The 2004-05 season was cancelled by Bettman on Feb. 16, but it's strongly believed the league wouldn't put the decision off that long if the 2012-13 season was to meet the same fate.

A deal that saved a 48-game season following the 1994-95 lockout was signed on Jan. 11.

The NHL is currently enduring its fourth work stoppage in the past two decades. The league is coming off a season where it generated a record US\$3.3-billion in revenue.

Edmonton Journal: LOADED: 11.16.2012

644354 NHL

Would you believe ... two goals in TWO seconds? "ZapruderCam" yields provocative new evidence on hockey's fastest goal

Bruce McCurdy

Would you believe ... two goals in TWO seconds? "ZapruderCam" yields provocative new evidence on hockey's fastest goalPosted on Nov 15, 2012

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What makes Justin Schultz tick? A shift-by-shift analysis of a (mostly) solid night's workPosted on Nov 13, 2012

What is the fastest goal possible? Abbotsford Heat centre Ben Street may have achieved the theoretical extreme with his remarkable snipe against the Toronto Marlies last week, in which he snapped the puck past an inattentive Ben Scrivens directly off the centre ice faceoff dot.

Officially Street's insurance goal came just three seconds after teammate Steve McCarthy had opened the scoring with a shorthanded goal early in the third period. But new video evidence which emerged days after the fact strongly suggests even less time had elapsed.

Let's start with the original AHL Live broadcast of the two goals, a video which was widely published last week. But if you missed it, it's well worth a few seconds (!!) of your time.

Surprise, surprise, AHL Live missed yet another puck drop while transmitting the Jumbotron feed (more on this aspect later). At least Abbotsford fans get replays, eh.

The audio caught both goals, but the main camera just the first. What did it miss? New evidence was unveiled days later, from a relatively low-tech camera located at the far end of the rink (hereafter referred to as the "ZapruderCam"). The new footage was shown on Sportsnet's broadcast of last Saturday's game from Abbotsford when OKC Barons were the visitors, a week and a half after the goal was scored.

Would you believe ... two goals in TWO seconds? ZapruderCam yields provocative new evidence on hockeys fastest goal

The ZapruderCam (top centre) occupies such an unassuming locale, it wasn't until several days later that Abbotsford Heat staff thought to check its automated recording of Ben Street's bizarre goal.

Voicing over the scene depicted at right, host Jeff Marek explained: "A couple of days ago, [that camera] shed light on the mystery, how can you

score two goals in three seconds? It took a little detective work to find it, to get it on tape."

Detective work? That immediately grabbed the attention of this certified/certifiable P.I. (Puck Investigator). I thus spent more than a few seconds poring over this new evidence of such a rare goal. The "video" which followed was actually a series of still images, seemingly taken at 1-second intervals in the manner of a security camera in a low-rent district. The resultant sequence is crude, but tells a tale.

Indeed, the format lends itself perfectly to screen grabs. Having not found the new footage on the Internet, I simply photographed freeze frames on my own TV. What follows are seven consecutive images from the ZapruderCam sequence, with a brief commentary under each. Pay particular attention to the game clock at top centre, which ticks down over three consecutive images:

rsz fastgoal1 Would you believe ... two goals in TWO seconds? ZapruderCam yields provocative new evidence on hockeys fastest goal

After McCarthy's goal, Ben Street (#9 in white) lines up at centre for the still-shorthanded Heat. With all players seemingly in position, the linesman prepares to drop the puck. The clock shows 15:32 remaining in the third period, commensurate with the time of McCarthy's goal on the official game sheet, namely 4:28.

rsz fastgoal2 Would you believe ... two goals in TWO seconds? ZapruderCam yields provocative new evidence on hockeys fastest goal

The puck has just been dropped. Street's stick is right on the centre ice dot, perhaps recoiling from the quick shot. Opponents are just beginning to react to the flight of the puck.

rsz fastgoal3 Would you believe ... two goals in TWO seconds? ZapruderCam yields provocative new evidence on hockeys fastest goal

The puck is invisible at this resolution, but is clearly on its way into Toronto's zone as Marlie defenders turn in pursuit. The clock has ticked down by one second. Street and the linesman are interested spectators. Off in the distance, Scrivens may actually be on another planet. He hasn't moved a muscle from the previous shot.

rsz fastgoalzapruder Would you believe ... two goals in TWO seconds? ZapruderCam yields provocative new evidence on hockeys fastest goal

Here's the money shot. Street is the first guy on the ice to know the puck is in the net, but he's already celebrating, even as the clock shows 15:30. Scrivens has dropped to his knees, beaten and disbelieving.

rsz fastgoal4 Would you believe ... two goals in TWO seconds? ZapruderCam yields provocative new evidence on hockeys fastest goal

Street's teammates react to the weird goal and begin to celebrate. Toronto players slump (some things never change), while Scrivens is now frozen in his new place, on his knees. The clock has ticked down one more second, to 15:29.

rsz 12fastgoal5 Would you believe ... two goals in TWO seconds? ZapruderCam yields provocative new evidence on hockeys fastest goal

Now the clock has stopped at 15:29 as the Heat penalty killers converge on the goal scorer.

rsz fastgoal6 Would you believe ... two goals in TWO seconds? ZapruderCam yields provocative new evidence on hockeys fastest goal

... with the last frame showing the goal celebration, the Abbotsford players in very nearly the spots they occupy when the original broadcast returns to "real time" (0:41 of the video). The clock is still stopped at 15:29; Street's goal would go into the books at 4:31. Scrivens remains rooted to his spot, clearly stunned by the turn of events. (Well, "fuzzily stunned" better describes the image quality, but you know what I mean. He hasn't budged since the puck whizzed by him.)

Viewed in sequence these images leave the clear impression the ZapruderCam is set to intervals of 1.0 second. While there may have been the slightest delay in the starting of the clock, it was extremely minimal. The sequence shows Street in the act of shooting at 15:32 and already celebrating the goal two frames later at 15:30; he too would need a short reaction time, suggesting if anything he scored in less than two seconds. It certainly didn't take as many as three!

Street's stick now resides in the Hockey Hall of Fame, not a bad accomplishment for a 25-year-old who has yet to play his first NHL game.

Officially, his feat ties the NHL record of two goals by the same team, set by Jim Dowd and Richard Park of Minnesota Wild in this game back in 2004. The record for fastest two goals by both teams is two seconds. There's actually video of that one, preserved in this YouTube clip from what is surely Don Cherry's Rock'em Sock'em Hockey. (Hey, we PI's will look for clues anywhere!)

Gilmour's goal, like Park's, was an empty netter. In this case the time clock can be seen running accurately on screen during the sequence, stopping immediately when the puck hits the net. This was in the days before the tenths of second were shown, so chronologically speaking the "resolution" is the same as the ZapruderCam sequence.

What sets Street's goal apart is the important fact that he had to beat a goaltender to score. His shot was necessarily harder than Gilmour's seeing-eye slider, in fact here is how Street described it (Canadian Press via Puck Daddy):

"(Assistant coach) Cail MacLean told me they would probably go forward off the draw, so I figured there was no use trying to win it back," said Street.

"I tried to go forward myself and got pretty good wood on it. I got it high enough that he didn't pick up on it. I picked the right club, I guess."

(To which Puck Daddy snarkily adds: "We assume he means golf club, and not attempting the shot against an affiliate of the Leafs.")

Still, what kind of self-respecting goaltender lets in an unscreened wrist shot from centre ice? My answer: "a distracted one". While the photographic evidence above is way too low-rent to be conclusive, I'd be willing to wager Scrivens was actually watching the replay of the first goal on the Jumbotron. As we saw and heard in the first video, said replay was still running when the puck was dropped for the second goal. I don't think it's too big a stretch to imagine Scrivens zoning out on it for a moment, hearing the click of the faceoff but not picking up the puck right away, and zing! It's in the net. Just an educated guess on my part, but fits the observed facts. One sees players on the bench looking at the big screen all the time, hard to imagine goalies don't do it too. This one got burned ... at least that's my theory.

The attentive reader might be remarking, "That's funny, I didn't see the big screen in the ZapruderCam full-rink view, where is it?" An excellent question, attentive reader, another small mystery to be investigated to the ends of the Internet. To my unsurprise, no good pictures seem to exist showing the big screen at Abbotsford Entertainment and Sports Centre in action.

abbotsford Would you believe ... two goals in TWO seconds? ZapruderCam yields provocative new evidence on hockeys fastest goal Fear not! As before an article that is entirely reliant on peculiar sources, round about Chapter 11 of Google I came across this tasty shot promoting Loonie Toonie Dog 'n Brew Night at AESC. Which a) sounds like a great idea and b) shows an appropriately fuzzy view of a bright panel that I assume is the big screen right above the scoreboard.

Indeed, re-examining our earlier exhibits, in the first of the screen grabs there is the teeniest smidgen of visual evidence. Looking at that spot right above the scoreboard at the extreme top of the frame, just the very bottom of the big screen can be seen. Moreover, the position of the two skates that are barely visible match with those of Toronto's #17 (Paul Ranger) at 0:36 of the original video.

As a not-unsympathetic old goalie, I can imagine Scrivens' thought processes as he sneaks a glimpse at the big screen: "How the hell did McCarthy squeeze that through me anyway WHAT THE ?!?!? ... oh nooooo!" [feels shame]

Poor guy will probably never hear the end of it. But such is life in the minor leagues, where the picture is usually fuzzy but the stories can be terrific.

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644355 Ottawa Senators

Lockout frustrates Senators coach MacLean

by Allen Panzeri

For the last couple of weeks, Ottawa Senators coach Paul MacLean and his wife Sharon have been doing something they generally can't do in September and October: Visiting their three children, sons A.J. and David and daughter Erin.

But like everyone else, MacLean is frustrated that the lockout continues, with no end in sight. He'd rather be behind the bench.

"I think, like everybody, I'm a fan," he said on Thursday, as he and Sharon joined about a dozen people from the Ottawa front office, including assistant coach Dave Cameron and director of player personnel Randy Lee, at the Ottawa Food Bank to sort food for a few hours.

"I work in the game, but I'm a fan of the game, too, and I'm with everybody (in saying) 'Let's just play.'"

"But I also understand there's a process involved. I've been around long enough to know just to be patient and just wait it out, though like everybody you get frustrated.

"Sharon and I are just trying to stay busy with things we haven't been able to do over the past number of Septembers and Octobers, and that's trying to help a little bit.

"But, yeah, I want to be coaching and I want to be playing."

MacLean said he and his staff have long finished their preparations for the season and have put scenarios in place for however long training camp may be when the lockout does end.

One thing is certain, though: Training camp won't be open to everyone. MacLean said only 23 or 24 players already under contract will be invited.

That's simply a byproduct of having only a limited amount of time to get ready for the season.

The players now in Binghamton who don't get an invitation will be important, because there will likely be plenty of injuries as the team scrambles in a short period of time to get ready.

"Short of getting on the ice, there's not much more that we can do until we get the green light," he said.

MacLean had been hoping for an early resolution so the Senators could capitalize on the whatever momentum they generated last season, when they made the playoffs and almost got past the New York Rangers in the first round.

But the lockout has gone on so long now that it has pretty well robbed every team of whatever momentum it had hoped to carry over.

Even a team such as the Stanley Cup-winning Los Angeles Kings will miss getting a bounce from an excellent season.

"I think every team has the same thing now," said MacLean.

"I don't think any team has the advantage.

"My thought on it is, once this starts, you better be prepared to go fast."

MacLean didn't offer any additional information on defenceman Jared Cowen's hip surgery, letting general manager Bryan Murray's statement on the injury be the definitive word.

But MacLean did say it hurts Binghamton.

"It's not a great big blow to our team, because we're not playing now," he said.

"I think it's more of a blow to the team in Binghamton, because anytime you lose a player of his calibre, it's obviously hard to replace.

"But at the same time, every injury is someone else's opportunity."

Ottawa Citizen LOADED: 11.16.2012

644356 Ottawa Senators

Peter Regin ready for trip to Northwest Territories, Finland

By Don Brennan ,

Peter Regin will be doing a lot of travelling over the next week or so. He thinks that's wonderful, of course, except for the fact he'd much rather be going nowhere.

Alas, with no CBA negotiations breakthrough in sight, the 26-year old Senators forward will join a group of fellow locked-out NHLers on a four-day, three-charity-game excursion to the great (usually) white north that begins Sunday.

They best pack some warm clothes. It's supposed to "feel like" -29C Tuesday in Yellowknife.

"I'm excited to see the Northwest Territories," Regin, a native of Denmark, said Thursday at the Sensplex. "I just think it's a great opportunity I probably won't get again."

When he gets back, he'll likely prepare for a trip to Finland. As of now, Regin has an opportunity to sign with Lukko Rauma in the SM-liiga. It's not the best league in the world, obviously, just that country.

And three other Danes play on the team: Frans Nielsen of the New York Islanders, Mikkel Boedker of the Phoenix Coyotes and Philip Larsen of the Dallas Stars.

Regin hopes the offer will still be on the table when he returns from the NWT.

"I know they want to get an answer too, so we kind of agreed that we were going to wait and see what happened this week," he said. "Now there hasn't been a lot of talk (between the NHL and NHLPA, and by not a lot he means none) this week, so I don't think another week will change a whole lot."

Signing with Lukko comes with a catch. If he does, Regin figures he'll get paid about 20% of the \$800,000 he'd earn with the Senators — so about \$160,000. But his contract will also stipulate that, should the NHL season get cancelled, he must remain with Lukko.

"I would like to go there, that's my first priority, especially because my friends are there and it would be fun to play with them again," said Regin. "(But) a lot of guys have signed month-to-month deals (with European teams), so if it gets blown up here, at least you can go somewhere else and sign for bigger money."

Like the KHL, maybe, or perhaps Sweden, where it's expected the currently closed doors to NHLers will swing open if Gary Bettman and Don Fehr don't shake hands soon.

Regin points out that "a lot" of NHLers are basically playing for free right now because of insurance costs on lavish deals they have in the NHL. That means if the lockout lasts a year, they'll play for free all season.

"It's not bad for me, especially because my insurance is so cheap," he said. "It's different for the guys like Erik (Karlsson), having a \$46-million contract. I only have \$800,000 to cover. At least I can make a little bit, too."

"It's not about money, especially if it's for a month," Regin added. "If they cancel the season here, it becomes kind of about money, because you really need to make something, too."

Regin empathizes with the 100-plus Europeans who have either lost their job or are sitting in press boxes watching the 100-plus locked-out NHLers work their jobs. But he also says it's part of the business.

"We all compete for the same jobs, but we're also all colleagues," he said. "I guess you don't want to take somebody else's job, but that's what the game is about. It's what you do every year at camp. You knock somebody out."

And everybody gets knocked out at some point in their career, too.

"That's what the game is about," Regin said. "So you can't really think about that, too."

"Everybody would want to be here. It's not like guys want to be there, taking somebody else's job. It's sad."

A genuinely good guy, Regin needs to be playing and not because he's poor. Once one of the Senators' top prospects, his last two seasons have been cut short by shoulder surgeries. Now, Senators coach Paul MacLean sees him as a top-9 forward, but with question marks on the first two lines, he could have a significant role in Ottawa.

He just needs to get his career back on track. He needs the CBA talks to start again — and end on a positive note.

"It's frustrating to hear (about them) every day, to follow it, and kind of get the inside," he said. "I haven't been at any of the meetings with the league, I haven't been in it that close, but we talk about it here every day. We get all the updates from (Senators' player rep Chris Phillips). And it looks like we aren't that far apart. Hopefully the league can figure out we're not that far apart, too."

Ottawa Sun LOADED: 11.16.2012

644357 Philadelphia Flyers

Hope dims for NHL settlement

Sam Carchidi

And on the 61st day of the NHL lockout, a spokesman for the league gave little hope for a settlement.

"I'm more discouraged now than I have been at any point in the process," Bill Daly, the NHL's deputy commissioner, told the Canadian Press on Thursday.

No meetings between the league and the players' union are scheduled, and the NHL is getting close to announcing another series of cancellations. Games have been canceled through Nov. 30.

A conference-only, shortened season of 64 games would be possible if the teams reached a collective bargaining agreement and began play Dec. 1. But to make that possible, a CBA would probably have to be in place by Tuesday in order to allow players a chance to return from Europe before having a one-week training camp.

That possibility grows smaller each day.

Representatives from the NHL and the players' union have not met since Sunday.

How to divide hockey-related revenue - which reached a record \$3.3 billion last season - and players' contracting rights are the main issues in a labor dispute that threatens to wipe out a season for the second time since 2004-05.

Philadelphia Inquirer / Daily News LOADED: 11.16.2012

644358 Philadelphia Flyers

NHL suggests 2-week break from negotiations

The Associated Press

TORONTO - Negotiations had already hit a wall in the ongoing hockey labor fight, and now the NHL has suggested the sides take an official two-week break before getting back to the bargaining table.

NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman floated the idea of a break to players' association executive director Donald Fehr. The union hasn't responded to the league yet, but the players maintained their position on Thursday night that they are ready and willing to meet at any time, and the only way to reach a deal to end the long lockout is to keep talking and negotiating.

"Gary suggested the possibility of a two-week moratorium," NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly wrote in an email to The Associated Press on Thursday night. "I'm disappointed because we don't have a negotiating partner that has any genuine interest in reaching an agreement. Zero interest."

The suggestion of a break was first reported by The Canadian Press on Thursday night.

With no new negotiations scheduled, and communication in general shutting down, the NHL appears to be getting closer to calling off more games, putting the entire hockey season in jeopardy.

"I hope not, but I'm more discouraged now than I have been at any point in the process," Daly said. "I responded to Don saying he did not know how to proceed from here."

The players' association wants to keep the bargaining going, despite how frustrating recent sessions have been.

"Of course everyone on the players' side wants to reach an agreement," union special counsel Steve Fehr said in a statement Thursday night. "The players have offered the owners concessions worth about a billion dollars. What exactly have the owners offered the players? We believe that it is more likely that we will make progress if we meet than if we don't. So we are ready to meet."

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"If indeed they do not want to meet, it will be at least the third time in the last three months that they have shut down the dialogue, saying they will not meet unless the players meet their preconditions. What does that tell you about their interest in resolving this?"

The sides put on a push to make an agreement last week when they met over six consecutive days in New York. However, Friday's session ended with a heated exchange, and talks lasted only about an hour on Sunday.

The 61-day lockout has already claimed 327 regular-season games, including the New Year's Day outdoor Winter Classic, and more could be wiped out within a week. It is believed that an agreement would need to be in place by the end of next week for the season to get under way on Dec. 1.

That is starting to look unlikely because of the mere fact that the sides are unable to find common ground on the big issues keeping them apart. It is more than just finances preventing a deal. The disagreements over player contract terms have emerged as just big an impasse.

The NHL wants to limit contracts to five years, make rules to prohibit back-diving contracts the league feels circumvent the salary cap, keep players ineligible for unrestricted free agency until they are 28 or have eight years of professional service time, cut entry-level deals to two years, and make salary arbitration after five years.

A few hours into last Friday's session, negotiations broke down over the core economic differences that separate the sides.

A lockout wiped out the entire 2004-05 season.

Philadelphia Inquirer / Daily News LOADED: 11.16.2012

644359 Philadelphia Flyers

NHL labor negotiations take bizarre turn

Tim Panaccio

Throughout this 61-day NHL lockout, there have been some bizarre moments.

One of them occurred late Thursday night when TSN studio analyst Aaron Ward tweeted that NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman suggested on Wednesday a two-week moratorium on the talks.

Think about that. A two-week break in the talks while two months of the NHL season have already been cancelled.

Now that is truly bizarre, but it also explains why there haven't been negotiating sessions this week.

There were six days of consecutive negotiations last week before things broke down last Friday night amid serious rancor on both sides.

Talks resumed for 90 minutes two days later, but quickly broke down again.

While the two sides seem close, at the same time, they remain very far apart on economics, as league deputy commissioner Bill Daly told CSNPhilly.com on Monday at the Hockey Hall of Fame ceremonies.

Daly said early Thursday morning that he was, "more discouraged now than I have been at any point in the process."

Some took Daly's remark as more posturing from the league, which is faced with having to cancel most, if not all, of December's games sometime early next week.

Late Thursday night, Daly told TSN, "We are extremely disappointed in where we and the players find ourselves. And from our perspective, we have made repeated moves in the players' direction with absolutely no reciprocation."

"Unfortunately, we have determined we are involved with union leadership that has no genuine interest in reaching an agreement. Regardless of what we propose, or how we suggest to compromise, the answer is 'no.' At some point you just have to say, 'enough is enough.'"

There was no response from NHLPA executive director Donald Fehr or his special counsel, Steve Fehr.

Comcast SportsNet.com LOADED: 11.16.2012

644360 Philadelphia Flyers

Hartnell, NHLers to play in charity game in A.C.

Tim Panaccio

Scott Hartnell is pretty revved up about next Saturday's "Operation Hat Trick" in Atlantic City, N.J., that will benefit relief efforts for victims of Hurricane Sandy.

"Brad Richards will captain the one team and I'll captain the other," Hartnell said of the game at Boardwalk Hall. "This is pretty cool. Brad's been doing stuff out there on Staten Island. Maybe we'll have some Rangers-Flyers battles out there."

Game time is 7 p.m. Tickets go on sale Friday, Nov. 16 at 10 a.m. and are priced from \$20 to \$100.

"We are all overwhelmed by the damage and destruction caused to our area by Hurricane Sandy, and as professional hockey players we wanted to come together to help those who were victimized by the storm," Richards said. "While we know the road to recovery is long, we hope a hockey game featuring some of the top players in our sport will help rally additional support for the three great organizations that are committed to helping rebuild our area."

Tickets can be purchased at the Boardwalk Hall box office, Ticketmaster.com, all Ticketmaster locations, or by calling 800-736-1420. Additional information can be found at the Atlantic City Heroes Facebook page.

"Hockey is a small world," Hartnell said. "We thought of this. Atlantic City got hammered. There were some people putting out feelers and we jumped at the opportunity. We're a great group of guys. It's like our own All-Star Game. This is going to benefit those affected by Hurricane Sandy and it's going to be a great night in Atlantic City."

Hartnell and Richards will be joined by South Jersey's Bobby Ryan, Kimmo Timonen, Braydon Coburn, Dan Carcillo, James van Riemsdyk, Justin Williams, Simon Gagne, Ville Leino, Steve Eminger, Jeff Halpern, Brian Boyle, Jody Shelley and James Neal.

"This all kind of came out of the blue," Hartnell said. "Talking with people who were affected by the hurricane and you see images on TV. A few of us got together and said, 'Maybe we can do a hockey game with all the benefits going to those areas in New York and the Jersey shore.' The American Red Cross did such an incredible job trying to put back these towns hit so hard. We want to help."

There will also be online auctions of NHL-used equipment.

"It's going to be a big night and a lot of fun," Hartnell said. "All the money goes to the Jersey shore and the Empire State, too."

Proceeds benefit the Empire Relief Fund, N.J. Hurricane Relief Fund and American Red Cross.

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644361 Philadelphia Flyers

Flyers Notes: Grossmann to join Swedish club

TIM RIDAY

FOLLOW TIM RIDAY ON The list of Flyers signing overseas grew on Wednesday.

Defenseman Nicklas Grossmann agreed to join Allsvenskan club Sodertalje SSK in Sweden, as profiled by the team's website (via ProHockeyTalk).

Grossmann spent time at both the junior and senior levels with the club before joining the Dallas Stars' organization in 2005.

The 27-year-old Swede was acquired by the Flyers just prior to the trade deadline last season in exchange for two draft picks.

Grossmann played 22 regular-season games for the orange and black, posting six assists and 10 penalty minutes. He also appeared in nine playoff games, registering one assist.

The imposing defenseman earned a four-year contract extension worth \$14 million on April 7, after adding a much-needed physical presence to the Flyers' blueline.

Grossmann will join fellow Flyer Matt Read in Sodertalje. Read signed with the team in early October.

Flyers forward Wayne Simmonds is headed back to Toronto.

According to Yahoo! Sports' Puck Daddy, Simmonds has left Czech Extraliga club Liberec to deal with a family issue at home, but hasn't ruled out a return to the team.

After a short stint in Germany, Simmonds signed with Liberec in late October, and was subjected to racist chants after only his third game with the team (see story). Fans began to chant "opice" at Simmonds after he fought Miroslav Zalesak of Chomutov. "Opice" translates to "monkey."

In addition to Simmonds' departure, Lieberec also announced eight fans alleged to have made those racial taunts towards Simmonds on Oct. 28 have been arrested (via ProHockeyTalk).

Gervais signs in Germany

Defenseman Bruno Gervais, who signed a two-year, \$1.65 million deal with the Flyers this past offseason, on Tuesday agreed to join Heilbronner of the German second division, according to agent Alan Walsh.

The 28-year-old spent the 2011-12 campaign with the Tampa Bay Lightning, recording six goals and seven assists in 50 games.

In his career, Gervais has tallied 15 goals, 66 assists and a minus-64 rating in 381 games between the Islanders and Lightning.

Gervais will join Kings netminder Jonathan Bernier in Heilbronner.

Comcast SportsNet.com LOADED: 11.16.2012

644362 Pittsburgh Penguins

No talks scheduled in NHL lockout

By Rob Rossi

The NHL and its Players' Association are in a deep freeze.

The sides are not scheduled to negotiate through the weekend, league and union officials said. Bargaining broke off Sunday after a meeting in New York that capped a run of negotiations in five of six days.

The NHL does not anticipate resuming negotiations, especially in a group setting that would include owners and players, until the Players' Association presents a new proposal for a labor agreement.

Optimism from a week ago has disappeared, at least from the league's perspective.

"It's very discouraging," deputy commissioner Bill Daly said.

Union officials, specifically special counsel Steve Fehr, have not spoken in nearly as pessimistic terms since negotiations broke.

Players missed their third paycheck on Thursday.

Penguins players at Southpointe on Thursday said they have not given up hope for an early-December start to the season but only because the NHL has not extended its slate of canceled games.

There are no set plans for more cancellations, Daly said.

However, if negotiations do not resume by Thanksgiving weekend, there is an increasing likelihood the NHL will cancel games through Dec. 15 — possibly as soon as Nov. 26.

The NHL already has canceled 26 percent of its regular-season schedule by bagging games through November. Also, the Winter Classic outdoor game and surrounding New Year's Eve/Day events are scrapped.

A lockout, enacted by owners when the last labor agreement expired Sept. 15, hit Day 61 on Thursday.

Owners and players are divided on revenue split, owners' revenue sharing, method for guaranteeing players' current contracts and contractual issues such as maximum length for veterans and free agency.

Tribune Review LOADED: 11.16.2012

644363 Pittsburgh Penguins

NHL lockout: Checks not in mail; no claims of poverty

By Dave Molinari

Most NHL players do not live check-to-check.

Bodycheck-to-bodycheck, maybe, but existing on a paycheck-to-paycheck basis shouldn't be an issue for guys working in a league where the minimum salary in 2011-12 was \$525,000 and the average pay was about \$2.44 million.

Consequently, most players -- especially those who have spent a significant number of years at this level -- presumably didn't feel any immediate sting when the lockout that has shut down the NHL the past two months prevented them from receiving their third check of the 2012-13 season Thursday.

"At this point of this lockout, I hope nobody's hurting for money," Penguins winger Pascal Dupuis said after joining nine teammates for an informal workout at Southpointe.

"We got an escrow check back from last year, and we're making enough money to, hopefully, not be in financial trouble right now."

Of course, considering that there haven't been any negotiations since Sunday and that no bargaining sessions have been scheduled -- the league actually has proposed a two-week moratorium on talks -- players probably shouldn't be counting on a deposit in their bank accounts on the 30th, either.

"It's not looking good," Sidney Crosby said. "As bad as it's looked at some points, I've always tried to find little glimmers of hope that one day everyone will wake up and find a way to do it.

"But that hasn't been the case so far."

For players such as Crosby, who has received about \$46 million in salary -- to say nothing of bonus and endorsement money -- since he broke into the league in 2005, the earnings he has lost during this labor dispute haven't had a significant effect on his life.

He has gone weeks without being paid, but the financial impact on him likely won't be felt even if this labor dispute stretches for months. Maybe years. Possibly decades.

But Crosby is one of the NHL's high-end performers, in terms of talent and take-home pay. Consequently, he has an immunity to the fiscal pinch of the lockout that many of his peers do not.

"I'm fortunate, obviously," he said. "I haven't had to worry about [not being paid]. It is a reality, for sure, for some guys."

Fourth-line center Joe Vitale, for example, has just gotten established as an NHL regular. He was paid \$525,000 last season and was scheduled to earn the same amount in 2012-13.

While that obviously is far more than the average wage-earner pulls in, Vitale doesn't enjoy the same financial cushion that some more experienced -- and better-compensated -- teammates enjoy.

Consequently, while he certainly isn't being forced to choose between, say, paying his electric bill and buying groceries, Vitale acknowledged that he has been a bit more prudent about some purchases lately.

"You just obviously have to prioritize a little better, as far as getting the on-sale bread instead of the whole-grain," he said. "Little things like that. But that's the only change, financially."

Everyone involved in the lockout has absorbed some level of financial setback, and whether that will persist through the winter remains to be seen.

While there are conflicting perspectives on how close the league's owners and the NHL Players' Association are to settling on a new collective bargaining agreement, it's a reality that a deal won't happen unless the sides get negotiations going again.

"It can get done in two days," Dupuis said. "It's a matter of talking. Obviously, right now, we're willing to do it. We're ready to talk. It's on their side."

When discussions resume, there are several major issues to be resolved if a part of the season is to be salvaged. The sides still haven't agreed on how to divide revenues and must work out a number of contract-related issues and how to handle the financial aspects of a lockout-shortened season.

"I think we're pretty close on some issues, which is good," Crosby said. "I feel like some of those things could be negotiated pretty quickly, hopefully. But other things seem like they're pretty far apart."

Until agreements are reached on those, the Penguins can expect to have the same kind of interactions with fans away from the rink that they have for a number of weeks now.

"The [most frequent question] is, 'Hey, when is this thing going to be over? When are we going to get back to playing hockey?'" Vitale said. "I always tell them the same thing: 'We're working our hardest to get a fair deal in place. No one misses the game more than we players do.'" Tribune Review LOADED: 11.16.2012

644364 St Louis Blues

Janssen and the Blues lend a hand to help hurricane victims

By NORM SANDERS

Former St. Louis Blues forward Cam Janssen is as tough as they come, but the rugged winger admitted becoming emotionally moved by the damage caused by Hurricane Sandy.

Janssen will join former Blues teammates and other NHL players in a benefit hockey game Saturday to help first responders and victims impacted by the hurricane. Game time is 7:30 p.m. at the Hardees IcePlex in Chesterfield, Mo.

Tickets are \$20 each, with VIP tickets available for \$200 that include special seating, complimentary food and drinks and a private after-party with the players.

Among those scheduled to play are Janssen, David Backes, Andy McDonald, Barret Jackman, Alex Pietrangelo, T.J. Oshie, Brian Elliott, Kevin Shattenkirk, Scott Nichol former Blues players Jamal Mayers and Ty Conklin, St. Louis native NHL player Chris Butler and ex-Blues Jamie Rivers and Jim Campbell.

Some of Janssen's former college and high school teammates are also involved

"It's going to be as competitive, that's what I want it to be," said Janssen, who grew up in Eureka, Mo. "There's going to be NHL guys out there every other shift and we're going to be tired because it's the Olympic (sized) rink, too."

Tickets are available now at www.responderrescue.org, or by calling 314-627-0700. Anyone that can't attend but still wants to make a donation can do that at the following link: <https://www.responderrescue.org/donations.html>.

"We are selling some tickets," Janssen said. "People better get their tickets quick, because it's going really good."

Janssen now plays for the New Jersey Devils. He said during the hurricane, which hit much of the northeastern U.S., he and his fiancée were blown away by the extensive damage they saw on television.

Janssen had many friends and teammates living directly in the storm's path.

"I was sitting on my couch watching the Weather Channel and Fox News and brainstorming," Janssen said. "I was watching this devastating hurricane that trampled this region of the United State, this highly populated region, and just couldn't believe it."

"We looked at each other like 'We've got to do something,'" he said. "I made a couple phone calls and called the right people, then all of a sudden we got some structure down for the event."

Janssen was not surprised in the least when so many of his hockey friends and non-hockey friends were quick to lend a hand for the charity event.

"You really find out who's your true friends," Janssen said. "There are so many people who are helping me and really getting nothing out of it...they're going out of their way to help me put this thing on."

During the lockout, Janssen and many Blues players are working out at the IcePlex in Chesterfield under the guidance of a pair of ex-Blues, River and Jeff Brown.

"I'm very fortunate to have all these guys in my town to skate with," Janssen said. "Jamie Rivers and Jeff Brown put us through all this drill work and skills every single day. You still miss the game and the competitiveness, the crowds, that euphoria and high that you get from a fight or a big hit."

Belleville News-Democrat LOADED: 11.16.2012

644365 Toronto Maple Leafs

Maple Leafs prospect Leo Komarov heading back to KHL?

Kevin McGran

Leo Komarov tenure with the Toronto Marlies may be coming to an end. But only if he has assurances he can return to North America if the lockout ends.

For now Komarov, who leads Marlies forwards with five goals, continues to work out with the team. But a clause in his contract clicked in as the lockout dragged on that would allow him to return to Moscow Dynamo of the KHL.

"Both sides would like him to be able to return when and if the lockout ends. That's the big question mark," said Marlies coach Dallas Eakins. "Nothing changes for him. He continues to work hard."

"The kid doesn't want to just leave and not be able to come back if and when the lockout ends, and the team doesn't want that either."

Komarov scored four goals in his last three outings. The 25-year-old product of Finland was expected to play for the Leafs this year but — of course — can't due to the lockout.

There is still plenty of paperwork to be done and there's no guarantee one way or another which direction Komarov ends up taking. But if he leaves, Eakins will miss him, but understand.

"If it does happen, he's had a great audition here, he's got his feet wet in the North American game," said Eakins. "If he goes over there, he continues to develop over there and it opens up a roster spot for us. So another guy gets to play a little bit more."

"He's played hard. He's a character guy and a leader for our team. We've got a good feel. I've got a lot of time for him. There are no shifts off. He's got enough skill to finish every once in a while."

Toronto Star LOADED: 11.16.2012

644366 Toronto Maple Leafs

Former players questioning NHLPA's direction: Cox

By Damien Cox

It was certainly not what the NHL Players' Association wanted to hear. Or what it wanted its membership to hear.

With locked-out members of the union facing a third lost paycheque this week and weekly collective losses of \$62 million, and with absolutely no activity ongoing in terms of negotiations on a new collective bargaining agreement with the league, the Don Fehr-led organization has nonetheless been able to stay very consistent in its message for weeks.

Attack NHL commissioner Gary Bettman. Personalize the disagreement. Make it appear as though the labour battle is all Bettman's doing. Emphasize that the union gave "massive" concessions seven years ago. Question why owners are gagged and not allowed to speak freely.

NHLPAers have hit those notes consistently over the first 60 days of the lockout along with repeating the charge that the NHL won't negotiate fairly.

But Fehr, who has more control over the union than any executive director since Alan Eagleson, can't control what is said by former NHL players.

Early on, ex-NHLers didn't have much to say, with Bobby Orr simply suggesting it was time for both the NHL and the union to negotiate.

"They have to accept that responsibility to sit down and get a deal done. Shame on them if they don't do that," said Orr.

This week, however, the dynamic changed to a degree, with former players Mark Recchi and Chris Therien suggesting players may want to at the very least question the direction in which Fehr is taking the union and the tactics being used.

"My advice is that the longer (the lockout) goes, the worse (the offer) is going to get (for the players)" said Recchi, who retired after last season and has been through all three NHL lockouts since 1994.

"The longer they're out, the revenues are going to go down and down. Corporate sponsors aren't going to be lining up . . . so there goes that money. The schedule isn't going to be 82 games, I don't think, at this point. That's more money lost. So how are you going to get a better deal? Personally, I think the best time is now."

Therien, a former Flyer and now a member of the radio broadcast team that covers Philadelphia games, used his Twitter account (@ctherien6) to express his concerns about the state of the talks.

"I go back to 04 lockout as a player. 1 question I would have asked (Bob Goodenow now that I've been thru this - what exactly is plan B?" he tweeted this week.

He added: "I'm not saying Don Fehr doesn't have a plan B but if I'm a player again now I'm calling on that 'always available' line to find out."

Finally, Therien twitterized: "One thing I know is both sides are in a fight for what they believe in right or wrong! what my opinion is simply what past experiences of 2 prior labour strifes has taught me."

It's a sensitive area for the union, given that under Eagleson players felt they were bullied into submission, unable to question union decisions or strategies. During Goodenow's run as executive director, the union stressed unity but after Goodenow and key lieutenants authorized an offer to the league of a 24 per cent salary rollback in the fall of 2004 without the knowledge of most players, the membership gradually revolted and Goodenow was ultimately booted out.

Paul Kelly took over in 2007 but a small cadre led by ex-ombudsman Eric Lindros, union lawyer Ian Penny and players Andrew Ference, Matt Stajan,

Dan Hamhuis and others engineered his ouster in a controversial 4 a.m. firing in Chicago.

Fehr succeeded Kelly, preaching the need for players to be informed and united, as was the case with the baseball union he led through a long series of battles with owners.

The issue now is whether the players are making the decisions or whether they are simply following Fehr's lead. After Kelly was axed, a new structure was put in place at the union that eliminated the office of NHLPA president, the executive committee and any official negotiating committee.

Dozens of players have participated in sessions with the NHL with only a few attending more than a handful. With no executive committee or president to challenge strategies or decisions, Fehr — who was consulting on the new union structure before taking over as NHLPA boss — reports to the membership at large and the 30 team representatives.

Whether those players and those reps are asking the hard questions of Fehr that Recchi and Therien are suggesting they should is unclear.

Still, there is no evidence at all that the union is cracking, just as there is no evidence that the owners are anything but solidly behind Bettman.

What Recchi and Therien seemed to be questioning is whether rigid solidarity alone will get the players where they want to be.

Or make up for the millions in lost wages they'll never get back.

Toronto Star LOADED: 11.16.2012

644367 Toronto Maple Leafs

Leafs' Komarov to bolt?

By Lance Hornby

Leo Komarov came to North America to play in the NHL, but might not see the inside of the Air Canada Centre for a long time.

So rather than continue with the young Toronto Marlies farm team, the 25-year-old is looking at returning to a more familiar and financially rewarding situation with Moscow Dynamo in the KHL. The Finnish winger, drafted in the sixth round by then-GM John Ferguson back in 2006, is in discussions to use a clause in his one-year contract with the Leafs to go back to the Russian-based league if the lockout persists.

But the Marlies are reluctant to lose the player who was their goal-scoring leader a few days ago and had brought a spark to the team with his aggressive play.

"This is a complicated situation we are trying to work through," Leafs' vice-president of hockey operations Dave Poulin told the Toronto Sun on Thursday.

The Marlies are about to start three games in three nights Friday in Hamilton. Komarov did attend an optional practice Thursday.

"I think Leo wants to make sure that, if he does leave, that he can come back if the lockout ends," coach Dallas Eakins told TSN.

"No matter what happens, this kid is a good prospect, he's worked hard to get where he's at for a shot at the NHL. I think he's going to push for a job if it ever does start back up."

Komarov had three goals in three games last week in Texas, before serving a one-game suspension for a check to the head area of a San Antonio Rampage player. He and defenceman Jake Gardiner share the team lead with five goals.

BRIEFLY

Blackhawks captain Jonathan Toews admitted this week he was still feeling the effects of a concussion during the playoffs, though he'd passed NHL-imposed protocols required to play ... Habs forward Blake Geoffrion has been released from a Montreal hospital less than a week after he had surgery for a skull fracture ... Capitals forward Jason Chimera has signed with Chomutov of the Czech Extraliga. Chimera, who had 20 goals and 19

assists for the Caps last season, has played 663 career NHL games ... Detroit Red Wings prospect Marek Tvrdon, a forward with the Vancouver Giants of the WHL, is out for the season due to an undisclosed injury. The Vancouver Sun reported that Tvrdon has a blood clot in his arm.

— files from QMI Agency

Toronto Sun LOADED: 11.16.2012

644368 Toronto Maple Leafs

Marlies might lose Leo Komarov to Russia

Michael Traikos

When 2006 draft pick Leo Komarov finally signed with the Toronto Maple Leafs last summer, he made it clear he was coming to North America for the sole purpose of achieving his dream of playing in the NHL. But with the lockout standing in the way of that dream, the 25-year-old, who has been playing with the Toronto Marlies in the American Hockey League, is about to return to Russia.

The question now is for how long?

While Komarov had a provision in his contract to go back and play in the KHL, the Leafs are hoping that the forward prospect will also be able to come back to Toronto if and when the NHL season starts.

"It's not cutting ties," said Marlies head coach Dallas Eakins, who expects Komarov to continue playing in the AHL until everything gets worked out. "It's a part of the lockout. If there was no lockout, this would not be going on at all. He would be playing for our team or the Toronto Maple Leafs.

"One of the big things is Leo wants to make sure, if he does leave, he can come back if the lockout ends. No matter what happens, this kid is a good prospect, he has worked hard to get to where he is at for a shot at the NHL and that's his endgame. For Leo, this is about playing in the NHL. That's what he wants to do. And I think he's going to push for a job whenever it ever does start up."

A self-described pest, Komarov has come as advertised after spending the last three years playing for Moscow Dynamo. Wearing No. 87 — his birth year — he has not exactly been the Sidney Crosby of the AHL. But with five goals and seven points and 20 penalty minutes in 11 games, as well as a one-game suspension for a hit to the head, he has made an impact.

"There's no shifts off, that's for sure," Eakins said. "And I'm not looking in games to find him. If he's not getting it done with points on the scoreboard or chipping in with goals, he is going to that net extremely hard. He has been a pest, he skates well, he's been extremely hard to play against. And that's what you need ... he's brought it both ways for me.

When asked if returning to Russia might hurt Komarov's chances of playing with the Leafs, Eakins shook his head. The organization respects his decision and was pleased with how he has handled this request to leave. And it does not appear that Komarov has much to prove at the minor-league level.

"I have a very good gauge of what he's going to bring over here now," Eakins said. "He's had a real good audition. Would I like him to stay? Absolutely. Are we going to miss Leo in our lineup? Absolutely. But these are decisions that are hard for a player and for his family ... we support his decision."

National Post LOADED: 11.16.2012

644369 Toronto Maple Leafs

20 (More) Questions with ex-NHLer Jeremy Roenick: 'I definitely can be obnoxious'

Sean Fitz-Gerald

Jeremy Roenick will fight you, people of the Internet.

"Sometimes, some people just hit me the wrong way, and I just wish that the laws would allow me to hit them right f— back," he said on Friday.

In his recently released autobiography, retired National Hockey League centre Jeremy Roenick spends a paragraph discussing the damage the sport inflicted on his face over two decades. The list includes 600 stitches, 13 concussions — and possibly 20 more that were never diagnosed — and a jaw that once broke in 21 places.

The sections discussing the damage his face, specifically his mouth, inflicted on the sport tend to run much longer. The title is fittingly long-winded: J.R.: The Fast, Crazy Life of Hockey's Most Outspoken & Most Colourful Personality.

"The modern athlete has become too worried about saying anything that is going to rile up the other team," Roenick writes. "Modern stars worry too much about being diplomatic. F— diplomacy."

The 42-year-old from Boston retired as one of the most prolific NHL scorers born in the United States. His place as its most vocal player ranks even higher, and he does not shy from the consequences of being mouthy in his book — from a fight he narrowly escaped with an NHL coach to an array of other controversies, including those in his own home.

Roenick has already been profiled once in the National Post's "20 Questions" feature, in a piece that ran in 2007. Protocol dictates a celebrity can only be profiled once in a "20 Questions," but an exception is being made in this case, given the subject. So here, in what we'll call "20 More Questions," Roenick sits down with the Post to discuss six-figure poker hands with Keith Tkachuk, the challenge of raising children as a celebrity in the age of social media (see: Gretzky, Paulina), and his unorthodox plan of defending himself in a fight with that aforementioned coach.

1. Arrogant, obnoxious or just unfiltered?

JR "You know what? I'm not arrogant at all, because I really do respect a lot of people. I am very confident. I've never thought of myself as an arrogant person. Confident? Absolutely. An ego? Absolutely. And I definitely can be obnoxious. Just ask my wife."

2. Do you regret anything you've said in public?

JR "No. I might have maybe chosen my words wrong, but I think I got my opinion out there. Whether it was really brash, or whether I sugarcoated it? No. If I feel I shouldn't say something, I don't."

3. Describe for me your reaction when Patrick Roy said, "I can't really hear what Jeremy said, because I got my two Stanley Cup rings plugging my ear[s]."

JR "It was funny, because he says, 'plugging my ear.' I laughed. I laughed really hard. Loved the rebuttal. My only comeback was scoring on him the next day, and ringing out the other ear."

4. Earlier in your career, did you take it as a compliment or an insult whenever someone said you played like a Canadian?

JR "Oh, that is the biggest compliment I could get. The way I look at it, that's the biggest compliment that you could pay me as a hockey player; that I played like a Canadian. Because I think, in order for the United States to get to a world-class level, we had to adopt a Canadian style, which was hard-nosed, physical, north-south hockey that was reckless and sometimes brutal. We didn't hit that world stage until we learned how to play that way."

5. In your book, you wonder if, when you were with the Coyotes, then-coach Wayne Gretzky might have treated you differently as your coach if you were a Canadian ...

JR "Wayne is a very fair guy. He's a good man and I don't think he's a controversial person at all. So I probably think he'd probably treat me the same."

6. The Gretzky name has become mildly controversial on Twitter, through racy pictures posted by his daughter, Paulina. Is that at all awkward for you, as a contemporary?

JR [laughs] "Uh, no, because I'm dealing with it with my second generation. The second generation, growing up in celebrity-hood, it's not easy. And they try to create their own path. And sometimes, they try to create it without the help of their celebrity significant. And that causes severe

problems, at times. At least, it causes high blood pressure and severe headaches.”

Confident? Absolutely. An ego? Absolutely. And I definitely can be obnoxious

7. Did you vote in the U.S. Presidential election?

JR “I did.”

8. Are you happy with the result?

JR “I am ... devastated with the outcome. I’m actually really disappointed that America would accept the mediocrity that we’ve been put in for the last four years. I understand the job [President Barack Obama] came into was extremely difficult and extremely deep, but whether he — or anybody else — wanted to admit it, it is so not better. It is worse than when he came into office.”

9. Do you think professional athletes skew Republican because of their salaries or ...

JR [cuts in] “To me, it’s not about money. It’s not about how much tax I’m going to pay. I could care less how much tax I have to pay. It’s not about me. It’s about the state of our country, it’s about the economics of our country, it’s about the debt of our country, it’s about the foreign affairs of our country. Nobody can rationalize with me that we go from 24 million people on food stamps to 41 million, and explain to me that it’s better.”

10. Would you ever seek public office?

JR “Um, I don’t know if I’m too controversial to run for public office. I definitely would be a go-getter. I’d be more like a [New Jersey Governor] Chris Christie kind of guy, who just speaks out and is very aggressive, and believes what he believes in, and believes in the people. Like, I’m a big people person. A lot of people might not know it, but I love people. I try to do everything I possibly can to help people who need it. I would never count anything out.”

11. Who won the \$110,000 pot in that poker game in the back of the Phoenix Coyotes’ jet?

JR [smiles, sheepishly] “Um, Keith and I split it, because we were too afraid to open our hands.”

12. Do you think stories like that are why some fans will never side with players during a labour impasse like the one this year?

JR “I just don’t think they can relate. But I never say that I can relate to someone who doesn’t have a job, or someone who struggles to pay their rent. And I would never say, ‘I know how you feel,’ because I couldn’t say that. That’s unfair. People live different lives. And they have different mentalities. I wouldn’t expect anybody to understand, or believe or not believe. That’s just my life. And, hey, if they could be in that position, I would love for them to be in that position. But don’t blame me because I was able to get there.”

That’s the biggest compliment that you could pay me as a hockey player; that I played like a Canadian

13. With the fame and the money, you said in your book that you’d wished you’d been a better husband at times. What did you mean?

JR “Oh, I could go on forever about this. You know, surrounding myself with the wrong people, which really took a lot of my attention and my affection away from the people who needed it; being very selfish, to where I would just get up and take off with my buddies to go on a golf trip and really not even ask if it was OK. A lot of little things. I mean, obviously, drinking, having irresponsible gambling ... flirting with other girls, other girls hanging around, other people hanging around, bad influences hanging around. Being a pro athlete, you have the gamut of things that you have to deal with.”

14. Do you still have a gambling problem?

JR “I think I enjoy it. I was out of control at one time. I don’t have a problem now. I think I gamble within reason, that I can afford, that I don’t lose sleep over. But, yeah, no question, at one time, absolutely.”

15. How bad?

JR “Just betting football. Betting basketball games. Playing on the ice and sitting on the bench, not watching the game but watching the scoreboard tickers of football scores around the country. Looking at basketball scores

while I’m playing hockey. Yeah, there was a lot of things that kept my mind off being the player that I could have been.”

16. Explain the artistic process behind “Officer #3” in the television show Heist, and “Assistant Coach” in Ghost Whisperer?

JR [laughs] “Saying the fewest lines you could possibly have and still make air. Doing those little cameos is always fun. I didn’t care if I was just someone passing by the camera that looked in with a smile, or if they gave me a couple of lines. The fact that they asked me to be in any of these, I took it as a compliment.”

17. Who would have won in a fight between you and former coach Jim Schoenfeld?

JR “Schonny would have beat the living tar out of me.”

There was a lot of things that kept my mind off being the player that I could have been

18. For those who haven’t read your book, can you explain the self-defence plan you hatched when it looked like he was going to fight you after you had a player-coach disagreement in Phoenix?

JR “Um, when Jim Schoenfeld kicked all the players out of the room and he started taking off his shoes, taking off his jacket, I knew that this man was a beast. He was stronger than me. And the only thing that I could have done was to find any way I possibly could to just get a hold of his nuts — whether it was with my hand or my mouth — and bite them as hard as I could until he screamed loud enough for everybody else to come in.”

19. You talked your way out of having to fight that day. Has he seen the book?

JR “No. I don’t think so. He’s going to laugh. He’s going to laugh when he sees it.”

20. Who wins in a talk-off between Don Cherry, Mike Milbury and Jeremy Roenick?

JR Mike will talk forever, and then he’ll leave, because he’ll get sick of it. Don will sit there and he’ll rationalize with you and he’ll give you example after example after example. And I’ll just be the stone that will continue to yell, yell, yell and just not give in. Because I’m too stubborn — I’m way too stubborn to leave without knowing I got the last word.”

National Post LOADED: 11.16.2012

644370 Vancouver Canucks

Toews is finally over concussion symptoms but Daniel Sedin miffed at head-shot mentality

Ben Kuzma

VANCOUVER — The two-month anniversary of the NHL lockout was marked by the league’s threat to cancel games until mid-December if a resolution isn’t reached in the next week. It was also marked by the loss of another marquee matchup that would have matched the Vancouver Canucks against the Chicago Blackhawks at Rogers Arena.

The only silver lining is that the collective bargaining agreement impasse has allowed the injured Ryan Kesler, Alex Edler and Jason Garrison to methodically mend under the care of the Canucks while collecting their third cheques of the season. And it has allowed Daniel Sedin more time to avoid another head shot and another concussion that resulted in headaches that sidelined the winger a dozen games late last season.

“It seems when you get a few concussions, it’s easier to get the third or fourth one,” the Swedish winger said Thursday following a UBC skate with six teammates. “I don’t know if rest really helps or what the deal is with that. I’m happy that I’m back and skating and that’s all I worry about. You notice at times in the first few practices that you’re kind of hesitant in the corners because you don’t want to be blind-sided and not be ready for it. You see the tiniest hit and it cost a guy a full year and you see a big hit and a guy is back in a week. It’s a tricky injury and that’s why it’s so scary.”

"I've had nothing, no symptoms. I took a few weeks off after the season and started training again. You worry about the first few workouts, but everything has been fine. I'm doing the same things that I did before [the concussion] and that was the bottom line."

Meanwhile, despite following protocol and being cleared, Blackhawks captain Jonathan Toews admitted this week he wasn't fully recovered from a concussion when he competed in the playoffs last spring. Balance and sight issues only recently subsided following five days of tests and corrective procedures at the Carrick Institute at Life University in Marietta, Ga., the same the chiropractic neurology facility that treated Sidney Crosby from concussion symptoms that were threatening his career. Toews had missed the last two months of the regular season with the concussion and that certainly got Daniel Sedin's attention.

He is wary that a lack of respect between players could result in another concussion and recovery uncertainty. Daniel Sedin was injured March 21 by an elbow to the chin from Duncan Keith which resulted in a five-game suspension for the Chicago defenceman. The Swedish winger returned for Game 4 of a first-round playoff series against the Los Angeles Kings. And while the NHL has toughened its stance on hits to the head and especially those from the blind side — amendments to Rule 43 call for anything from a minor to match penalty and supplementary discipline at the commissioner's discretion — Daniel Sedin's injury was an example of what the league can't address.

"I've always said it's going to come down to the players," he's stressed. "You can do whatever you want, but players don't seem bothered about getting five or 10 games. Once they get more respect for each other, it will clean it up. Guys are fighting for jobs. If they know they can get a big hit in, they're going to do it and not be too worried about a five-game suspension. They're going to be in the league."

Daniel and Henrik Sedin will remain in Vancouver during the lockout but will plan a return to Sweden to play for Modo of the Swedish Elite League if the labour impasse threatens the entire season. In the interim, Daniel Sedin hasn't looked for a hockey fix and didn't watch the junior Super Series game Wednesday between the WHL and Russia at the Pacific Coliseum.

"I've got enough with the kids [two daughters, one son] and the TV is not on too much — and definitely not hockey," he chuckled. "I play a lot of board games with my wife."

In the interim, the head games between NHL owners and players' association have an ominous tone. No negotiations sessions are planned and nobody is budging on systemic issues. For the players, contracts limited to five years, eight years of service for free agency instead of seven, five years or pro service instead of four for arbitration rights and entry-level deals pushed back from three to to years will limit their options.

"We'd rather be at the table and having some give and take, but they [owners] have expressed zero interest in doing that," said Canucks goalie Cory Schneider. "It stinks. It stinks for the fans and it stinks for people of hockey, but they keep cancelling games and don't want to make any progress. I hear them saying we need to make a substantial move toward them and I guess a billion dollars isn't enough and they want everything else, too."

"I'm not really sure what they've given us. There are points we can talk about and come to a compromise, but they're just interested in getting what they want and not budging. We need somebody to step up instead of just giving deadlines, but we were prepared for this."

"I haven't even looked at the schedule since the lockout started. A lot of guys are almost numb to it at this point. Whenever we try to make progress, we expect the worst and hope for the best."

Vancouver Province: LOADED: 11.16.2012

644371 Vancouver Canucks

Vigneault staying sharp and hopeful

Jason Botchford

In 40 years, Alain Vigneault's dream has come full circle.

Sharing a story from his youth Thursday, he reminisced about dreaming of playing in the NHL.

Things haven't changed all that much.

Now he has to hope there's a season so his team can play. If there is, he says he's ready. He's mapped out a truncated training camp, planned how he's going to incorporate Jason Garrison, and mulled the opportunities he's going to give Zack Kassian and Chris Tanev.

What's left?

"Work out in the morning and at night, watch old Nordiques-Habs games," Vigneault said. "That's what we got right now."

That's not entirely true. He's in Vancouver for 10 days a month. He's been scouting Chicago Wolves games, and was in Langley Thursday with his staff for a coaches clinic. It was a lively, informative exchange, not to mention a wonderful break from the lockout.

How odd to hear people in the NHL actually talking about hockey.

Vigneault told the crowd one of the bigger impacts general manager Mike Gillis has had in Vancouver was hiring a skills coach. His goalie coach, Rollie Melanson, explained why he thought the butterfly style was a "cop out." Goalies today need hybrid techniques dependent on never making the first move, he said. Vigneault's visual coach, Darryl Williams, provided some great detail about the four-minute, 20-clip video packages Canucks players get to prepare for games.

Of course, an insightful evening couldn't escape the reality there is no NHL and won't be any time soon, if reports are accurate that Gary Bettman wants a two-week moratorium on negotiations.

Vigneault is the first person associated with his team to express concern about how this is all going to impact the Canucks. His team has the fewest players — two — who have gone to Europe.

"I was with (Rick Bowness) in 1994-95 and I don't remember any pre-season games," he said. "I don't think there will be any."

"I don't know what to expect (from the players). All 30 coaches are banking their players are professional enough."

"In the beginning, when I heard all of the guys going to Europe, I didn't think I'd want it. They could get injured."

"But now, I don't know. We have been six to seven months without playing. We've only got (Dale Weise and Jannik Hansen) who are over there."

"In the end, you have to trust them. They are players and they know what's right for themselves."

"They have to understand once it starts, it's going to start. You hope they have the pedal to the metal when they are working out. Like they would have been doing if training camp had started on time."

Vigneault said he hoped his players were skating 3-5 times a week. He also said he's not thrilled with his players being on Twitter. We know David Booth is doing one of those two things.

Without exhibition games, there won't be time for Vigneault to tinker with his lineup. Good thing he already knows how he's going to use Garrison on the power play.

"I have an idea," Vigneault said. "I liked when we had Alex Edler and (Christian Ehrhoff) together on the point. Eddie was so good at finding Christian and Christian was so good in putting it on the net."

"It's sort of that same dynamic. Left passer, Eddie and left shot, Garrison. At even strength, I'm still trying to figure things out for Garrison. I've seen Chris Tanev play quite a bit and I liked what I saw."

"He's going to be a steady defenceman who you won't notice in a lot of offensive situations, but you'll know defensively he's doing the job."

Vigneault said he's been to Chicago to track players on the farm club, especially Tanev and Kassian.

"Of the four games I saw, I really liked (Kassian) in three of them," Vigneault said. "One he was so-so, but that was one of those games all players have."

"In the games I saw, I saw the physical implications. Offensively, he's real good down low, protecting the puck."

Vigneault said he's not frustrated by the lockout, but he is wistful.

"I hope the players miss me as much as I miss them," he said.

Vancouver Province: LOADED: 11.16.2012

644372 Vancouver Canucks

NHL lockout: One plus is that Daniel Sedin has had time to feel better

By Ben Kuzma,

Thursday's two-month anniversary of the NHL lockout was marked by the league's threat to cancel games until mid-December if a resolution isn't reached in the next week.

It was also marked by the loss of another marquee matchup that would have pitted the Vancouver Canucks against the Chicago Blackhawks at Rogers Arena on Thursday night.

The only silver lining is that the collective bargaining agreement impasse has allowed the injured Ryan Kesler, Alex Edler and Jason Garrison to methodically mend under the care of the Canucks while collecting their third cheques of the season.

And it has allowed Daniel Sedin more time to avoid another head shot and another concussion, which resulted in headaches that sidelined him for a dozen games late last season.

"It seems when you get a few concussions, it's easier to get the third or fourth one," the Swedish winger said Thursday following a UBC skate with six teammates. "I don't know if rest really helps or what the deal is with that. I'm happy that I'm back and skating, and that's all I worry about.

"You notice at times, in the first few practices, that you're kind of hesitant in the corners because you don't want to be blind-sided and not be ready for it. You see the tiniest hit and it cost a guy a full year and you see a big hit and a guy is back in a week. It's a tricky injury and that's why it's so scary.

"I've had nothing, no symptoms. I took a few weeks off after the season and started training again. You worry about the first few workouts, but everything has been fine. I'm doing the same things that I did before [the concussion] and that was the bottom line."

Despite following protocol and being cleared, Blackhawks captain Jonathan Toews admitted this week he wasn't fully recovered from a concussion when he competed in the playoffs last spring.

Toews' balance and sight issues subsided only recently, following five days of tests and corrective procedures at the Carrick Institute at Life University in Marietta, Ga., the same chiropractic neurology facility that treated Sidney Crosby for concussion symptoms that were threatening his career.

Toews had missed the last two months of the regular season with the concussion, and that certainly got Daniel Sedin's attention.

He is wary that a lack of respect between players could result in another concussion and make recovery uncertain. Daniel was injured March 21 when Duncan Keith delivered an elbow to the chin, which resulted in a five-game suspension for the Chicago defenceman. The Swedish winger returned for Game 4 of the first-round playoff series against the Los Angeles Kings.

While the NHL has toughened its stance on hits to the head, and especially those from the blind side — amendments to Rule 43 call for anything from a minor to match penalty, and supplementary discipline at the commissioner's discretion — Daniel's injury was an example of what the league can't address.

"I've always said it's going to come down to the players," he stressed. "You can do whatever you want, but players don't seem bothered about getting five or 10 games. Once they get more respect for each other, it will clean it up. Guys are fighting for jobs. If they know they can get a big hit in, they're going to do it and not be too worried about a five-game suspension. They're going to be in the league."

Daniel and Henrik Sedin have remained in Vancouver during the lockout but will plan a return to Sweden to play for Modo of the Swedish Elite League if the labour impasse threatens the entire season. In the interim, Daniel hasn't looked for a hockey fix and didn't watch the junior Super

Series game Wednesday between the WHL and Russia at the Pacific Coliseum.

"I've got enough with the kids [two daughters and a son] and the TV is not on too much — and definitely not hockey," he said, laughing. "I play a lot of board games with my wife."

In the interim, the head games between NHL owners and the players' association have an ominous tone. No negotiation sessions are planned and nobody is budging on systemic issues. For the players, the following issues will limit their options: contracts limited to five years; eight years of service for free agency instead of seven; five years of pro service instead of four for arbitration rights; and entry-level deals pushed back from three to two years.

"We'd rather be at the table and having some give and take, but they [owners] have expressed zero interest in doing that," said Canucks goalie Cory Schneider.

"It stinks. It stinks for the fans and it stinks for people in hockey, but they keep cancelling games and don't want to make any progress. I hear them saying we need to make a substantial move toward them and I guess a billion dollars isn't enough and they want everything else, too.

"I'm not really sure what they've given us. There are points we can talk about and come to a compromise, but they're just interested in getting what they want and not budging. We need somebody to step up, instead of just giving deadlines, but we were prepared for this.

"I haven't even looked at the schedule since the lockout started. A lot of guys are almost numb to it at this point. Whenever we try to make progress, we expect the worst and hope for the best."

Vancouver Province: LOADED: 11.16.2012 Washington Capitals

Holiday shopping essential: Black Friday apps

By Hayley Tsukayama,

Retailers expecting a tepid holiday shopping season are pulling out all the stops to attract customers to their stores this year — including embracing the enemy.

Big-box stores have come to terms with "showrooming" — when shoppers come into stores armed with smartphone apps designed to identify cheaper deals online — and devised new plans to offset its impact.

Target is also offering reviews from the technology news site CNET alongside its products on store shelves, GigaOm.com reported. That should alleviate the need for shoppers to pull out their smartphones at all. Target and Best Buy will offer price-matching for online deals this holiday season.

In a call with investors, Best Buy's new chief executive, Hubert Joly, said the company is focused on converting in-store browsers into buyers by offering better information from employees. "Once customers are in our stores, they're ours to lose," he told investors Wednesday.

According to an International Data Corp. survey released this week, showrooming may influence up to \$1.7 billion of holiday retail sales.

The survey found shoppers are most likely to showroom big-ticket items, followed by apparel and footwear. The survey also found that quick online comparison shopping will be a part of about 1.4 percent of all consumer electronics purchases this holiday season.

The help of in-store employees means a lot to shoppers trying to sort through the range of products available in stores this winter. Between 56 and 60 percent of shoppers armed with smartphones say that they'll be "more likely" or "much more likely" to purchase in stores when helped by knowledgeable sales staff, according to the IDC survey.

For the 41 percent surveyed who say they'll continue to rely on smartphone research to make purchasing decisions, here are a few apps to help on the way.

Nextag Shopping: Nextag is a deal comparison-shopping site that does a lot of the legwork for shoppers doing research or buying online. Users can just scan barcodes, take a picture or type in a product name to find its price

on other places on the Web. For those thinking ahead, the app also allows users to put things on their "radar" for alerts on price drops.

TGI Black Friday: Powered by TGIblackfriday and DealCatcher, this app lets users search for products, notifies shoppers when new ads are posted and lets users save their favorite deals for later. It also gives users a breakdown of how many deals are at a particular store, so you can better plan your shopping trips.

Black Friday App: This aptly named program from DealNews has catalogued the Black Friday ads from just about every major retailer from Ace Hardware to Wal-Mart. Users can search and save ads, see deals by category and even look at a feed of recently posted deals to get a good feel for what's out there on Black Friday.

Black Friday by BradsDeals: Another popular shopping site, Bradsdeals.com, also has a Black Friday app that lets users compare prices and look at copies of the flyers retailers have sent out to show off Black Friday deals. Shoppers can also use this app to plan out their shopping trips and set the date, time and location of any planned excursions.

SnapTell: For dedicated showroomers, SnapTell is one of the fastest ways to see if a product in stores can be found at a lower price online. Run by Amazon, SnapTell has users take a quick photo of the item of their choice and then runs it through an image recognition database to see where its advertised online. The photos work best with books, DVDs, CDs and video games. Users can also scan barcodes for information.

SnipSnap: To make things a little more manageable on Black Friday, try SnipSnap for coupon management. Users can take pictures of coupons they want to use to cut down on paper clutter. Shoppers can also search coupons other people have snapped to add to their own digital wallet. The app also ranks stores by the success rate users have had with scanned coupons — which could save even more hassle.

BuyVia: Not that into Black Friday, but love Cyber Monday? Consider BuyVia, a new service that provides price comparisons for consumer technology, including product descriptions written in plain English. Users can manage their BuyVia shopping lists on their phones, tablets and computers and scan barcodes of items they want to track.

Washington Post LOADED: 11.16.2012

644373 Winnipeg Jets

Vicious as a WOLVERINE

By: Tim Campbell

ANN ARBOR, Mich. -- Jacob Trouba is already a lot of things as a hockey player, an NHL first-round draft pick, a gold-medal winner at the World Under-18 tournament and a college freshman playing senior minutes less than 10 games into his NCAA career.

Topping the list of things the 18-year-old defenceman is not?

Dull.

The ninth overall pick of last June's draft, his name called by the Winnipeg Jets, is what you'd call a play-by-play man's dream.

More often than not, he's the centre of the action, the one making all the news and noise.

It matters not the zone or situation. Trouba plays the game and he's not waiting around for it to play him.

Less than 10 games into his college career at University of Michigan (eight points in nine games, including a team-leading three power-play goals), Trouba is not holding back because he's new.

"That's it; they recruited me to come here and play how I play. So that's what I'm trying to do," Trouba said after another eventful night Thursday, though his Wolverines lost a 3-1 CCHA decision to visiting Notre Dame. "That's who I am. It's how I play.

"I'm not changing just because I'm a freshman. I feel like I can add to the team so I'm going to try to do whatever I can to help."

The 6-2, 195-pound blue-liner is on Michigan coach Red Berenson's first defence pairing with junior Mac Bennett, an alternate captain.

Berenson is quite clearly ready to see where it takes them.

"He's been an impact defenceman, come in and played pretty well," said Berenson, the former NHLer, NHL coach of the year and 29-year veteran behind the Michigan bench. "I would say really well at times. But like any young defenceman, he's going to make mistakes.

"At some point, he tries to do too much but that's a good thing rather than a bad thing. As he gets more experience, he's going to be a terrific player."

There was lots to see Thursday at Yost Ice Arena.

In the game's first three minutes, Trouba read offensive pressure accurately, slipped into an open area from the left point and rattled a loose puck off the left post.

Two shifts later, he thumped Notre Dame forward Mario Lucia on his can when he thought about a give-and-go, and did the very same to Mike Voran later in the period.

But the eyebrow-raiser of the period was with just a little over two minutes left, when Trouba showed again how quick and explosive he can be when he chooses to get physical.

Notre Dame defenceman Shayne Taker decided to quickly return a cleared puck to the Michigan zone, hoping to sustain some Fighting Irish pressure.

But it was a one-on-one situation on Trouba's normal right side, and the Michigan blue-liner quickly detected Taker's isolation, stepped quickly up and would have taken his opponent's head off, had Taker not taken half a faulty stride and started to slip.

Still, the contact wasn't incidental and certainly adds to the word that's already getting around fast, that Trouba means it when he decides to use force.

November's not over but the CCHA has taken note. For a high, hard hit two weeks ago in a road game against Northern Michigan, Trouba not only got ejected but he was handed an extra one-game penalty.

Later on in Thursday's game, Trouba decided to join a two-on-two rush to be the extra attacker. Nothing abnormal there, other than his team was killing a penalty.

On the next shift, he was part of the two-on-two rush but when the puck didn't get through to him, he was ridden into Notre Dame goalie Steven Summerhays. Summerhays didn't like the jostling and upended Trouba on the way out of the crease, sending the Yost crowd into an uproar.

Trouba could well have been a game changer in the third. His 70-foot breakaway pass to team captain A.J. Treais hit the mark but Treais couldn't convert. The game was tied 1-1 at the time.

The loss, however, didn't mean discouragement.

"I think I fit in here pretty well with the systems we run," Trouba said. "So I'll just play how I play and (put) it go together with the team. That's what I'm going to do."

Winnipeg Free Press LOADED 11.16.2012

644374 Winnipeg Jets

Bettman suggests to NHLPA that sides take a break in negotiations

By: Chris Johnston,

TORONTO - After a lockout spanning almost nine weeks, the only thing the NHL and NHL Players' Association are talking about is taking a break.

Commissioner Gary Bettman has suggested placing a two-week moratorium on stalled collective bargaining negotiations, multiple sources told The Canadian Press on Thursday night. The offer came after Bettman received a phone call from Donald Fehr on Wednesday in which the NHLPA executive director said he didn't know how the sides could proceed from their current stalemate.

Rather than providing an immediate answer, Fehr told Bettman he would need to bounce the idea off his membership before responding. The union has repeatedly taken the position that it would prefer to meet rather than having breaks during the labour dispute — and suggested again Thursday it will continue to favour that position.

"We believe that it is more likely that we will make progress if we meet than if we don't," NHLPA special counsel Steve Fehr said in a statement. "So we are ready to meet. If indeed they do not want to meet, it will be at least the third time in the last three months that they have shut down the dialogue, saying they will not meet unless the players meet their preconditions."

"What does that tell you about their interest in resolving this?"

The potential freeze comes with talks already having fallen silent after a busy stretch of meetings last week in New York. By the time negotiations broke off last Sunday, it was clear that distrust and some bad feelings had made their way into the bargaining room.

The sides have been unable to agree on proposed changes to player contract rights and how to share revenue, and will also need to sort out how they pay for the damage of a lockout that reached 62 days on Friday.

Pessimism has grown while losses have started to mount. On Thursday, players missed their third paycheque of the season while the league moved closer to making another round of game cancellations, prompting some to suggest the entire year could be in danger.

Asked about that possibility on Thursday morning, deputy commissioner Bill Daly replied: "I hope not."

"But I'm more discouraged now than I have been at any point in the process," Daly added.

The NHL is expected to start wiping games beyond Nov. 30 off the schedule early next week. There had previously been hope for a shortened 68-game season starting Dec. 1, but that now appears to be gone.

In total, the lockout has already forced the cancellation of 327 games, including the Winter Classic between the Maple Leafs and Red Wings at Michigan Stadium. The league's other big mid-season event — the Jan. 27 all-star game at Nationwide Arena in Columbus — is also expected to be formally cancelled in the near future.

Earlier this week, Steve Fehr indicated that he thought a new CBA could be finalized soon after a breakthrough was made in negotiations.

"One thing Bill Daly and I agree upon is that when the moment is right the deal could be done very quickly," he said Monday. "One day, three days or whatever."

It will likely be much longer before real traction starts being made in negotiations.

Instead, the sides will continue inching closer to a make-or-break moment. The 2004-05 season was cancelled by Bettman on Feb. 16, but it's strongly believed the league wouldn't put the decision off that long if the 2012-13 season was to meet the same fate.

A deal that saved a 48-game season following the 1994-95 lockout was signed on Jan. 11.

The NHL is currently enduring its fourth work stoppage in the past two decades. The league is coming off a season where it generated a record US\$3.3-billion in revenue.

Winnipeg Free Press LOADED 11.16.2012

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ESPN / The damage this time will be permanent

By Pierre LeBrun

TORONTO -- Who blinks first?

Still no bargaining talks on tap and the clock ticks away toward Armageddon as the NHL lockout reached Day 61 Thursday.

The third paycheck went by the wayside Thursday for 700-plus players who are obviously feeling more and more pressure with their livelihoods on the line.

Of course, owners with empty arenas are feeling plenty of strain, as well.

Know this: It's too late to declare anybody a winner no matter how this plays out. The buzzer has sounded. Both sides will be declared losers. The long-term damage incurred by this league and industry can't be undone at this point. There are corporate partners who might never want to reinvest in a sport that doesn't play every time a CBA is up. There are fans who promise that they were fooled once, but it won't happen twice. And there are markets that won't rebound easily, not for a while, even with a shortened season.

And so at this point all that remains is salvaging what's left of a chance to play hockey this season and pray that by the second or third season of a new CBA the business will have rebounded to some degree. No guarantee there.

The NHL has informed the NHLPA that talks won't resume unless/until the players have new ideas or a new proposal to reignite things. Owners don't want to move an inch at this point. They're furious that their \$211 million "make whole" offer was rebuffed so easily. Owners, with the hard-liners leading the way, don't want the league to lift a finger right now on this offer. Of course, similarly, players tell me they're riled up by the fact that the league won't budge on its list of demands involving player contracts.

In short, everyone's angry.

Know this, Part 2: NHLPA executive director Don Fehr has done a "masterful" job so far of managing this lockout, one NHL governor told ESPN.com Wednesday. Fehr is getting the league to move on key issues such as revenue sharing and is keeping his players on board through it all. He's also frustrated with the league to no end. But Fehr's grade is far from complete. His most important test is coming. Unless I'm completely misreading the tea leaves, I can't think of very many NHL players who are willing to sacrifice an entire season of hockey just so they can make a point to commissioner Gary Bettman. I'm not saying I would sign the league's latest, updated proposal from last week, but if I'm an NHL player, I demand that Fehr cut his losses over the next 2-3 weeks and try to make the best deal possible from what's left on the table.

As one NHL team executive said Wednesday, "The reality is, neither side is really going to like this deal no matter where it ends up. But to wait until next season to get a deal done helps absolutely no one."

And here's where the read on Fehr gets widely different takes. On the one hand, there are people who believe Fehr has always shown an ability to feel the pulse of his membership, and if it's a deal they want, he'll deliver one when the time is right. But there are others who doubt his true intentions.

"I think he wants to rewrite labor negotiations; the game is not his priority," said one NHL team executive.

A sentiment, by the way, that the players don't buy whatsoever. Those I've spoken with all believe Fehr's intentions are to make a deal.

Regardless of whom you believe and what they say about Fehr, both positive or negative, he's going to determine his own hockey legacy very shortly.

One NHL owner I exchanged texts with Wednesday believes that if next weekend (after U.S. Thanksgiving) comes and goes without a tentative deal, then it might be too late to save the season. I'm not so sure about that -- the league didn't cancel the entire 2004-05 season until February '05, and while I do believe the league won't wait that long this time, it's still too early to be jumping off the cliff. But the clock is ticking.

Still, this owner's belief tied into much of the doom and gloom that has come from the owners/league side over the last few days. How much of that is meant to be a scare tactic to get the players to finally break? Tough to tell. Some of it surely is a message to players that time is of the essence. I also believe some of that anger/anxiety about a lost season is genuine. But I would think that feeling is shared by both sides at this point.

There's a lot at stake for everyone.

ESPN LOADED: 11.16.2012

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Joe Yerdon

NBCSports.com / NHL has reason to fight for maximum contract lengths

Former Bruins tough guy Stan Jonathan is in a bit of trouble.

Jason Brough

Jonathan has been charged with criminal negligence causing a death after a hunting accident on a native reservation in Ontario.

NHL owners and general managers need to be protected from themselves. This much we know, and the league doesn't deny it.

The victim in the case, Peter Kosid, was struck by a shot allegedly fired by Jonathan while he was bow hunting, according to Sun Media. Jonathan was not in the same hunting party as Kosid and reportedly shot him from about 375 meters away (over 1,200 feet). Kosid was in hunting camouflage according to the report.

Even the last CBA – the one with the hard salary cap that was supposed to be bulletproof – had loopholes that GMs exploited to sign free agents.

Jonathan played eight seasons in the NHL and accumulated 751 penalty minutes in that time with the Boston Bruins and Pittsburgh Penguins (just 19 games there). Jonathan did also have two seasons with more than 20 goals as well as being a prolific fighter in the 1970s and 80s.

The most notable loophole allowed teams to offer "back-diving" contracts that gave players lots of money up front and practically none as the term expired. Not only did these deals artificially deflate the cap hit by tacking on years past a player's probable retirement date, it also gave the player the bulk of his money sooner than later, which is better than the opposite.

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It's hard to imagine those back-diving contracts will exist once a new CBA is signed. The owners will fight too hard for them to be nixed.

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However, some observers think owners will stand less firmly on another demand, that being maximum contract lengths of five years.

NBCSports.com / Former NFL labor mediator on NHL lockout: "I'd volunteer to do it for free"

Under the last CBA, there was no such thing as a maximum contract length. Ilya Kovalchuk and Rick DiPietro signed for 15 years each. Shea Weber got 14. All told, 16 players notched deals for 10 years or more.

Mike Halford

Players like long-term deals because they offer security. NHL contracts are guaranteed, so once they're signed they can't be canceled, even if the player stops producing or gets hurt.

The U.S. Magistrate Judge that mediated NFL-NFLPA talks wants a crack at solving the NHL lockout.

Which brings us to our point: If the salary cap restricts how much a player can earn and there's no way to front load deals, what do you think a prized free agent is going to ask for in negotiations if there's no cap on contract lengths?

"I'd volunteer to do it for free," Arthur Boylan told ESPN New York. "I'd love to get this thing done."

The answer is term. If only because there's nothing else to ask for.

Boylan, who helped bridge the gap between NFL commissioner Roger Goodell and NFLPA boss DeMaurice Smith last year, also happens to be a huge hockey fan.

And if meeting that demand is the only way one team can beat out another team to sign the player, he'll get it. (Let's face it, GMs know they can be fired tomorrow, so what do they care if the team has a problem down the road? See: moral hazard.)

He recently received a refund for part of his Minnesota Wild season tickets and says that there's too much at stake for more games to be lost.

Long-term contracts aren't necessarily a terrible thing, but believe it or not there have been athletes that got a little too comfortable once they cashed in on a big deal.

"They know the future of the game is in their hands," he said of the NHL and NHLPA. "They'd really be blowing this thing if it doesn't get resolved, it being the second lockout in recent memory.

There have also been players whose health issues kept them off the ice. (Or, in the case of DiPietro, severely restricted their time on it.)

"That would be a real disaster for everybody."

Here's more, from ESPN's Katie Strang:

Maybe a few long-term contracts gone wrong is simply the price owners will have to pay to get a new CBA. And there are probably owners and GMs that don't want five-year limits; they want to lock up their stars as long as possible.

Boylan said he feels mediation is always a wise choice when two sides hit this sort of impasse — the earlier, the better. The judge was tasked with bringing together the NFL and NFLPA after a failed round of mediation before the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service lockout in April 2011.

On the other hand, is the average player willing to keep sacrificing paychecks to protect a contract right that will almost definitely never apply to him?

The first thing he did?

Huddled NFL commissioner Roger Goodell and NFLPA chief DeMaurice Smith together for lunch, talking about everything but football. From his chambers, he slipped the two men out of a side door, evaded the press and found a quiet place for the three of them to grab a bite to eat.

Maybe it's a battle NHL commissioner Gary Bettman thinks is winnable (the NBA won it), so he might as well win it.

Goodell and Smith had a D.C. connection, Boylan found, a small tie but not too trivial to work with.

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"Part of the whole thing about mediation is finding common ground, even if it's something unrelated. You can find camaraderie in anything," Boylan said. "And boy, there sure are a lot of traditions in hockey and a love for the sport. One thing leads to another and that commonality, that sure goes a long way."

NBCSports.com / Schneider thinks NHL will blink on contract rights

Jason Brough

The NFL lockout lasted from Mar. 11 to Jul. 25 — 136 days in total.

Canucks goalie Cory Schneider doesn't believe the players have more to lose than the owners when it comes to the ongoing lockout.

That said, the Pro Football Hall of Fame game was the only on-field cancelation of the work stoppage.

"We don't agree with that internally," Schneider said, as per The Province. "It's doing a lot of harm to them, too. It's mutually assured destruction."

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It's an interesting comment, since the consensus opinion among observers is that the owners will be hurt less by a lengthy lockout.

As we wrote a few weeks ago, an NHL franchise isn't an NHL player. The first has an indefinite life span and a value that's determined by the expectation of future revenues; the other has an average career length of four to five seasons and a value that falls to zero once that career is over.

There are also franchises that bled money under the last CBA, so whatever damage is done in the short term is less of a concern than getting the right deal for the future. In fact, for some of those teams, there may be less damage done during the lockout than would be done under terms of the old CBA.

As they say, no deal is better than a bad deal.

On the bright side, both sides have agreed to reach a 50-50 split in revenues eventually, so arguably the biggest "future" issue has been decided.

The remaining "future" issue is contract rights. The NHL wants to cap contract lengths at five years and bump the age of unrestricted free agency eligibility to 28 (or eight years of service), plus other changes.

But Schneider doesn't believe the owners are willing to lose a season over those issues.

"The detriment it would cause the players on the contracting rights is far greater than the benefits the owners would gain," he said.

"For them, to make (contract rights) their last stand, on all of them, doesn't make sense to us."

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