

# SPORT-SCAN DAILY BRIEF

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Sports Xchange

Report: Sabres' Weber signs with team in Norway

John Vogl

Sensing an extension in the NHL work stoppage, Sabres defenseman Mike Weber has signed with Lorenskog of Norway's elite league, according to RB.no.

Weber is scheduled to arrive in Norway on Saturday, according to a Google translation of the report, and is expected to play his first game Thursday.

"He wanted to wait to sign awhile, but now it looks like the lockout is prolonged," Lorenskog sports director Atle Olsen told Rome Blad, according to the translation.

Weber will be one of seven Sabres playing overseas, joining Christian Ehrhoff and Alexander Sulzer (Germany), Tyler Myers and Tyler Ennis (Switzerland), Andrej Sekera (Slovakia) and Jhonas Enroth (Sweden). Thomas Vanek recently returned after a month in Austria, though he said he might return if the lockout continued.

Negotiations took a turn for the worse Thursday.

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644381 Buffalo Sabres

As war of words escalates, NHLPA expresses interest in meeting despite league's call for moratorium

John Vogl

The war of words is back on. It remains to be seen whether the word "compromise" is in hockey's future.

The NHL Players' Association responded to the league's call for a two-week moratorium on talks late Thursday night, and the union's initial thought is there's no reason for an official halt.

"We believe that it is more likely that we will make progress if we meet than if we don't," 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 NHL says it asked for the moratorium because union officials had no interest in a new collective bargaining agreement. NHLPA Executive Director is expected to take the league's request to the players today before issuing a response.

"I find it incredible that the union is suggesting that we are somehow 'close' to a deal," NHL Deputy Commission Bill Daly said in an email to the Minneapolis Star-Tribune. "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.

"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."

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644382 Chicago Blackhawks

NHLPA hopes to continue talks next week

The NHL Players Association hopes to meet with the league next week to continue negotiating a new collective bargaining agreement, RDS Montreal reported Friday.

NHLPA special counsel Steve Fehr and NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly spoke Friday but did not schedule a new meeting.

League commissioner Gary Bettman had proposed two-week moratorium on negotiations.

Games thru November have already been cancelled and a new round of cancellations are expected the middle of next week if a new deal is not done. The two sides, however, are still far apart on how to divide hockey-related revenue.

The latest players' proposal reportedly would provide them with more than \$1 billion more than a 50/50 split over the next five seasons.

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644383 Chicago Blackhawks

We're puttin' on the foil, and you can join us

Steve Rosenbloom

Look, I'm as bummed by the NHL lockout as you are. You hockey fans, anyway.

I'm sure we're all getting tired of watching online highlights of Traktor Chelyabinsk scoring on Bars Astana in the Kontinental Hockey League, and while the Wolves offer a competitive product, you want to see the best, right?

But the best isn't playing on our continent. So, Stevie Sunshine has an idea: If we can't see the best hockey players, let's see the best hockey movie.

Here's my plan to help depressed hockey fans: I'm organizing a big-screen showing of "Slap Shot" at the Music Box Theater on Dec. 6.

Yes, old-time hockey. Toe Blake. Eddie Shore.

If you're reading this far, you're a hockey fan --- go, you --- and that means you've seen "Slap Shot" 10,000 times, give or take. That includes all the times you came across it while channel surfing and watched right through Reggie Dunlop telling Francine he was going to Minnesota, which he called the "big apple," which I still can't understand.

But no matter. The point is, no matter how many times you've seen "Slap Shot," you can't see it enough, and you probably haven't seen it in a theater on a big screen since the Hanson Brothers first brought their (bleepin') toys with them.

I mean, it has been so long that a son of a Hanson Brother is in an NHL organ-i-zation. Christian Hanson isn't playing NHL hockey because Gary Bettman won't let anybody play NHL hockey, and that's why we're doing this.

The Tribune has secured a restored 35mm print of "Slap Shot" and we plan to run it 35 years after Reggie placed a hundred-dollar bounty on the head of Tim McCracken, the head coach and chief punk on that Syracuse team.

I contend this is the best sports movie of all-time. Tribune film critic Michael Phillips disagrees. So, he and I will discuss that before we show the film, and I'm puttin' on the foil.

We'll include a Q&A session, and we're working on some surprises. No promises. These things can be tricky. But we're trying. Tickets are just \$15. You can buy them and get the other particulars at [chicagotribune.com/slapshot](http://chicagotribune.com/slapshot). Join us for the big-screen viewing of the character that Paul Newman said was closest to who he really was.

Think about what else you'd miss: Hanrahan's wife, Jim Carr's toupee, Joe McGrath's inspirational speech, and Ogie Ogilthorpe, with all the litigation, the notoriety, his subsequent deportation from Canada, and that country's refusal to accept him.

I'm trying to capture the spirit of the thing.

Oh, and lemme ask you something: Who own da Chief?

C'mon, everybody: Owns. Owns.

That's the call and response of every hockey player at every level forever.

I shouldn't have to explain this to anyone, but "Slap Shot" is one of the most profane movies ever. So, kids, think twice before you bring your parents to hear Reggie offer tender child-raising advice to Anita McCambridge.

Now, bleed all over 'em. Let 'em know you're there.

Chicago Tribune LOADED: 11.17.2012

644384 Chicago Blackhawks

Silence to continue with suggested two-week break in NHL talks

TRACEY MYERS

The NHL and NHLPA negotiations have been quiet lately. Too quiet. And they're reportedly about to get much quieter.

The Canadian Press reported late Thursday that league commissioner Gary Bettman has suggested a two-week moratorium on CBA talks. It's the latest wrinkle in a lockout that's had it's share. Most have been negative; so is this one. After talking all of last week, the two sides have had little to say to each other since last Friday.

Now, the silence could truly become deafening. Blackhawks forward Jamal Mayers said players are "frustrated" with this latest decision.

"We've shown a willingness to negotiate and move and we've been willing to get to 50 percent. It's how we get there," Mayers said. "We're not accepting their current proposal on contract issues. If you've taken a look at them, some seem farfetched. We've offered a solution for back-diving contracts. We've offered quite a bit and it's unfortunate that this is the way they see it. But that's the way it is."

But the NHL apparently doesn't see the players' association as having offered much at all. Deputy commissioner Bill Daly told The Canadian Press "from our perspective, we've made repeated moves in the players' direction with absolutely no reciprocation. Unfortunately, we have determined we are involved with a union leadership that has no genuine interest in reaching an agreement.

"They have essentially made one proposal – five times," Daly continued. "They continue to request a 'guaranteed' players' share as part of the next agreement and we repeatedly tell the maybe they should get a reality check."

Blackhawks player representative Steve Montador said the moratorium is "a suggestion that we follow their script." Although he added that, at the present moment, there isn't much to talk about.

NHLPA special counsel Steve Fehr, in a statement to The Canadian Press, said "we believe it's more likely that we'll make progress if we meet than if we don't. So we are ready to meet. If indeed they don't want to meet, it will be at least the third time in the last three months that they've 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?"

And so we're back to bad blood, bitter talk and no progress. The league says the NHLPA doesn't want to negotiate, isn't interested in making a deal. The NHLPA has said the same about the league. And the potential of starting the season in early December seems all but impossible.

Now you wonder if another season is completely lost. Mayers, who went through the 2004-05 lockout, said he does think about that.

"I'm not getting any younger and I've been on a year-to-year basis for a couple of years. It would certainly be disappointing to end my career this way, but you have to do things the right way," he said. "I'm aware it could happen. But I think there's a fair deal out there and it's just about getting to it."

Asked about a potentially second canceled season, Montador said, "I don't fear we're nearing that place at all."

"I think the majority of this negotiation is posturing and being on a rigid timeline," he said. "With the way we have offered concessions to this point I feel a deal can be made. If we were to suggest no salary cap, then likely I'd say there won't be a season. We haven't done that yet and for now don't anticipate it. All along we've attempted to get a deal and Gary has just scooped our concessions up and continued to ask for more."

Comcast SportsNet.com LOADED: 11.17.2012

644385 Dallas Stars

Hot Air: With hockey on hold, Dallas Stars' voice tackles football

BARRY HORN

What does a hockey play-by-play voice do when sidelined by the NHL lockout?

Well, last Saturday night Ralph Strangis picked up his fifth Lone Star Emmy alongside analyst Daryl Reaugh for their work on Stars broadcasts. Today, he'll try his voice on his first-ever college football telecast.

It's not that Strangis hasn't worked college football before. Back in the late 1980s, he filled in on Saint John's Johnnies radio broadcasts in their Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference games.

"I've been wanting to do a football game for a long time," Strangis said. "I watch a ton of football. I'm a professional broadcaster. I have 100 percent confidence in my abilities to do this."

Beyond hockey, Strangis' TV resume has been limited to volleyball and professional wrestling.

He steps into uncharted waters this afternoon at 2:30 p.m. when Texas A&M hosts Sam Houston State on a Fox Sports Southwest pay-per-view offering also available online on ESPN3.

"Here's what I know about the Aggies," Strangis joked this week, "they have a great young quarterback and they are coming off a pretty big win."

Savvy voice that Strangis. Johnny Manziel, the redshirt freshman quarterback, is the talk of the college football world. The Aggies upset win at top-ranked Alabama in a Southeastern Conference showdown was the second-highest rated college football game of the season nationally.

He also knows that Sam Houston, a Southland Conference team riding a seven-game win streak to an 8-2 record, is in for the game of its life.

Still, he had never set foot in College Station before Friday.

Strangis has been deep in study mode all week. For advice, he called his buddy Chuck Cooperstein, a college football voice of note, and Brad Sham, the voice of the Cowboys. He also lunched with Aggie friends to learn about school tradition.

"I told him to remember two words, 'Pat Summerall'" Sham said.

Translation: Be concise.

A few days after he picked up the assignment, Strangis spent his pre-Emmy hours at the North Texas-South Alabama game in Denton to study Dave Barnett's interaction with the crew on television and George Dunham working the radio side. He took photos of their "spotting boards," football broadcasters' umbilical cords to what's happening down below. He also called Fox's Kenny Albert and asked for one of his.

Strangis' spotting board, which includes depth charts, nuggets about players and all sorts of notes, will be an amalgam of all three.

Strangis' Razor today will be Shea Walker, a former Aggie wide receiver and a regular on FSSW football.

During Stars broadcasts, Strangis often pays homage to NFL broadcaster Ray Scott, a master of conciseness who was fond of going to commercials during 0-0 games saying, "The score? There is no score."

Strangis is thinking of using it Saturday. But if he wants to use the line in College Station, he is advised to offer it just before kickoff. Points should come early and often.

"I'm not going to pretend I know it all," Strangis said. "I am just as excited as I have ever been to do a game. I've never done a broadcast with 87,000 people in the stands. I am thankful to everyone involved for having the confidence in me to do this. This whole thing is an honor."

#### Aggies-Alabama numbers

There were a lot of disappointed eyeballs in the state of Alabama in the wake of Texas A&M's 29-24 victory over the University of The Crimson Tide.

CBS's rating in Birmingham was tops among the 56 major markets nationally, a ridiculous 47.5 with a 70 share. That means 47.5 percent of all homes in the market were watching the game and 70 percent of all homes with TVs turned on were tuned to the game.

To help understand the enormity the rating for a regular-season game: The infamous Game 6 of the 2011 World Series, earned on 47.1 in Dallas-Fort Worth, the highest-ever Rangers rating.

Behind Birmingham was Knoxville, Tenn. where they would gladly trade their Volunteers for the Aggies, at 24.3.

Third was Austin, home of the Longhorns, proving plenty of folks are still paying attention to the Big 12 defectors. It scored a 16.3.

Dallas-Fort Worth, where folks like to bandwagon hop, was No. 10 at a healthy 11.8. D-FW outscored Houston, traditionally the leader in the state when it comes to the Aggies. Houston was No. 12 at 10.1.

#### Flexing Cowboys ratings

I can't believe I am typing this but someone in the know brought it up this week. The NFL is thinking about flexing the Cowboys into another Sunday Night Football game.

The Cowboys currently have one more NBC Sunday night game on the schedule, Dec. 2 when the Philadelphia Eagles visit. That would be their fourth prime time game this season. The NFL allows six.

The fifth could come Sunday Dec. 23 when the New Orleans Saints come to Cowboys Stadium. Currently penciled in for NBC that night is the disappointing San Diego Chargers at the horrible New York Jets. The NFL and NBC would like to get out of that mess.

The Cowboys and Saints are both 4-5 but they each have upsides. The Cowboys have four winnable games upcoming and the Saints have Drew Brees, who can carry a team. This is not to say the flex is a lock but consider it a definite maybe.

#### Around the Horn

HBO's Real Sports on Tuesday night has an update on the May 2009 collapse of the Cowboys' indoor practice facility. Special teams coach Joe DeCamillis, who suffered a broken neck, and scout Rich Behm, paralyzed from the waist down, will be featured... There is no Texas-Texas A&M football game on Thanksgiving but Fox Sports Southwest will feature a seven-hour tribute to the storied rivalry starting at 5 p.m... The invisible but technically strong Longhorn Network captured eight Lone Star Emmys last week. FSSW won six and KXAS sports anchor/reporter Matt Barrie earned four.

Dallas Morning News LOADED: 11.17.2012

644386 Dallas Stars

#### Players' union, NHL consider cooling off period

#### Staff

If the NHL and the players' association have run out of things to talk about, how can they find a way to make a deal to save the hockey season?

The lockout is now in its third month, and there is no obvious path to progress.

There was a hint of optimism after the league and locked-out players met a few times, but the view quickly became bleak.

Now NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman has suggested to players' association chief Donald Fehr that they take a two-week break from each other. If talking doesn't work, it is possible that not talking will?

Star-Telegram LOADED: 11.17.2012

644387 Detroit Red Wings

#### Red Wings' Ian White: Gary Bettman is an idiot

By Helene St. James

Winging It in Motown: Rivals? Fond of Joe Sakic but Claude Lemieux ...  
ugh

The fact that the NHL might not want to even talk about a new collective bargaining agreement for the remainder of the month has left Detroit Red Wings defenseman Ian White furious.

Speaking after an informal skate today in Troy, White lashed out at NHL commissioner Gary Bettman.

"I gotta be honest: I personally think he's an idiot," White said. "Since he's come in, I think he's done nothing but damage the game."

This is the third time during Bettman's tenure there has been a lockout. The last time around, it ended up costing the entire 2004-05 season.

"If you think of all the moves he's made," White said, "teams that are all struggling seem to be the teams that he put in places where there's not viable markets for hockey. Three work stoppages -- I don't know if he's in control of the owners or what he's saying, but I think it's only seven of the owners that have to agree on something to have something pass. You'd think it'd be at least 50%. It just doesn't seem like they're running a democratic process, if you will."

The league and the players have been at odds since Sept. 16, when owners locked out players. The latest rumor to emerge Thursday evening was that Bettman and Co. have told NHLPA executive director Don Fehr there should be a two-week moratorium on negotiations. That takes the process to the end of November, meaning that it's only a matter of time before games in December will be canceled.

"The whole process has just been frustrating," White said. "I think, just where we stand now, you'd think that we're close to making a deal if they're willing to come a little bit our way. It's something that could have been done even in the summer. So it's frustrating. There's just absolutely no need to be missing games and doing this kind of damage."

Players are due to miss a third paycheck in the coming weeks. If the league is hoping financial pressure will work to stir an uprising against Fehr, White said there's no chance.

"We're fully behind him," White said. "I don't even know if it would really matter who's leading us at this point. Their offers are just so ridiculous. They're trying to take everything that we have away from us. They haven't even put out an offer we could consider in terms of the rights and taking away our contractual stuff .... We're behind our leader. I know he's going to do the best for us. But it's on the owners to at least be somewhat fair."

The sides started out at odds over how to split hockey-related revenue from what was a \$3.3-billion business last season. While there has been progress on that note, there's deep division over how to make sure existing contracts are fully honored by owners, as opposed to instituting a salary rollback like in 2005.

Players, meanwhile, want to know why they should be the ones to suffer after owners such as Minnesota's Craig Leopold handed out front-loaded \$98-million, 13-year deals to Ryan Suter and Zach Parise during the summer.

"This thing seems like it's just so ridiculous -- what we're fighting over, what we're asking, what they're trying to get," White said. "Obviously, I'm biased towards the players, but you look at our last offer -- I mean, we've agreed to come down to 50-50. Why should we have five-year limits on contracts and stuff when these are the owners that are throwing all this money out, they're signing these guys to long-term deals, they're trying to circumvent the system that they put in place last time? So they're going to blame that on us? I mean, why can't these guys act like adults and control themselves?"

Defenseman Niklas Kronwall sounded an optimistic note that there will still be a 2012-13 season. He readily admitted a two-week quiet period "just doesn't make sense. You'd think you'd want to make sure you're doing everything you can to get something done." But asked whether he senses that the season might be in danger, Kronwall said, "No. I can't imagine it going that far. But again, I didn't see this coming, either. I thought we were going to have everything locked up by the end of the summer."

With Thanksgiving just a week away, heralding the nearness of December, the state of the NHL is beyond aggravating to White.

"It looks awful," he said. "Every day I take a look -- you look at the calendar, and then you look at the position, and nothing has really changed. It's getting pretty close to being tragic."

Detroit Free Press LOADED: 11.17.2012

644388 Detroit Red Wings

Winging It in Motown: Rivals? Fond of Joe Sakic but Claude Lemieux ...  
ugh

By Graham Hathway

Rivalries make watching sports fun. Cheering on a team through an 82-game season can become a grind, but even the regular season can be exciting when certain teams show up on the schedule. For every meaningless game against the Blue Jackets, the Wings take on a team that causes them to elevate their game and provides some quality entertainment.

It's not just the teams we want to watch. Rivals usually contain players we have strong feelings about. The term "playoff atmosphere" is used to describe these games, and when the Wings win, we puff out our chests and act even more arrogant than normal (as if that's possible). When they lose, we are crushed and gorge on pizza (LC, of course).

In the last 21 years, rivals of the Red Wings have come and gone, but some have remained. Some rival players, while they played for a team we despised, we couldn't help but respect them.

So today, we take a look at two guys on opposite ends of the spectrum. One is an all-around class act whom I always wished played for a different team. The other is someone who recently said he was "good" with Detroit fans -- and apparently has never met any of them in person.

RESPECTED: Joe Sakic

What can be said about Joe Sakic that hasn't already been said this week? His induction into the Hockey Hall of Fame is well-deserved for a player who was a superstar on the ice and a gentleman off of it.

As the captain of the Wings' biggest rival of the last 21 years, you'd think he would receive the scorn and hatred that Peter Forsberg and Patrick Roy got. Unlike the "tough guys" who were a part of the rivalry, those players were the stars, the elite talent who truly made this rivalry as good as it was.

Yet Sakic, at least in my eyes, never was deserving of any backlash, save for the fact he played for the Avalanche. There was no specific incident that made you say, "What a jerk." No quote from him that made you say, "He's lost his mind."

Truthfully, Sakic was always the Avalanche's version of Steve Yzerman -- part of and yet beyond the rivalry. Their only contribution to the back-and-forth was their play. They never did anything (beyond score a good goal or make a defensive play) that made you want to rip their hearts out. They didn't exhibit cockiness that wasn't backed up.

Simply put, Sakic, like Yzerman, was a leader who went out and did his job, did it well and handled himself with class (the most overused word in sports, but these two deserve it). I may have hated the team he played for, but I will always respect Sakic as a player and a man.

Honorable mention: Teemu Selanne, Mike Modano

VILLAIN: Claude Lemieux

Really, could it be anyone else?

We know what he did. The hit on Kris Draper. The retaliation in which he turtled like a baby. The fact he didn't express any remorse for what he did to Draper.

No one is hated more in Detroit than Lemieux.

Detroit Free Press LOADED: 11.17.2012

644389 Detroit Red Wings

Detroit Red Wings' Ian White on Gary Bettman: '...he's an idiot'

By Ted Kulfan

NHL commissioner Gary Bettman has proposed a two-week moratorium on talks with the Players Association, which rankles Red Wings defenseman Ian White who fears the regular season could be lost.

Troy — Ian White has been one of the more vocal and frustrated players during this NHL lockout.

Commissioner Gary Bettman has caught most of White's verbal frustration the past two months, the length of this lockout thus far.

After learning of Bettman's suggestion for a two-week moratorium in negotiations, White called Bettman "an idiot."

"I personally think he's an idiot," said White Friday after a group of locked out Red Wings finished a workout. "Since he's come in, he's done nothing but damaged the game."

"The moves he's made, teams that are struggling seem to be ones he put in places where there's not viable markets for hockey."

"Three lockouts (under Bettman's regime, including the entire 2004-05 season). I don't know if he's in control of the owners or what he's saying. (Eight) of the owners have to agree to have something passed —you'd think it would be at least 50 percent. It just doesn't seem like they're running a democratic process, if you will."

The league has already canceled all games through Nov. 30. It's almost certain the league will cancel more games this week, likely through mid-December.

To step away from the negotiating table for two weeks — at this important juncture — is a curious move.

"It just doesn't make sense," said Red Wings co-player rep Niklas Kronwall. "No one on our side feels that's the way to go, but that's their words and we'll go from there."

What seemed like an impossibility, that another season just like 2004-05 would be lost, is beginning to look possible.

"It looks awful," White said. "Every day I take a look at the calendar, you look at their position, and nothing has really changed."

"It's pretty close to being tragic (losing the entire season, similarly to the 2004-05 season)."

"The whole process has been frustrating. Just where we stand right now, you'd think that we're pretty close to making a deal if they would be willing to come a little bit our way."

White suggested all of this strife could have been avoided.

"It's something that could have been done in the summer," White said. "That's what is frustrating. There's absolutely no need to be missing games and doing this kind of damage."

One belief for Bettman's strategy is the two-week break would further agitate players against Donald Fehr, the NHL Players Association executive director, possibly forcing Fehr into making a deal.

But White doesn't expect any sort of uprising against Fehr.

"We're fully behind him," White said. "I don't even know if it really matters who is leading us at this point because their offers are so ridiculous. They're trying to take everything that we have away from us. They haven't even put an offer out we can consider in terms of the rights and taking away our contractual stuff."

"We're behind our leader. I know (Fehr) is going to do the best for us. It's on the owners to at least be somewhat fair."

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644390 Detroit Red Wings

Red Wings' Ian White lashes out at Gary Bettman, calling him 'an idiot' who's damaged the game

Ansar Khan

TROY – Detroit Red Wings defenseman Ian White has been one of the more outspoken players during the NHL lockout.

Most of his wrath has been directed at NHL commissioner Gary Bettman. On Friday, White fired a few more shots at the man he holds responsible for the sport's labor troubles.

"I got to be honest, I personally think he's an idiot," White said of Bettman. "Since he's come in I think he's done nothing but damage the game. If you think of all the moves he's made, the teams that are all struggling seem to be the teams he put in places where there's (less support for hockey).

"Just three lockouts (since Bettman became commissioner in 1993). I don't know if he's in control of the owners or what he's saying. I think it's (eight) of the owners have to agree to have something passed. You'd think it would be at least 50 percent. It just doesn't seem like they're running a democratic process."

Speaking after an informal practice with about eight teammates at the Troy Sports Center, White is disappointed to hear that the league has suggested to the NHL Players Association that they take a two-week break in collective bargaining talks.

"The whole process has just been frustrating," White said. "I think just where he stand now, you'd think that we're pretty close to making a deal if they're willing to come a little bit our way.

"It's something that could even have been done even in the summer. That's what's frustrating. There's absolutely no need to be missing games and doing this kind of damage."

The NHL did not respond to a message seeking comment.

Like many players, White believes the league is being too inflexible in talks.

"This thing seems like it's so ridiculous," White said. "Obviously, I'm a little biased towards the players, but if you look at our last offer, we agreed to come down to 50 50 (in hockey-related revenues).

"Why should we have five-year limits on contracts? These are the owners that are throwing all this money out. They're signing these guys to long-term deals, trying to circumvent the system they put in place last time, so you got to blame that on us?"

He said the union remains fully supportive of its leader, Donald Fehr.

"We're fully behind him," White said. "I don't even know if really matters who's leading us at this point, their offers are so ridiculous and they're trying to take everything that we have away from us.

"I know (Fehr) is going to do the best for us. It's on the owners to at least be somewhat fair."

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644391 Detroit Red Wings

Red Wings scouting report: Healthy knee should elevate versatile Danny Cleary's play

Ansar Khan

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

Danny Cleary

Position: Right wing/Left wing

Age: 33

Height/weight: 6-0/208

How acquired: Signed as a free agent in 2005 following a tryout in training camp.

Contract: One year remaining on a five-year deal that has a salary-cap hit of \$2.8 million.

2011-12 stats: 75 games, 12 goals, 21 assists, 33 points, plus-2 rating, 30 penalty minutes.

Career stats: 821 games, 151 goals, 211 assists, 362 points, plus-27 rating, 415 penalty minutes.

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

Strengths: A versatile player who can fill many roles. He can be used with skilled players on a top-two line or play on a checking line. He plays both ends of the rink. When healthy, he skates well. He kills penalties and can play a net-front role on the power play.

Weaknesses: Tends to be streaky offensively, scoring in spurts and going through cold stretches. He's experienced a lot of wear and tear the last couple of years.

2011-12 in review: He managed to play in 75 games despite being in constant discomfort due to a left knee that needed to be drained four times over the final two months of the season. He had surgery after the season to repair torn cartilage and clean up debris and said he feels a huge difference. ... Recorded career-high 199 shots on goal. ... Career-high nine shots on goal in 5-2 loss at San Jose Nov. 17 (one goal). ... Three power-play points (two goals, one assist) was lowest total since 2005-06 (no points). ... Played his best during an 11-game stretch from Dec. 4-26, with 11 points (five goals, six assists). ... Had no points over his final 10 games, including five playoff games.

2012-13 outlook: He should be able to skate much better after having his knee issues addressed. He'll probably play mostly on the third line, centered by Darren Helm, with either Todd Bertuzzi or Drew Miller on the other wing. He'll continue to play regularly on the penalty kill and should log more power-play time with the departure of Jiri Hudler and impending retirement of Tomas Holmstrom.

Does Cleary still have the potential to score 20 goals, like he has in three of the past six seasons? Should he play on a top-two line, or is he better suited for the third line?

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644392 Edmonton Oilers

NHL Lockout: Why do billionaires keep buying teams that lose money? (Updated)

Jonathan Willis

The answer: There is a big gap between "losing money" and actually losing money.

There is a strange dichotomy in NHL ownership. The owners, whether as companies or individuals, are extremely wealthy. Yet many teams reportedly lose money every year, and with few exceptions even the profitable clubs don't make that much money. Why would phenomenally successful men sink money into a black hole like that? Is it simply a case of viewing hockey teams as luxuries where they can afford to bleed red a little?

While non-financial considerations undoubtedly come into play, the simplest explanation is that the financial picture for various NHL teams is a lot healthier than it is typically reported to be.

Take the Florida Panthers as an example. For many, the Panthers are a great case in point of what went wrong with the NHL's expansion into the

Sunbelt. Attendance has improved of late, but on a percentage basis still easily falls into the NHL's bottom-third. The team has struggled for respectability on the ice, and off the ice the financial picture is generally seen as gloomy.

Last year, Forbes estimated that the Panthers lost \$7 million. Over the last nine seasons, they calculate the Panthers total losses at \$68 million, an average deficit of \$7.5 million per season.

Interestingly, the picture that Forbes paints is at odds with that presented by Broward County. Broward County was primarily responsible for the construction of the Panthers' arena, and as a result gets to look at the books of the organization. According to the county auditor, the organization made \$117.4 million in profit between 1998 and 2012.

How does a team losing \$7.5 million per season rack up profits in excess of \$100 million? There are a few reasons, and to find them we need to dig a little.

The Panthers play in BB&T Center. The arena was built for \$191 million and opened in 1998, it was financed through bonds issued by the County and repaid through a combination of tax and arena revenues. The County then inked a 30-year operating agreement with Panthers Hockey LLLP (now known as Sunrise Sports & Entertainment, or SSE).

As part of the agreement, SSE essentially controls the arena. They host 41 regular season home games (plus playoff games and any special/pre-season games), and between 70-100 other events in a calendar year. The county receives revenue sharing only if the Panthers organization hits a certain profit level, which was previously pegged at \$12 million in a year.

The 2010 auditor's report, which is available at the county website, shows a company that averaged \$9.9 million per fiscal year between 1999 and 2008 (discounting the 2004-05 lockout year, for a moment). Those revenues dipped to just a hair over \$1 million in 2005, the year of the NHL lockout. Interestingly, 2005 – due to the lockout – is the one year where Forbes doesn't provide an estimate that shows the Panthers losing money, and it's the lowest revenue-generating year the auditor records.

That's either an incredibly interesting coincidence, or evidence that the Panthers themselves help make the arena as profitable as it is.

Looking at the Panthers numbers, I think two things stand out:

1. NHL teams are gateways to favourable arena deals, and thus greater revenue. Sunrise Sports & Entertainment would never have received their current sweetheart deal with Broward County without the Panthers. Even in a year where the Panthers lose money, owning the team allows SSE to make profits overall, thanks to their arena deal and the non-hockey events they collect revenue from as a result.

2. Hockey-related revenue is defined in such a way so as to maximize the appearance of losses on the hockey side. I expected to see that the Panthers were making good money on their arena deal; I was surprised to find that what was far and away their worst fiscal year coincided with the NHL lockout. If the Panthers were losing money but the arena business was profitable, we would not expect to see a major drop in SSE revenue in 2005; instead we saw a significant dip. (Note: judging by the email commentary I've received, this point is being missed by many readers. If the Panthers were acting as a drag on revenue, the 2005 lockout year should have been quite profitable for SSE; instead it was easily their worst fiscal year of the decade – JW.)

Perhaps I should not have been surprised, because hockey-related revenue is defined in such a way as to show losses: owners have generous deduction allowances – in some cases, as with television broadcasts, the owners can deduct up to 100 percent of revenues as a "direct cost" – and certain forms of revenue (including many of the government subsidies teams receive) are not included in the calculation.

The bottom line is that the Panthers' current ownership did not get into hockey to lose money, and according to the county auditor they haven't lost money. Florida, commonly presented as one of the league's have-not teams, and an example of the dangers of over-expansion, is nothing of the sort: it's a healthy business, carefully presented to appear like a money-losing operation.

Unfortunately, it is impossible to know what the situation is in other NHL cities. NHL teams are private companies, and have no obligation to divulge their financial data. But the fact that the Panthers are seen as one of the poorest clubs in the league suggests that the vast majority of NHL teams are doing just fine.

Update

As Erin Bolen points out at SBNation, the audit by Broward County is limited to financial data for the Arena Operating Company, the division of Sunrise Sports & Entertainment.

This doesn't shift the two basic points of this piece highlighted in bold. The AOC is incredibly profitable, and SSE only gets to run it because of the Panthers, so the Panthers still serve as a gateway. Additionally, a 90% drop in total AOC profitability in a lockout year remains highly interesting when the number of hockey events should only represent roughly one-third of their total revenue.

However, with that said the above piece at times confuses the financial data for the arena operating company with the financial data for Sunrise Sports and Entertainment, due to my misreading portions of the audit. That's an important distinction to make, and one that I failed to make in my reading of the audit.

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644393 Minnesota Wild

Conversations resume between NHL and union; negotiations still on hold

IRA PODELL , Associated Press

NEW YORK - The conversations have restarted in the ongoing NHL labor fight. The negotiations have not.

One step at a time in the roller-coaster ride that holds the hockey season in the balance.

A day after NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman suggested to players' association chief Donald Fehr that the sides take a two-week break from seemingly fruitless bargaining, talking resumed Friday — albeit from afar.

Deputy commissioner Bill Daly spoke briefly with union special counsel Steve Fehr, and they were expected to have further discussions during the weekend to talk about the next steps in bargaining.

It was unclear if any progress was made yet in the discussions.

"I wouldn't characterize it," Daly told The Associated Press in an email Friday night. "Nothing else noteworthy."

The day wasn't expected to produce positive results following Thursday night's revelation that the NHL floated the idea of taking time off in discussions. No official answer was given by the players that they accepted or rejection Bettman's suggestion, but they repeated their willingness to bargain anytime and their belief that negotiating is the only way an agreement can ever be reached.

If the NHL and the players' association have run out of things to talk about, how can they ever find a way to make a deal to save the hockey season?

It is a question both sides seem to have trouble answering, and not because they are being guarded or coy. The lockout is in its third month, and there is no obvious path to progress.

There was a hint of optimism last week when the league and locked-out players met a few times, but the view quickly became bleak. After a one-day break, the sides met Sunday. That brief return to the table also turned badly quickly. They haven't met — and have barely talked — since then.

Frustration and a hint of anger have entered the equation. So perhaps a cooling-off period would make some sense before the sides agree to get together again.

"I think what you have seen is disappointment with where we find ourselves in the process," Daly said. "I don't think it's a case of personal animosity."

Now that Daly and Steve Fehr have resumed discussions with each other, maybe it will be less than two weeks before negotiations resume. At this point, any contact qualifies as good news.

Staying apart could pose a problem because time has become a major factor. All games through Nov. 30 have already been taken off the

schedule, more cancellations are likely within a week, the Winter Classic has been wiped out, the All-Star game is the next big event in jeopardy, and the whole season could be lost, too, in the blink of an eye.

Daly said Thursday that he is more discouraged now than at any other point in the process.

"Of course everyone on the players' side wants to reach an agreement," Steve Fehr said 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.

"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?"

That came in response to Bettman's suggestion of a break, and other comments by Daly about the tenor of the discussions between the sides.

"Gary suggested the possibility of a two-week moratorium," Daly said. "I'm disappointed because we don't have a negotiating partner that has any genuine interest in reaching an agreement. Zero interest."

The NHL contends that the union has submitted the same proposal multiple times without moving in the league's direction. The union says it has agreed to come down from receiving 57 percent of hockey-related revenues to a 50-50 split. The league wants that to go into effect in the first year of the agreement, while the union wants to get there gradually.

Back in 2005, after the entire 2004-05 season was lost to a lockout, the players' association accepted a salary-cap system for the first time and feels it shouldn't have to bear the brunt of the concessions now after league revenues reached a record high of over \$3 billion last season.

"In '04, the gap was huge," said Rangers forward Brad Richards, who attended last week's bargaining sessions. "Very frustrating. Didn't expect to go on this long, didn't need for it to go on this long. They want to create this view that we're so far apart. Only one way to get a deal done. That's the only tactic they know."

Richards organized a benefit skate Friday to help in the relief efforts on Staten Island after Superstorm Sandy, and was joined by several of his teammates. Richards, who signed with the Rangers last offseason, and led them to the No. 1 seed in the Eastern Conference last postseason partnered with a high school team to organize "Skating for Sandy."

This 62-day lockout has claimed 327 regular-season games, and hope of a new deal and the start of the already-shortened season — likely of 68 games per team — on Dec. 1 has been dashed.

Rangers forward Marian Gaborik sees little benefit in taking a break from negotiations.

"I don't know what his mindset is," he said about Bettman.

It is more than just finances preventing a deal. The disagreements over player contract terms have emerged as just as 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.

Players missed their third pay day of the season Thursday, and the clock is ticking toward more losses. The 2004-05 season was canceled in February. A lockout in 1995 ended in January, leading to a 48-game schedule.

"Different," Gaborik said about this lockout. "The union is much stronger. We have a leader we believe in."

Freelance writer Denis Gorman contributed to this report.

Star Tribune LOADED: 11.17.2012

644394 Minnesota Wild

Charts obtained by Star Tribune show how far apart NHL believes it is from NHLPA

Posted by: Michael Russo

Over the past few days, I have talked to a handful of players who have indicated how unfair it is that the NHL Players' Association has essentially agreed to a 50/50 split, yet now the NHL was moving the goalposts and won't negotiate the contractual changes the league is seeking.

I made some calls to see if the former was true because I had been given a different impression — that the NHLPA doesn't get to 50/50 over the course of its proposal, especially when one considers the potential loss of revenue this year due to the lockout after last year's record \$3.303 billion.

I have obtained a series of charts that the NHL presented the NHLPA based off the union's most recent economic proposal (see below). If you look at the NHL's numbers, you can see why the league says the NHL and NHLPA aren't as close on a core economic model as Executive Director Donald Fehr indicated last Friday night during a news conference.

Last Friday before talks between the NHL and NHLPA broke off, the NHL prepared and provided the union a series of charts to demonstrate what it felt the existing economic proposal from the NHLPA would mean based on the league's current situation and the damage already done to the business due to the lockout.

The NHL used four different assumptions in terms of lost hockey related revenue (HRR) this year, the most conservative being 10% off of last year's \$3.303 billion — but also 12.5% down, 15% down and 17.5% down. Given where the NHL is, and with more cancellations coming up early next week, the NHL actually feels a more realistic view at this point is 25% down.

In any event, the NHL assumed that in Year 2, it would recover to 2011-12 HRR levels plus 2.5%. In Years 3, 4 and 5, the NHL assumed 5% growth year-over-year.

Using those four assumptions, and what the NHL says is the union's "guaranteed" players share dollars of \$1.916 billion in Year 1 and growing by 1.75% in every year, the NHL demonstrated that the applicable players' shares over the five years of the union's proposal ranges anywhere from a low of 64.4% to a high of 70.3% in Year 1, and falls gradually to 52.4% by the last year of the deal the players are proposing.

So regardless of loss assumptions, the NHLPA never gets to 50/50 over the course of its proposal, according to the NHL charts.

"The issue of how you deal with damage from the lockout is a tough one, particularly since it is impossible to know the extent of the damage," NHLPA Special Counsel Steve Fehr said in an email. "What we have suggested to the owners several times is that we put aside that issue for the moment and concentrate upon the overall structure of the deal. If we do that, based upon the last proposals from each side, we think the parties are much closer than they have ever been on the economics. If we could bridge that gap, then we could come back quickly to the lockout damage issue. For whatever reason, the owners have declined to do that, and seem to be intent on portraying the parties as further apart than we think we are."

The NHLPA has previously indicated the players shouldn't be responsible for the damage of starting this lockout. That may be fair.

Regardless though, what all these numbers prove at the very least is that the longer this lockout goes, the harder the math equation will be to solve. Damage to league revenue becomes more and more severe with each passing day. That complicates absolutely everything, which is why an end to the lockout just doesn't seem in sight.

Under the NHL's most recent proposal, the league wishes to go immediately from a 57/43 split in favor of the players to 50/50. Had there been a normal season and year-to-year growth of 5%, 50/50 would have been \$149 million less last year's \$1.883 billion player share in 2012-13 and another \$62 million less than \$1.883 billion in 2013-14. The league says it would "make whole" that money by reimbursing the players in two deferred, lump-sum payments, plus 2% interest. Had there been a normal season and year-to-year growth of 5%, there would be no shortfall in 2014-15 and essentially the league says the two sides would be caught up.

The NHLPA has made clear that this math does not honor in full every contract mutually agreed to with owners and thus is unacceptable.

Here are the charts:

NHLPA PLAYERS' SHARE PROPOSAL OF NOV. 9 UNDER DIFFERENT REVENUE GROWTH ASSUMPTIONS ILLUSTRATIONS

TABLE 1

GROWTH FACTOR 5.0%	-10.0%	13.9%	5.0%	5.0%		
	2011-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17
HRR	3,303B	2,973	3,386	3,555	3,733	3,919
APPLICABLE PCT. 52.4%	57.0%	64.4%	57.6%	55.8%	54.1%	
PLAYERS' SHARE 2,053	1,883	1,916	1,949	1,983	2,018	
NHL at 50%	1,486	1,693	1,777	1,866	1,960	
Make-Whole	149M	62	----	----	----	
	1,635	1,755	1,777	1,866	1,960	
Difference	280	194	206	152	94	
Total						
926M						
Players' Share VOY % Inc. 1.75%	1.75%	1.75%	1.75%	1.75%	1.75%	

TABLE 2

GROWTH FACTOR 5.0%	-12.5%	17.1%	5.0%	5.0%		
	2011-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17
HRR	3,303B	2,890	3,386	3,555	3,733	3,919
APPLICABLE PCT. 52.4%	57.0%	66.3%	57.6%	55.8%	54.1%	
PLAYERS' SHARE 2,053	1,883	1,916	1,949	1,983	2,018	
NHL at 50%	1,445	1,693	1,777	1,866	1,960	
Make-Whole	149M	62	----	----	----	
	1,594	1,755	1,777	1,866	1,960	
Difference	322	194	206	152	94	
Total						
967M						
Players' Share VOY % Inc. 1.75%	1.75%	1.75%	1.75%	1.75%	1.75%	

TABLE 3

GROWTH FACTOR 5.0%	-15.0%	20.6%	5.0%	5.0%		
	2011-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17
HRR	3,303B	2,808	3,386	3,555	3,733	3,919
APPLICABLE PCT. 52.4%	57.0%	68.2%	57.6%	55.8%	54.1%	
PLAYERS' SHARE 2,053	1,883	1,916	1,949	1,983	2,018	
NHL at 50%	1,404B	1,693	1,777	1,866	1,960	
Make-Whole	149M	62	----	----	----	
	1,553	1,755	1,777	1,866	1,960	
Difference	363M	194	206	152	94	
Total						
1,009B						
Players' Share VOY % Inc. 1.75%	1.75%	1.75%	1.75%	1.75%	1.75%	

TABLE 4

GROWTH FACTOR 5.0%	-17.5%	24.2%	5.0%	5.0%		
	2011-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17
HRR	3,303B	2,725	3,386	3,555	3,733	3,919
APPLICABLE PCT. 52.4%	57.0%	70.3%	57.6%	55.8%	54.1%	
PLAYERS' SHARE 2,053	1,883	1,916	1,949	1,983	2,018	
NHL at 50%	1,362	1,693	1,777	1,866	1,960	
Make-Whole	149M	62	----	----	----	
	1,511	1,755	1,777	1,866	1,960	
Difference	404	194	206	152	94	
Total						
1,050B						
Players' Share VOY % Inc. 1.75%	1.75%	1.75%	1.75%	1.75%	1.75%	

Where do we stand now? Not firm ground.

After 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 last night, 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."

In a statement, NHLPA special counsel Steve Fehr said, "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?"

Daly and Steve Fehr did talk today. No meetings are planned.

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, but more games will be scrapped next week. Players missed their third paycheck Thursday.

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644395 Montreal Canadiens

Duhatschek: Welcome to the half-way point of the NHL lockout

ERIC DUHATSCHKEK

Picture this: It's the Hockey Hall of Fame luncheon this past Monday and there's an empty seat at the presenter's table between me and selection committee co-chair Pat Quinn. It was supposed to be NHL commissioner Gary Bettman's place and believe me, the temptation to channel my inner Clint Eastwood and start lecturing that empty chair about the futility and madness of the lockout was almost too much to bear.

Bettman's absence was noteworthy because even back in 2004, when the NHL last ground to a halt because of a lockout, he was far more visible at Hall Of Fame ceremonies than he was this time around. Some suggested Bettman kept a lower profile because he has become so much more of a personal lightning rod during this, the third lockout under his reign as NHL

commissioner, and thus didn't want his presence to overshadow the moment for inductees Pavel Bure, Adam Oates, Joe Sakic and Mats Sundin.

Fair enough. That night, Bettman showed up to give a short and perfunctory speech, made a veiled reference to the lockout and then disappeared. He wasn't at the preliminary parties; he didn't take his usual seat in the auditorium; and he didn't stick around for all the visiting and glad-handing that goes on afterward.

That's the thing about the hockey world when they gather for an event such as this. They are inveterate gossips. It's really one of the great pleasures of the business, a sort of unofficial industry-wide convention that drops ex-players, agents, owners, labour leaders and NHL brass into one small corridor of downtown Toronto for a 72-hour period.

There are accidental meetings with old friends in the to-ing and fro-ing through hotel lobbies, along with quick catch-ups over coffee or stronger beverages. All the old stories are retold, but this year, every conversation eventually drifted back to the elephant in the room, namely, when might the lockout end?

Over on Puck Daddy this week, Greg Wyshynski called this the "nobody knows anything" portion of the labour negotiations and he has that pretty well right. Nobody does know anything and they know even less today, after Bettman determined that a two-week break in the negotiations would act as a sort of cooling off period, in which the two warring sides could come up with fresh ideas to end the stalemate.

Good luck with that.

Overall, even among parties that have a role in the negotiating game, there was a real uncertainty over what may happen next. Some, a few die-hard optimists, thought something might give in early December, the way it did in 2004, when the NHL players association offered a 24 per cent rollback that – for a time anyway – gave the negotiations a push forward.

Others, a larger class of pessimists, believe that things are so bad that the Hall of Fame could potentially reconvene next November to honour its class of 2013, without a single NHL game having been played in the interim.

Their logic is that if the season is ultimately lost – probably about a 50-50 proposition right now – then the NHL will not hurry back to the bargaining table, because the first two months of the season are the softest part of the revenue cycle anyway. The industry will be so badly damaged by a cancellation that even supposedly logical businessmen will then allow emotions to trump logic in the negotiating fray (if they haven't already).

If or when that happens, when one side believes it needs the other to surrender unconditionally, then the casualty count will be high.

Today, on our website, there was a post by a reader who called himself A Business Professional who summed up in two paragraphs a conversation I had with a prominent, semi-retired NHL figure, who still has many close ties to the game (and is privy to the sort of conversations that haven't spilled into the public domain because of Bettman's gag order).

His view echoed thoughts that our reader posted:

"Rule number 1 is you never ever ever allow the fundamental process of a deal to be in the hands of lawyers and accountants. With respect to my several friends in these professions, they are what is known on a professional level as the necessary evils. Heartless and soulless. These people should only be called in once the framework of a deal is done. They put the legalities on paper and present the accounting fiscal challenges. The NHL and players now need the owners and builders and smart players to step to the plate with their passion and love of the game. A Geoff Molson and a Mario Lemieux along with some hard nosed smart passionate players. They need to tell the lawyers and accountants to literally take a hike and that they will be called back when needed."

I read that today and wondered if he was actually within earshot when we talked about one of the real differences this time around – that there is no vehicle for the sort of back-channel communications our reader suggests should take place between the likes of Geoff Molson and Mario Lemieux.

Back in 2004, the NHLPA had a player president, Trevor Linden, and an executive committee, in addition to an executive director, Bob Goodenow, and his deputy, Ted Saskin. Goodenow was the No. 1 man on the bargaining team, and acted as a sort of coach or general manager, but Linden was the de facto captain of the players' team.

As a group, players understand that sort of chain of command – teammate, captain, coach, manager – and feel comfortable operating within it. If they wanted a private word about the progression of the lockout, without engaging Goodenow, they could do so with Linden, who was highly regarded by his peer group for integrity and fairness.

Ultimately, it was Linden and one of the secondary negotiators on the owners' team, former NHL board chairman Harley Hotchkiss, who made the first inroads which eventually led to a settlement in July, 2005.

In the aftermath of that agreement, there was a significant bloodletting within the players association. A new hierarchy emerged that no longer features a player as president.

Instead, NHLPA executive director Donald Fehr has a far more diffused base, with players popping in and out of the negotiations all the time. Just about every time Fehr steps before the microphone, he stresses his open-door policy – how any player who wants to engage in the process, or needs a point clarified, is welcome to do so. Every so often, whenever they need a show of strength, a who's who of NHL stars appears at Fehr's side, to demonstrate solidarity. Sidney Crosby weighs in periodically, just to affirm his support of the NHLPA negotiating stance.

But when the office of NHLPA president disappeared in the restructuring, the dynamic of the negotiations also changed. Fehr hired his brother Steve as his No. 2 and suddenly, there are no opportunities for any back channel talks. It is a development that is frustrating the league to no end, one of the many changes the NHL didn't give enough weight to when the process started back in July, when it fired its first CBA volley.

They presented a wish list for the current agreement as a legitimate opening offer. Instead of dismissing it out of hand, the NHLPA just let it sit there for close to two months, percolating in the public consciousness, ensuring that animosity would build up towards the owners. It would have been easy for the NHLPA to respond with a counter offer right away. The fact that they didn't was stroke of public relations genius, one which the league didn't anticipate.

The players had the better part of the summer to work themselves into a lather over that bit of foolishness. The NHL then exacerbated the problem by hurriedly signing dozens of players to contract extensions just before the Sept. 15 lockout deadline, providing more ammunition for Fehr and Co. It also gave the player rank-and-file a chance to rally around a perfectly legitimate question – if the economics of the league were so bad, why were teams throwing so much money around just before the deal expired?

So now, as the NHL makes incrementally improving offers from the July starting point, it is coming up against a wall of doubt and suspicion. Mostly, the players have decided just to trust Fehr for guidance on when they might make their best possible deal, without sacrificing a full season. When will that moment come? Will it ever come? Will the league dig in? Will the players association always ask for one more concession, until they get to the same point they did back in February of 2005, when they ran out of time to save any sort of a meaningful season?

The answer, right now, is nobody knows for sure. Most think it could go either way, with the wild card being Fehr. Negotiators on the NHL side have consulted with their counterparts in major league baseball and the intelligence they have gathered from them has them worried. The league doesn't plan a meek surrender, but they're not sure how far they can push the NHLPA, which was dug in on revenue-sharing, and then the 'make-whole' provision and now on contracting rights.

In short, this is unknown territory, with all new players on the NHLPA side. Generally, in every sort of negotiation such as this, there is some ebb and flow. Momentum builds and then stalls. Optimism ran high about two weeks ago and now pessimism reigns supreme.

About the only thing I'm prepared to venture is that the drop-dead date to play games in 2012-13 is still two months or more away. That means there will be at least two more opportunities for the sides to get closer and see if they can't finally bridge that gap. You'd think there would be urgency now, but you'd be wrong. With lawyers and accountants in charge, the real urgency doesn't start until the clock is five minutes from midnight and the end is in sight. So hang on to your hats, because realistically, they are just at the half way point now – two months into the lockout, with another two months remaining to save a fraction of the 2012-13 season – and maybe the industry's future as well.

THE LONG AND SHORT OF IT: When the Calgary Flames let Brent Sutter go this summer, replacing him behind the bench with Bob Hartley, who would have thought that Sutter would be coaching again before anyone

else in the NHL? But it happened this week, when the team he owns and manages, the Western Hockey League's Red Deer Rebels, fired coach Jesse Wallin after a 10-11-1 start and Sutter installed himself back behind the bench. Red Deer likely would have been a different team this year if the Edmonton Oilers had wanted to keep Ryan Nugent-Hopkins closer to home. The Calder Trophy runner-up in 2012 still had junior eligibility left, but he is playing at the moment for the Oilers' AHL affiliate in Oklahoma City ... Usually, on the Sunday of Hall of Fame weekend, I get together over dinner with Lanny McDonald to catch up. This year, McDonald had a better offer, and had an informal reunion with ex-Leafs Borje Salming, Darryl Sittler, Tiger Williams and their spouses. A riotous night, McDonald tells me ... You never know what to make of injuries that occur to locked-out NHLers playing elsewhere in order to stay sharp. The fact is, they happen, just as they might happen in the NHL, if play was under way. The Red Wings' Valtteri Filppula, or example, sprained his right knee playing for Jokerit and Finland and will miss up to eight weeks, which probably gives him enough time to heal, if the NHL ever does play this season. The same cannot be said for the Ottawa Senators' young defenceman Jared Cowen, who is scheduled to undergo hip surgery on Saturday and is out for the season. Cowen is just 21 and played all 82 games for Ottawa last season, and was an underrated factor on their 92-point playoff team.

AND FINALLY: Arguably the most interesting injury news came via the Chicago Tribune this past week, when the Blackhawks' most outspoken critic of Bettman, team captain Jonathan Toews, reported that he is only now fully recovered from a concussion that caused him to miss two months of action last season, even though he was deemed healthy enough to participate in the playoffs.

According to the Tribune report, Toews was symptom-free and had cleared all NHL concussion protocols prior to his return, but he wasn't feeling 100 per cent until he visited the same Atlanta-based team of chiropractors and neurologists that treated Crosby for his concussion symptoms as well. Toews explained it to the paper this way: "Even if you don't feel something and you think you're symptom-free, there's probably still something there that's kind of hindering you and affecting the way your brain works. It was just a lot of eye-movement things. My eyes didn't track very well. They didn't look from one target to the next very well. My balance with my eyes closed and my head turned a certain way was terrible. (There were) little things that I would think were normal because I didn't feel something in my head."

Sheesh. Doesn't sound very good, does it?

Toews incidentally said that he will now consider playing opportunities in Europe, if the lockout stalemate continues. His Blackhawks' teammate, Patrick Kane, has already been cavorting in Switzerland for more than a month now.

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644396 Montreal Canadiens

Shoalts: As anger rises over lockout, Bettman calls for a break

DAVID SHOALTS

The news that NHL commissioner Gary Bettman thinks it's a swell idea to take a two-week holiday six weeks into what should have been a hockey season is sure to ignite more anger from the fans, sponsors, advertisers and anyone else with a stake in the league.

Yes, figuring out how to divide record revenue of \$3.3-billion (all currency U.S.) so that all concerned get rich is such an onerous task, such a Gordian Knot of a problem that the NHL commissioner feels a nice little break is in order. No sitting around boardrooms amid mouldering tuna sandwiches for this guy, trying to deal with the inscrutable Donald Fehr, no sir-ee. Let's all reconvene to the bar, shall we, and check the flight schedules to somewhere warm where they serve drinks with little umbrellas in them.

I suppose we should not be surprised at this. After all, it's the third lockout since Bettman became commissioner in 1993, the second one in the last seven years and now looking more and more like it will cost another season like the one in 2004-05. What's another two-week break?

Until this latest whopper, people in other businesses, hockey fans all, were merely shaking their heads. In the last four years, most of them had to deal

with the worst recession since the Great Depression, with shrinking revenues, which beget shrinking staff and shrinking paycheques. In the last four years, the NHL has had only to deal with four consecutive years of record annual revenue to go with the three years of record revenue before that.

The response of Bettman and the NHL owners to all this money was to shut down their business the minute the collective agreement with the players was up. Yeah, some of us are making a really big pile of money, the refrain went, but others are making a not-so-big pile, others are just breaking even and some of us are losing a really big pile of money. And the players are getting too much of it.

But somehow in the midst of this, with sporadic negotiations that would not have taxed even the most indolent labour negotiators, the players and owners agreed on the single biggest issue, how much each of them would get of the NHL's annual \$3.3-billion in revenue. Fifty-fifty, they say. The union guys even said they've pretty much agreed on how much more revenue-sharing there will be between the rich and not-so-rich teams to help throw a few bucks to the poor relations.

But what they can't agree on is how fast they will get to that 50-50 deal from the old standard, which saw the players get 57 per cent. They also can't agree on just how players who signed contracts under that old 57-per-cent rule will get all of their money once their slice of the pie shrinks by seven per cent. Oh, and there's the issue of just which side will take the biggest haircut this season because the lockout is going to whack a big chunk off that string of record revenue (at least \$250-million so far and counting).

Glen Hodgson is the chief economist for the Conference Board of Canada. He is also a hockey fan who is letting the Ottawa Senators hang on to his season-ticket money and pay him 5 per cent interest on it ("You can't get that rate on a bond," he says.).

Every day, Hodgson deals with people who are trying to figure out a different way to run their businesses because the economy forced them to cut back staff. He looks at the NHL and marvels at a group, he is increasingly convinced, that is hell-bent on running off the fans who made them rich.

"They've decided on the fundamentals," Hodgson said. "They're going to share 50-50. It's now all about the transition to 50-50, so why can't they get it done?"

Maybe it's because the owners and Bettman are convinced the fans will come back no matter what they do to the game. They did last time. Look at those seven years of record revenues.

Hodgson admits he and his fellow Senators season-ticket holders will be back the minute a puck is dropped along with just about every other subscriber in the six other Canadian NHL cities.

"Hockey is in our bloodstream," he said. "It's not just a nice thing to do like it is for Americans."

Funny thing, though. Even though the seven Canadian teams provide an over-proportionate share of that \$3.3-billion, the key to prosperity remains with all those American fans in the 23 U.S. cities. Owners of U.S.-based teams will tell you a frightening number of their fans are simply calling up and saying cancel my tickets, send me a full refund, no, I don't want to be on a waiting list or any kind of list, I'm done with you.

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644397 Montreal Canadiens

Weekend stroll down memory lane

By Pat Hickey,

MONTREAL — If the National Hockey League had been playing this weekend, I would have been in Denver to watch the Canadiens play the Colorado Avalanche.

Instead, I'll be taking a stroll down memory lane.

It starts Friday with the Concordia University Sports Hall of Fame induction ceremony. The dinner is an annual event, and it usually allows me to touch base with athletes I've covered and, in some cases, played with or against.

This year offers an opportunity to renew acquaintances with a larger group than usual. Inductees John Erglis and Ron Puskarich played basketball for Loyola College in the mid-1970s when the school had a fierce rivalry with Sir George Williams University, the other partner in a shotgun marriage that produced Concordia.

They were also part of the 1974-75 Loyola squad that is being honoured in the team category. The roster included current Concordia coach John Dore, David Kurtz, Bobby Brix and Andre Chesnay, who was once my tennis doubles partner.

One inductee I won't have trouble recognizing is my kid brother, Mike, who is being inducted as a builder. Mike, who was my teammate and coach at Sir George, coached all-Canadians Tom Brethel, Mike Moore and Zan Pelzer as the men's coach at Sir George, and Olympians Sylvia Sweeney, Liz Silcott and Debbie Huband when he coached the Concordia women after the merger.

Basketball player Caroline Assalian, who is now a top executive with the Canadian Olympic Committee, is being inducted along with Sir George grad Helen Stewart, a sailor who competed against men in the 1960s.

On Saturday, it's off to the Étienne Desmarteau Arena in Rosemont to watch the Montreal Stars play the Boston Blades in a Canadian Women's Hockey League game that also serves as a fundraiser for the Quebec Breast Cancer Foundation.

I've been a fan of the women's game since Cammi Granato, Karen Bye and Thérèse Brisson were part of a pioneering powerhouse at Concordia. The Stars, who play on a sheet of ice that bears the name of three-time Olympic gold medallist Caroline Ouellette, offer hockey in its purest form with lots of skating and puck skills. There are no punishing checks, but there's no doubting the intense rivalry.

The arena is part of the legacy of the 1976 Olympics and every time I visit the building I'm reminded that it was the site of one of the greatest basketball games ever played. Puerto Rico took a star-studded U.S. team down to the wire before losing 95-94 in the preliminary round in 1976. The game featured an incredible performance by Butch Lee, who scored 35 points for Puerto Rico.

Lee's parents were from the U.S. Virgin Islands, but he qualified for inclusion on the Puerto Rican team because his mother went into labour while flying from the Virgin Islands to the U.S. and gave birth after the plane made an unscheduled stop in San Juan.

A ripple of excitement went through the crowd just before tipoff when the larger-than-life Wilt Chamberlain entered the building. National Basketball Association great Bill Russell was a TV analyst for the game and a writer shouted to him: "Hey Bill, the Dipper's here, why don't you play him at halftime and see who's the best."

Russell didn't miss a beat as he replied: "My friend, that was decided long ago."

Russell was referring to the fact the two met in the NBA playoffs eight times and Russell and the Boston Celtics prevailed in seven of those series.

On Sunday, there will be more Olympic memories as the Alouettes meet the Toronto Argonauts at the Olympic Stadium. I was there in 1976 when Cuba's Alberto Juantorena doubled in the 400 and 800 metres, and Finn Lasse Viren took the 5,000 and 10,000 metres. I remember the Canadian press corps was happy when Canadian Greg Joy finished second to Jacek Wszola in the high jump, but even happier because the overbearing American Dwight Stones didn't win.

I also remember that none of the washrooms at the Big O were functioning and the areas below the stands were filled with portable toilets. It seems that when a labour dispute erupted on the site, disgruntled workers poured concrete down the drain pipes.

The Big O has become a joke over the intervening years, but it has provided some great moments and there's no better place to be when there is a crowd on hand, which should be the case Sunday.

I always found it ironic that while running the Expos Claude Brochu promoted the idea that the stadium, which is connected to two métro stops, was inaccessible and that a downtown stadium was essential. Over the years, I've seen capacity crowds at the Big O to watch football and soccer games, not to mention rock concerts and even an opera.

When the Grey Cup was played there in 1977, the joint was filled even though the city was hit by a double whammy of a snowstorm and a transit strike.

When the Alouettes are in the playoffs or David Beckham comes to town, it's nice to know that the Olympic Stadium is more than just a piece of nostalgia.

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644398 Montreal Canadiens

Nothing to talk about in NHL lockout ... really?

Posted by Stu Cowan

It's hard to believe, but as the NHL lockout reached its 62nd day on Friday the two sides had nothing to talk about.

And, with no new labour talks planned, NHL commissioner Gary Bettman has suggested to players' association chief Donald Fehr that they take a two-week break from negotiations. The two sides haven't met and have barely talked since last Sunday and frustration is mounting, along with some anger.

"I think what you have seen is disappointment with where we find ourselves in the process," NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly said Friday in an email to The Associated Press. "I don't think it's a case of personal animosity."

Daly said Thursday that he is more discouraged now than at any other point in the process.

"Gary suggested the possibility of a two-week moratorium," Daly told The Associated Press. "I'm disappointed because we don't have a negotiating partner that has any genuine interest in reaching an agreement. Zero interest."

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644399 Montreal Canadiens

1992-93 Habs season flashback: A big comeback victory over Bruins

Posted by Stu Cowan

As we wait and hope for an end to the NHL lockout, Canadiens fans can relive the 1992-93 season – the last year the Habs won the Stanley Cup – at HIO as we post game stories from that season.

The Habs took a 12-4-2 record into a game against the Boston Bruins Nov. 16, 1992 at the Forum. Here is Red Fisher's story from that game:

Was this the night the Canadiens finally realized – as a team – that it's out there somewhere for them?

Is that what it takes: a 6-3 victory over the Boston Bruins – not necessarily because of the victory, but because of the way it was won?

Was this one extra-special?

"Not only was it extra-special," said Brian Bellows, "but it was a superior test of the guys' character.

"You look around the league and you'll see a lot of teams fall down when they give up the first three goals at home. We've always felt that if we hold the other team to three goals or less, we're going to get it back. We're not always going to make it up, but we're not going to give up trying, either."

Bellows has that right. Fewer than three minutes into the second period, the Bruins had goals from Steve Leach, Adam Oates and Steve Heinze – on five shots. That's when the air should have gone out of the Canadiens balloon after a scoreless first period.

Thirty seconds later, Mathieu Schneider started an uplifting assault in a wild period which didn't stop until other goals had been added by John LeClair,

Gilbert Dionne, Stephan Lebeau and Eric Desjardins. Kirk Muller scored into an empty net for the third period's only goal.

"I was out there for some of it, and I could just feel the rush of adrenaline," said Bellows.

That's one explanation, but can anybody really begin to explain whatever it was that happened here last night?

Consider this:

Goaltenders, particularly Patrick Roy, don't play much better than he and Andy Moog did during a scoreless first period. Then: the nightmare.

Five shots into the second period, the Bruins had goals from Leach, Oates and Heinze, and now it was a matter of trying to play catchup hockey from far back. Too far, on most nights, particularly against a team such as Boston, which normally doesn't give up much.

The Bruins' three goals were lashed beyond Roy in 1:35, the first – on an easy rebound – only 42 seconds into the period.

What now? Is this when the Canadiens' worst pre-season fears about their goaltending are realized? If not Roy, who? If help is needed, where?

Canadiens coach Jacques Demers swears on a stack of pucks that at no time did he consider removing Roy, and there's no reason to doubt him. Coaches simply don't thrust a backup goaltender into that kind of a situation – or shouldn't. What's more, the idea was to use Andre Racicot in tonight's game in Ottawa, so what's the rush? What's the sense? Would it make any sense?

Thirty seconds later, Schneider jump-started what appeared to be a dispirited Canadiens gang with his fourth goal of the season.

Fifty-two seconds later, LeClair had hauled up his associates to within a goal on some second-effort around the Boston net – but only after Moog had produced his finest stop of the game on a short, quick LeClair shot.

Then it's Dionne, after some sloppy defensive work by the Bruins, Lebeau on some poor work by Moog, and Desjardins, whose long shot was deflected beyond Moog by defenceman Gord Roberts.

Seven goals in a hair over seven minutes. Forty-one shots (21 by the Bruins) in one period. Five consecutive goals by the Canadiens in 9:02.

"That was Andy Moog's impersonation of Patrick Roy in the playoffs," grunted an exercised Boston general manager Harry Sinden.

Whew!

When does the Stanley Cup parade start?

Okay, so it's a little early in the season, but winning records are built on remarkable comebacks such as these. They're also constructed on the goaltending Roy provided after his desperate work earlier. He wasn't merely hot: he was on fire.

It's late in the period, for example, and there's Jozef Stumpel, cruising in alone on Roy in this, first game with the Bruins this season. Roy made the initial stop on the breakaway and then made an even better stop on the short rebound he had allowed.

"I had a feeling about this game," Muller was to mention much later. "Even when they got the first goal, I had a feeling we could do it."

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644400 New Jersey Devils

Conversations Restart; NHL Negotiations on Hold

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK (AP) — The conversations have restarted in the ongoing NHL labor fight. The negotiations have not.

One step at a time in the roller-coaster ride that holds the hockey season in the balance.

A day after NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman suggested to players' association chief Donald Fehr that the sides take a two-week break from seemingly fruitless bargaining, talking resumed Friday — albeit from afar.

Deputy commissioner Bill Daly spoke briefly with union special counsel Steve Fehr, and they were expected to have further discussions during the weekend to talk about the next steps in bargaining.

It was unclear if any progress was made yet in the discussions.

"I wouldn't characterize it," Daly told The Associated Press in an email Friday night. "Nothing else noteworthy."

The day wasn't expected to produce positive results following Thursday night's revelation that the NHL floated the idea of taking time off in discussions. No official answer was given by the players that they accepted or rejection Bettman's suggestion, but they repeated their willingness to bargain anytime and their belief that negotiating is the only way an agreement can ever be reached.

If the NHL and the players' association have run out of things to talk about, how can they ever find a way to make a deal to save the hockey season?

It is a question both sides seem to have trouble answering, and not because they are being guarded or coy. The lockout is in its third month, and there is no obvious path to progress.

There was a hint of optimism last week when the league and locked-out players met a few times, but the view quickly became bleak. After a one-day break, the sides met Sunday. That brief return to the table also turned badly quickly. They haven't met — and have barely talked — since then.

Frustration and a hint of anger have entered the equation. So perhaps a cooling-off period would make some sense before the sides agree to get together again.

"I think what you have seen is disappointment with where we find ourselves in the process," Daly said. "I don't think it's a case of personal animosity."

Now that Daly and Steve Fehr have resumed discussions with each other, maybe it will be less than two weeks before negotiations resume. At this point, any contact qualifies as good news.

Staying apart could pose a problem because time has become a major factor. All games through Nov. 30 have already been taken off the schedule, more cancellations are likely within a week, the Winter Classic has been wiped out, the All-Star game is the next big event in jeopardy, and the whole season could be lost, too, in the blink of an eye.

Daly said Thursday that he is more discouraged now than at any other point in the process.

"Of course everyone on the players' side wants to reach an agreement," Steve Fehr said 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."

"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?"

That came in response to Bettman's suggestion of a break, and other comments by Daly about the tenor of the discussions between the sides.

"Gary suggested the possibility of a two-week moratorium," Daly said. "I'm disappointed because we don't have a negotiating partner that has any genuine interest in reaching an agreement. Zero interest."

The NHL contends that the union has submitted the same proposal multiple times without moving in the league's direction. The union says it has agreed to come down from receiving 57 percent of hockey-related revenues to a 50-50 split. The league wants that to go into effect in the first year of the agreement, while the union wants to get there gradually.

Back in 2005, after the entire 2004-05 season was lost to a lockout, the players' association accepted a salary-cap system for the first time and feels it shouldn't have to bear the brunt of the concessions now after league revenues reached a record high of over \$3 billion last season.

"In '04, the gap was huge," said Rangers forward Brad Richards, who attended last week's bargaining sessions. "Very frustrating. Didn't expect to go on this long, didn't need for it to go on this long. They want to create this

view that we're so far apart. Only one way to get a deal done. That's the only tactic they know."

Richards organized a benefit skate Friday to help in the relief efforts on Staten Island after Superstorm Sandy, and was joined by several of his teammates. Richards, who signed with the Rangers last offseason, and led them to the No. 1 seed in the Eastern Conference last postseason partnered with a high school team to organize "Skating for Sandy."

This 62-day lockout has claimed 327 regular-season games, and hope of a new deal and the start of the already-shortened season — likely of 68 games per team — on Dec. 1 has been dashed.

Rangers forward Marian Gaborik sees little benefit in taking a break from negotiations.

"I don't know what his mindset is," he said about Bettman.

It is more than just finances preventing a deal. The disagreements over player contract terms have emerged as just as 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.

Players missed their third pay day of the season Thursday, and the clock is ticking toward more losses. The 2004-05 season was canceled in February. A lockout in 1995 ended in January, leading to a 48-game schedule.

"Different," Gaborik said about this lockout. "The union is much stronger. We have a leader we believe in."

Freelance writer Denis Gorman contributed to this report.

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644401 New Jersey Devils

A Discussion, Though a Brief One

By JEFF Z. KLEIN

Informal discussions resumed between the N.H.L. and the Players' Association on Friday after four days of no communication between the sides.

Deputy commissioner Bill Daly and Steve Fehr, the union's special counsel, had a brief discussion Friday and, according to officials, are expected to talk again over the weekend to discuss the next steps for bargaining.

The communication came after reports that Commissioner Gary Bettman had suggested a two-week moratorium on negotiations to Donald Fehr, the union's executive director.

Negotiations had stalled after the two sides bargained for six straight days last week. The lockout has wiped out the first month and a half of the 2012-13 schedule.

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644402 New Jersey Devils

Still No Sign of Play as NHL Lockout Passes Two Months

By REUTERS

NEW YORK (Reuters) - The bitter labor dispute between the National Hockey League (NHL) and the players' union shows no sign of thawing.

Now, with Thanksgiving just days away and the North American winter rapidly approaching, time could be running out for the feuding sides to reach an agreement and save the season.

No-one knows exactly when the cutoff point is but the clock is ticking and the financial costs are running into hundreds of millions of dollars with the lockout already more than two months old.

The NHL have already postponed more than 300 games and canceled the showpiece Winter Classic. The league is almost certain to announce another batch of postponements, possibly as early as next week.

There was some hope the two sides might be on the verge of cutting a deal when they held a series of closed-door meetings in New York last week.

But they ended without any significant progress and the rhetoric from both sides remains gloomy.

"I think the process is stalled right now," NHL Deputy Commissioner Bill Daly told the Los Angeles Times. "We are done with making proposals and we don't have any new ideas."

The Canadian Press reported that the NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman called the players' association (NHLPA) and suggested they take a two-week cooling-off break before resuming talks.

NHLPA counsel Steve Fehr said the players wanted to keep negotiating.

"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," Fehr said in a statement.

"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?"

Labor disputes are not uncommon in America's professional sports and the NHL is well accustomed to work stoppages, with this the fourth in 20 years.

The first dispute, in 1992, lasted just 10 days and was resolved without any games being lost but the next two escalated.

The second stoppage, in 1994, went for three months and wiped out nearly half the season, while the entire season was scrapped in 2004-05.

(Reporting by Julian Linden; Editing by Gene Cherry)

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644403 New Jersey Devils

NJ Devils alumni will take on New Jersey Colonials coaches tonight for Sandy relief

By Louis C. Hochman/NJ.com

MORRIS TOWNSHIP — Hockey players are used to moving quickly, and with determination. But this week, the New Jersey Colonials travel hockey club has a different goal in mind than the one near the edge of the ice.

Over the last few days, the team has assembled a match pitting its coaches against the New Jersey Devils Alumni Team, as a benefit to collect donations and food items for Hurricane Sandy victims.

The event is Friday night at 7 p.m., at the Mennen Arena in Morris Township. Among those scheduled to play: Ken Daneyko, John MacLean, Sergei Brylin, Grant Marshall, Bruce Driver, Pete DeBoer and Dave Barr.

"People were coming to me with ideas. (Devils head coach) Pete DeBoer and his sons skate in our club, and he was talking to the coaches on our teams — I think he suggested it," Colonials President Dede McMenamy said.

That was just this past Saturday. McMenamy originally suggested the event take place after Thanksgiving, but that schedule wasn't going to work for the Devils — so they poured on the speed.

She and several volunteers worked quickly to arrange scheduling with Mennen for Friday night. A dad with the Colonials is a professional printer, and arranged to print up signs quickly, including some that attendees can purchase and have signed by the Devils to benefit Sandy victims. A clothing vendor stepped up with T-shirts for the event.

"Everybody's just been coming out of the woodwork to help us," McMenamy said.

Admission costs \$10 for adults, and \$5 for children. Attendees must also bring non-perishable food items. Suggested items to donate include: Parmalat, powdered milk, canned meats and meals, hearty and low-salt soups, tuna, peanut butter, nut butters and canned fruit. An expanded list is available at njcolonials.com.

Checks are to be made payable to "NJ Colonials," but attendees should add "Hurricane Sandy" to the memo line. Only checks and cash will be accepted.

"People were asking me, 'Do I really need to bring canned goods?' And I said, 'Absolutely,'" McMenemy said. "I want the kids to have a physical reminder of what this is all about. People are hungry. People don't have houses. People can't have their Thanksgivings."

The event will benefit the Hurricane Sandy New Jersey Relief Fund as well as the Interfaith Pantry of Morris County. The pantry has been low on food since Hurricane Sandy, as those needing help poured in.

"It's just a small drop in the bucket, but it's wonderful that so many people are coming together to help," McMenemy said.

For more information, please call Dede McMenemy 973-822-8447 or visit njcolonials.com.

Star Ledger LOADED: 11.17.2012

644404 New Jersey Devils

NHL lockout update: Gary Bettman suggests two-week break from negotiations

By Charles Curtis, NJ.com

Lockout talks are at a complete halt, with nothing but the potential of canceled games ahead.

The next step could have been a new proposal or two, more meetings, even mediation.

Instead, the news is multiple reports, including from Kevin Allen of USA Today, that NHL commissioner Gary Bettman suggested a moratorium on negotiations for the next two weeks.

"At this point, there's not much more we have to offer. We feel like we have given a lot (and the union has offered nothing) and I'm not sure there is much more to give. Maybe a break might give both sides a chance to assess where we are," deputy commissioner Bill Daly told Allen in an email.

The union's Steve Fehr's response, in a statement, was to say the NHLPA was "ready to meet."

Donald Fehr, according to ESPNNewYork's Katie Strang, told Bettman he'd "like to speak with his membership first, a source said. The union likely will give Bettman a response Friday, although it is believed it would prefer meeting rather than not."

But there's a potential reason for the move by Bettman. Yahoo! Sports' Nick Cotsonika tweeted the commissioner did it because the league "heard Fehr told players on conf. call owners' date was Dec. 1. Wanted to show there is no date."

It appears to be just another day of back-and-forth, posturing and spin without a breakthrough in sight. If there's a break in the action for an entire two weeks, the damage that's already been done could get even worse.

Star Ledger LOADED: 11.17.2012

644405 New Jersey Devils

Locked out NHL stars to team to aid superstorm Sandy relief

By ANDREW GROSS

Negotiations to resolve the NHL labor dispute have hit a deep freeze, possibly for at least the next two weeks if the league's proposal to take a break from talks is followed, but there will be hockey in New Jersey next weekend.

Former NHL player Todd Fedoruk has helped organize the Operation Hat Trick charity exhibition game at Boardwalk Hall in Atlantic City on Nov. 24 at 7 p.m. to aid superstorm Sandy relief.

"It's a great way for us players to interact with the fans and the communities we play in and for people in need with what happened," said Middletown's James van Riemsdyk, still waiting to start his first season with the Maple Leafs after an off-season trade from the Flyers.

Bobby Ryan, who grew up in Collingswood, the Rangers' Brad Richards, Henrik Lundqvist, Brian Boyle and Steve Eminger and the Flyers' Scott Hartnell, Jody Shelley and Wayne Simmonds are among the players expected to participate. Some Devils have also been contacted about playing and may be added before the rosters are finalized early next week.

On Friday, Richards, Boyle and Eminger along with Rangers' teammates Marian Gaborik, Dan Girardi, Marc Staal, Carl Hagelin, Anton Stralman, Jeff Halpern and Taylor Pyatt conducted an on-ice clinic for youngsters at the Staten Island Skating Pavilion and raised between \$10,000 and \$12,000 for Sandy victims.

Gaborik told reporters he is regaining his strength after surgery in June to repair a torn labrum in his right shoulder and has been skating four to five times a week at the Rangers' practice facility for the past two and a half weeks.

At the time of the surgery, Gaborik said he hoped to return by November or December, though it wasn't clear on Friday whether Gaborik would be able to meet that timetable in case the NHL and the locked out NHL Players' Association reach a new collective bargaining agreement in time to play next month.

Van Riemsdyk said Friday playing in any game right now is a bonus, more so if it helps Sandy victims.

"Right after Sandy hit, I was thinking I want to think of a good idea and get something together," van Riemsdyk said. "I got a call from Todd Fedoruk who was interested in setting up a game. Atlantic City is right in the middle of Flyers' country and he mentioned the Rangers' aspect and some Devils guys. I thought it was going to be a home run."

"They've done a great job of getting the word out, they've sold a lot of tickets," added van Riemsdyk, who has spent the lockout skating in Minnesota with a group of about 25 NHL players, including Rangers' defenseman Stu Bickel and ex-Devils captain Zach Parise. "I know a lot of people back home itching to make the drive to see some hockey."

Van Riemsdyk, who was in Minnesota during Sandy, said his parents' home lost power for about a week and some trees fell on the property. He described that as "lucking out" since he had friends in surrounding communities who suffered much worse property damage.

Meanwhile, the lockout damage frustrates van Riemsdyk.

"Obviously we want to be out there playing," van Riemsdyk said. "Looking at it from an unbiased perspective, the moves we've made to them [the NHL] on their needs, obviously, they're not willing to make a deal at this point."

"I'm naturally pretty optimistic, so I'd like to think we're going to play at some point," van Riemsdyk added.

Bergen Record LOADED: 11.17.2012

644406 New Jersey Devils

NHL commissioner Gary Bettman backtracks on two-week moratorium statement

By Pat Leonard

Nicholas Fevelo

Brian Boyle and fellow Ranger players skate with young hockey players to raise money for Hurricane Sandy victims in Staten Island as the NHL lockout continues.

The Bettman Backtrack on Friday, Day 62 of the NHL lockout, was just as frustrating as the commissioner's Thursday slip-up.

Gary Bettman had recommended a two-week moratorium on collective bargaining negotiations to players' union executive director Don Fehr as reported on Thursday, but on Friday Yahoo! Sports reported the commissioner did so only because he wanted to prove to the union he had no intention of canceling the season as early as Dec. 1.

Instead of simply telling Fehr that wasn't true, Bettman — who believed the union felt Dec. 1 was the drop-dead date for the season to be canceled — reportedly suggested two weeks without meetings to prove it.

The Yahoo report said Bettman had heard that Fehr told players in an internal conference call that the owners' "date" was Dec. 1. The Canadian Press first reported on Thursday night that Bettman had recommended the 14-day dark period, even though the league is expected to cancel at least the first half of its December schedule before Thanksgiving.

Fehr and the union have used stall tactics and refused to negotiate on the NHL's terms on several occasions to back the league off of its financial and contractual demands, and the league likely is enraged that a comment made by Bettman in a private conversation has become a union sound bite.

But the fact is, this is just the latest Bettman misstep: From the league's arrogant first proposal on July 13, to the lockout itself, to the NHL's dismissal of three NHLPA proposals in 10 minutes on Oct. 18, to multiple attempts to circumvent Fehr's authority — all with the commish leading the charge.

"I find it incredible that the Union is suggesting that we are somehow 'close' to a deal," NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly fired back in a statement. "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 meantime, maybe they can make their position clear to us on 50-50, on the make-whole and on Player Contracting issue."

New York Daily News LOADED: 11.17.2012

644407 New Jersey Devils

Devils make rink available to local school

From Post staff report

The Devils might not have their own season, but they are doing their part to save someone else's.

Devils owner Jeff Vanderbeek is lending Prudential Center to the hockey team from East Side High School in Newark, according to NJ.com. The rink the school uses at the Ironbound Recreation Center is still not open because of damage caused by Hurricane Sandy.

Though high schools around the state are readying for the season, East Side's team was looking at a delay and possibly worse. Keith Veltre, founder of a Devils-sponsored program that teaches hockey to Newark students, said Prudential Center is open for as long as the school needs it.

"It essentially saved our season," Veltre told the website.

The Devils did the same thing for East Side last year following Hurricane Irene.

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

New York Post LOADED: 11.17.2012

644408 New York Rangers

Rangers reach out to Sandy victims

By MARK EVERSON

Brooks on The out-of-work Rangers captain looked over the beaming faces of the out-of-luck Hurricane Sandy victims of Staten Island, and pronounced his judgement.

"This is what New York is all about," Ryan Callahan said. "This is the great part of the job — how many people you can affect, how many people you can help.

"This is the lighter side of the lockout."

Callahan was part of a contingent of nearly a dozen Rangers who held two charity youth hockey clinics yesterday at the Staten Island Skating Pavilion, to aid the many victims of Hurricane Sandy.

"It's unbelievable what this storm did and how many people are affected by it," said Callahan, who fled town to Rochester, and still lost power when the diluted storm hit there.

A GOOD JOE: Rangers defenseman Dan Girardi gives kids some pointers yesterday at a clinic inside the Staten Island Skating Pavilion.

N.Y. Post: Charles Wenzelberg

A GOOD JOE: Rangers defenseman Dan Girardi gives kids some pointers yesterday at a clinic inside the Staten Island Skating Pavilion.

The clinics were organized by Brad Richards, with Brian Boyle, Carl Hagelin, Callahan, Marc Staal, Gaborik, Jeff Halpern, Steve Eminger and Anton Stralman also on hand.

Gaborik said his building is still without power.

"To see people without homes and dying, it's awful," Gaborik said. "We're just trying to help any way we can.

"People helping each other in difficult times is nice to see."

The kids, the parents, and the fans, a couple hundred in this Rangers' hotbed, found the Blueshirts "nice to see."

New York Post LOADED: 11.17.2012

644409 New York Rangers

Rangers' Brad Richards leads Staten Island benefit clinic

By STEVE ZIPAY

In a single file led by Brad Richards, 11 Rangers in knit hats, sweatsuits and skates walked out of a small dressing room in the Staten Island Skating Pavilion on Arthur Kill Road Friday -- not far from the destruction caused by superstorm Sandy -- and heard something they hadn't experienced since the NHL lockout began: Cheers.

About 300 people, including more than 100 youngsters of all shapes and sizes, applauded the arrival of the Blueshirts to this well-used rink, where Richards organized an afternoon charity clinic for the victims of the disaster. The event raised an estimated \$10,000 for the Cardinal Egan Fund.

After each of the two 45-minute skates, thrilled kids as young as age 6 swarmed players such as Brian Boyle and Jeff Halpern for autographs on their hockey gear and left smiling.

"Staten Island is a Ranger town and it certainly was hit hard," said John Lopresti, who helps administer the hockey program of St. Joseph by the Sea High School. "We tried to get some kids who were impacted by the storm in the group. It's a chance for the school to help in the relief effort. When this was first announced, we received 750 emails. We couldn't handle them all."

Richards, a Prince Edward Island native who arrived in New York from Dallas as a free agent a year ago, has been at the forefront of fund-raising efforts. He helped workers in Breezy Point and was off to Bay Ridge as a celebrity bartender Friday night.

"We know what's gone on, we're trying to do different things in different areas," he said. "Hopefully it does something for the community and the kids. We're in a position to do something; guys do a lot of this stuff but it goes unnoticed. We just want to be part of the community."

Marian Gaborik, who reported that his shoulder was feeling much stronger after labrum surgery in June and who recently has been skating several days a week, was happy to pitch in. "You see people who've lost their homes and you try to help any way you can," he said.

Henrik Lundqvist, Boyle, Halpern and Steve Eminger are among those who will play in "Operation Hat Trick," a charity game in Atlantic City next Saturday that was organized by Flyers forward Scott Hartnell. Richards will captain one team. About a third of the tickets, which are available through Ticketmaster, were sold Friday, an event representative said.

Newsday LOADED: LOADED: 11.17.2012

644410 Ottawa Senators

Talking hasn't worked for NHL and union - could not talking be the answer?

By Ira Podell, THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Talking hasn't worked for NHL and union - could not talking be the answer?

NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman (centre) leaves the NHLPA offices with Assistant Commissioner Bill Daly (left) and NHL lawyer Bob Betterman following collective bargaining talks last month in Toronto.

It is a question both sides seem to have trouble answering, and not because they are being guarded or coy. The lockout is now in its third month, and there is no obvious path to progress.

There was a hint of optimism after the league and locked-out players met a few times, but the view quickly became bleak. After a one-day break, the sides met Sunday and that brief return to the table also turned badly quickly. They haven't met -- and have barely talked -- since then.

Now NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman has suggested to players' association chief Donald Fehr that they take a two-week break from each other. If talking doesn't work, it is possible that not talking will?

Frustration and a hint of anger have entered the equation. So perhaps a cooling-off period would make some sense before the sides agree to get together again.

"I think what you have seen is disappointment with where we find ourselves in the process," NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly said Friday in an email to The Associated Press. "I don't think it's a case of personal animosity."

That might be the only positive development of this week.

The problem with staying apart is that time has become a major factor working against them. All games through Nov. 30 have already been taken off the schedule, more cancellations are likely within a week, the Winter Classic has been wiped out, the All-Star game is the next big event in jeopardy, and the whole season could be lost, too, in the blink of an eye.

Daly said Thursday that he is more discouraged now than at any other point in the process.

Fehr and the union haven't said whether or not they will agree to trial separation from the league. Publicly, the players have maintained the position that negotiations are the only way to work out differences and get a deal, and that they are willing to meet any time the NHL wants to.

"Of course everyone on the players' side wants to reach an agreement," NHLPA special counsel Steve Fehr said 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."

"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?"

That came in response to Bettman's suggestion of a break, and other comments by Daly about the tenor of the discussions between the sides.

"Gary suggested the possibility of a two-week moratorium," Daly said. "I'm disappointed because we don't have a negotiating partner that has any genuine interest in reaching an agreement. Zero interest."

The NHL contends that the union has submitted the same proposal multiple times without moving in the league's direction. The union says it has agreed to come down from receiving 57 per cent of hockey-related revenues to a 50-50 split. The league wants that to go into effect in the first year of the agreement, while the union wants to get there gradually.

Back in 2005, after the entire 2004-05 season was lost to a lockout, the players' association accepted a salary-cap system for the first time and feels it shouldn't have to bear the brunt of the concessions now after league revenues reached a record high of over \$3 billion last season.

"In '04 the gap was huge," said Rangers forward Brad Richards, who attended last week's bargaining sessions. "Very frustrating. Didn't expect to go on this long, didn't need for it to go on this long. They want to create this view that we're so far apart. Only one way to get a deal done. That's the only tactic they know."

Richards organized a benefit skate Friday to help in the relief efforts on Staten Island after Superstorm Sandy, and was joined by several of his teammates. Richards, who signed with the Rangers last off-season, and led them to the No. 1 seed in the Eastern Conference last post-season partnered with a high school team to organize "Skating for Sandy."

This 62-day lockout has claimed 327 regular-season games, and hope of a new deal and the start of the already-shortened season -- likely of 68 games per team -- on Dec. 1 has been dashed.

Rangers forward Marian Gaborik sees little benefit in taking a break from negotiations.

"I don't know what his mindset is," he said about Bettman.

It is more than just finances preventing a deal. The disagreements over player contract terms have emerged as just as 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.

Players missed their third pay day of the season on Thursday, and the clock is ticking toward more losses. The 2004-05 was cancelled in February. A lockout in 1995 ended in January, leading to a 48-game schedule.

"Different," Gaborik said of this lockout. "The union is much stronger. We have a leader we believe in."

Ottawa Citizen LOADED: 11.17.2012

644411 Ottawa Senators

Ottawa Senators prospect Stefan Noesen poised to fill fan favourite void left by Mike Fisher trade

By Aedan Helmer

Stefan Noesen may soon make Senators fans forget all about Mike Fisher.

The hard-nosed winger and leading scorer of the Plymouth Whalers is fully aware that he came to the Senators organization — as the second of three first-round picks in 2011 (21st overall) — with the key piece in the trade that sent fan favourite Fisher to the Nashville Predators on Feb. 10, 2011.

"I haven't put that much thought into it," says Noesen of the notion of playing in Fisher's shadow. "I got to where I am now by playing my game, playing a physical style and using a big body presence down low, so that's what I'm going to continue to do. I'm just trying to play my own game and hopefully (the fans) like it."

Whalers coach and GM Mike Vellucci certainly thinks the fans will like what they see. He's been one of Noesen's biggest fans since first seeing the teenager freshly-landed in Michigan after his family uprooted from Plano, Texas, in part to further Noesen's burgeoning hockey career.

Vellucci was scouting OHL draft-eligible prospects with the powerhouse Detroit Compuware when Noesen stepped up and commanded attention.

"I'll never forget the time I ran one of their practices, and I was doing a drill we always do here with the Whalers, just a quick-feet, quick-hands drill with three pucks around the net. I did the drill four times with him and he scored on 10 out of 12 shots," Vellucci recalls.

"I just remember thinking what great hands he had in tight and how he moved, how he thought the game. He hates to lose, and no matter what the score is he's always trying to win the hockey game. Guys like that are winners. When the game is on the line, he wants to be the guy who's delivering."

Noesen recalls the first time it all clicked for him.

He was still a youngster playing for the under-14 Texas Attack, seeking out competition from teams with kids two and three years older in a season that ended in a regional final, with his team losing out on a chance to compete for a national title.

"After that loss, it made me realize that this is really what I want to do," says Noesen, who moved to Plymouth that same year, living in a house minutes from the Compuware Arena, which has been his home rink ever since.

He finally got that chance to compete for a national title, leading Compuware to a championship in 2009, and Vellucci made him the Whalers' fourth-round pick the same summer.

With Noesen now in his fourth, and likely final junior season, Vellucci believes his skill set and hockey sense will translate well into the pro game.

"You can score 60 goals in our league (Noesen scored a career-high 38 goals last season, and has 14 in 20 games this season), but to crack the NHL maybe you have to be a fourth-line grinder," Vellucci says. "I see him as a third- or fourth-line guy (in the NHL), but after he's established himself he could definitely be a guy you'd see on the top two lines."

While it remains to be seen who will skate with him on one of those lines, Noesen keeps in touch with the other prospects from his draft class, like fellow first-rounders Mika Zibanejad and Matt Puempel, as well as 2010 pick Mark Stone.

"We're all competing for the same jobs that might be open right now," says Noesen. "But later on down the road we're all going to be playing together, so you want to build good connections and good friendships, so you can hopefully have some chemistry when we all get there."

#### ICE CHIPS

LW Jakub Culek finally made his QMJHL season debut Wednesday after he was traded from Rimouski to the Cape Breton Screaming Eagles for a pair of draft picks last week. Culek didn't figure in the scoring in a 5-3 win over P.E.I., but was a big factor as linemates Alexandre Lavoie and William Carrier combined for three goals and three assists in the game. Culek did find his way onto the scoresheet by fighting Jimmy Oligny, younger brother of teammate Jonathan Oligny... After appearing in only one game with the B-Sens, LW Darren Kramer found his scoring touch after a demotion to the ECHL's Elmira Jackals, where he scored in each of his first three games... Owen Sound Attack C Jarrod Maidens spent the week in Ottawa receiving post-concussion treatment from the Senators' medical staff, and is expected to remain in the capital next week as well. Maidens' last game was Nov. 30 when he suffered a concussion in a game against Barrie ... LW Matt Puempel made a strong case for his inclusion on Team Canada for the World Juniors, playing both games for Team OHL at the Subway Super Series, where he was a standout in Game Four on a line with Ryan Strome and Garret Meurs... RW Mark Stone returned to the B-Sens lineup after missing six games with an upper body injury, and played on a line with David Dziurzynski and Derek Grant ... Mika Zibanejad scored his first North American goal in the second period of Binghamton's 5-2 win against Adirondack Friday ... Mark Stone scored his first AHL goal, into an empty net, to seal the win ... Shane Prince was a healthy scratch on his 20th birthday Friday.

Ottawa Sun LOADED: 11.17.2012

644412 Ottawa Senators

Ex-Ottawa Senator Matt Carkner wants end to NHL lockout

By Don Brennan

The disputed heavyweight champion of the NHL is "angrily anxious to get the season going."

He also says that it's a good thing he's not on the negotiating committee trying to make a new CBA deal with the NHL.

"I don't think it would work too well," Matt "Big Country" Carkner mused over the phone, while taking a walk near his rented home in Long Island, Friday afternoon. "I'd probably be wanted for assault right now."

Yay! Finally some passion (even if he's only half-serious) other than that coming from fans and not at all evident in the way lunch mates Gary Bettman and Don Fehr appear to be going about their business.

Can't blame Carkner for being mad, either. After spending a good chunk of his life making it to the NHL in 2008, his career has been put on hold. So has his money-earning capabilities.

In his first two years as a Senator, his salary was a league-low \$500,000. The past two, Carkner made \$700,000. A Winchester native, he wanted to keep playing for his hometown team, but GM Bryan Murray had concerns about his surgically repaired knee and would only offer a one-year deal last summer.

Carkner balked, then signed a three-year deal with the Islanders for \$4.5 million.

Now, of course he wants to prove he's healthy and good enough to play more than the 29 games he did in 2011-12, but he also wants to start bringing home some tastier bacon. And with players now having missed three paycheques, Carkner is out (prior to taxes and dues) about \$325,000 because of the lockout. Now, that's not as much as the roughly \$1.73 million it has thus far cost Jason Spezza, but it is almost half of what Carkner earned last season.

"Obviously, I kind of thought this might be coming, so I'm prepared and everything," said Carkner, who turned 32 earlier this month. "I wasn't stupid, you know? But for me, I've played in the minors (most of) my whole career, (then) making close to minimum, which is a ton of money, but I don't have millions in the bank where I'm just sitting there and loving life."

"I know that if we don't start things up it's not good. My career is getting shorter."

Carkner fully supports the union and he's optimistic a deal will be reached that allows the season to start mid-December. He sees the "two-week moratorium" proposal by Bettman for what it probably is — another missed paycheck would put more pressure on players and, in theory, have them put more pressure on Fehr to make a deal.

And he also understands that the PA is playing a high-stakes game of poker against billionaires who have many more chips.

"The money they're losing right now is the money that's in their books," said Carkner. "Some of the franchises are tax write-offs. That's kind of what you're fighting against. They've earned their money, and they know how to make money, they definitely have the leverage, but it's going to come to a point where I think they're going to realize fans aren't appreciating this and they've got to get the product back on the ice."

Without doubt, there are players who want to throw the cards in now. Guys who can't stand by and watch money, plus precious months of their career, go floating out the window.

As much as this whole problem is on the owners, as much as players are tired of being asked to fix the problems caused by the ridiculous spending of their bosses, there has to be more than a few individuals who are ready to say screw it, let's sign the damn thing.

But where are these guys? Do they fear getting blackballed by the union, or as one friend put it, having a Sidney Crosby tell his coach, when the games do start, that he's not playing with the guy anymore? That no one on any team will?

Or do they fear being targeted on the ice next time they play against an staunch, tough union guy? Surely "Big Country" isn't afraid of that.

"Guys do speak up in our meetings and on conference calls," said Carkner. "Guys aren't afraid to step up amongst ourselves and discuss things that are concerning us. To make big announcements in the media about what's bothering them, I don't think that's productive at all."

"I think as a union right now, we just have to be solid, stick together and work together to get this done."

In the meantime, Carkner waits to meet his new coaches and most of the players on his new team. While many Islanders are playing elsewhere, he is left to "bag skate" with the leftovers, Marty Reasoner and Eric Boulton, in preparation for a season that may or may not come.

"I think it's frustrating, and a few more (words) for the fans who are looking in on this and wondering what the hell we're doing," said Carkner. "But we've given and given so far in the bargaining. We thought it would get us closer, but they just keep pulling away."

Even so, Carkner isn't about to show up at the NHL office and give Bettman the Brian Boyle treatment — as much as many people would like to see him do it.

"It's tough, whenever you get emotional about negotiating, that's going to be counter-productive, too," said Carkner. "Don is a professional and he's been through a lot of this. He knows the hoops he's got to jump through."

And so the game continues to fall, the pie that was once \$3.3 billion in hockey-related revenues becoming smaller, soon to be a crumb, then nothing at all.

Ottawa Sun LOADED: 11.17.2012

644413 Ottawa Senators

Ottawa Senators goalie Craig Anderson, former Ottawa 67's netminder Adam Courchaine join locked-out NHLers' tour of Northwest Territories

By Don Brennan

The Senators' Craig Anderson and former 67 Adam Courchaine will be the goalies on board when a core group of locked-out NHLers leave Sunday for a three-games-in-four-days trip to the Northwest Territories.

Anderson didn't participate in the group's last charity game — a successful event Nov. 5 in Cornwall.

Since his OHL career ended in 2010, Courchaine has played 66 games in the ECHL and three in the AHL.

Among those also making the trip to the Territories will be Chris Neil, Chris Phillips, Peter Regin, Jordin Tootoo, Guillaume Latendresse, Marc Methot, Jim Slater and Grant Clitsome.

Organizers are awaiting the confirmation of two or three other players.

Ottawa Sun LOADED: 11.17.2012

644414 Philadelphia Flyers

Flyers, other NHL players schedule game to benefit Sandy victims

Sam Carchidi,

Hockey is back.

Now, before you think we're talking about the start of the NHL season, stop dreaming. Friday was the 62d day of the lockout, and there is no end in sight.

But a benefit hockey game featuring several NHL players will be played at 7 p.m. next Saturday at Atlantic City's Boardwalk Hall, with proceeds aiding those affected by Sandy.

The game, billed as Operation Hat Trick because it aids three organizations, will feature all-stars Scott Hartnell and Kimmo Timonen of the Flyers and Brad Richards of the New York Rangers.

Proceeds will go to the Empire State Relief Fund, the New Jersey Hurricane Relief Fund, and the American Red Cross, aiding New Jersey and New York families affected by the storm.

Tickets (\$20 to \$100) can be purchased at the Boardwalk Hall box office, ticketmaster.com, all Ticketmaster locations, or by calling 1-800-736-1420.

"We are 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.

Hartnell and Richards will each captain a team represented by several of their teammates.

"The lives that have been touched by the devastation are people in our own communities and the communities of our fans," said Hartnell, who called it an honor to participate.

The Flyers also will be represented by Braydon Coburn, Wayne Simmonds, and Jody Shelley.

Others who will either play or join in with their support include Bobby Ryan, James van Riemsdyk, Simon Gagne, Ville Leino, Dan Carcillo, Steve Eminger, Jeff Halpern, Brian Boyle, John Carlson, Taylor Pyatt, Steve Downie, and James Neal.

Philadelphia Inquirer / Daily News LOADED: 11.17.2012

644415 Philadelphia Flyers

Is Flyers' Snider helping thaw NHL talks?

Frank Seravalli,

On the surface, prospects for an end to the NHL's 2-month lockout took a nosedive this week, when commissioner Gary Bettman proposed a 2-week moratorium in talks after bargaining reached yet another standstill.

Behind the scenes, there seems to be a seismic shift going on among the NHL's Board of Governors, also known as the group that Bettman answers to collectively.

And Flyers chairman Ed Snider may be the big mover-and-shaker behind it all.

Multiple sources confirmed to the Daily News on Friday that Snider, once seen as a supporter of the Bettman's push to rein in the players' share of revenue, has soured on the process after it became apparent that a deal would not be brokered in time for a Dec. 1 puck drop.

Put simply: Snider and the rest of the NHL's owners were promised a big win by Bettman, with player concessions on revenue division and contracting rights. The best they'll get now is a small win in revenue split - coupled with a demoralized fan base and all-important corporate sponsors that are ready to quit.

A source familiar with Snider's thinking characterized it as: "If this is the deal we are going to get, what's the point of dragging this out?"

Neither Snider nor team president Peter Luukko has publicly addressed the lockout since it began on Sept. 16, for fear of a \$1 million fine from Bettman.

Snider, 79, is the NHL's longest-serving governor and serves on the board's executive committee, which helps steer policy. A backroom wheeler-dealer, Snider can make his moves in a practical way via the board's numbers.

When it comes to labor negotiations, league rules require a vote of 75 percent of governors to oppose the commissioner's recommendation. That means Bettman has absolute power, so long as he has eight out of 30 owners to block any hostile movement against him. Bettman actually needs only seven owners to support him, since the league owns the Phoenix franchise.

Latest Flyers Videos

There have been many educated guesses over the last few weeks as to which franchises are a part of this "hardline" bargaining group of Bettman's

staunchest allies, but my list first included Boston, Minnesota, Calgary, Washington, Dallas, Philadelphia and Anaheim, in addition to Phoenix.

Others did not have the Flyers originally among that hardliners list. But the Flyers' original thinking, at least in terms of what this reporter had learned, was that they were pro-lockout on Bettman's conditions. They trusted him. They made huge money after the 2004-05 lockout, when their payroll dropped from \$71 million in 2003-04 to the capped \$39 million number in 2005-06. They also participated in two Winter Classics, hosting one at Citizens Bank Park, and a Stanley Cup final without reaching their previous payroll level in seven straight seasons.

Bettman and Snider have worked well together over the years - and Bettman is well aware of Snider's power, sensing a need to keep the Flyers' owner in his pocket in times like these. For Bettman, the Flyers are a linchpin.

To be sure, Snider and Co. were not against the lockout. Some in the media pegged the Flyers during this process as "middlers," or those that wanted to play but were interested in results.

That all has changed. On Friday, multiple sources indicated Snider's "strong discontent" for Bruins owner Jeremy Jacobs, a big-market owner who has been one of the lockout's ringleaders.

Despite their on-ice rivalry, there seems to be some thinking that the Flyers are interested in teaming up with the midmarket but high-revenue Pittsburgh Penguins to sway more governors toward a swift resolution. The Rangers are also viewed as anti-lockout.

At the very least, if the Flyers are changing their view, two important questions arise: Which other teams have shifted? Where is this whole thing heading?

While some of the smaller-market teams have been interested in a greater percentage of "hockey related revenue" to help get back in the black, there is a growing sentiment that any lingering effects from this lockout could wipe out a franchise in Columbus, Florida, Nashville or Tampa Bay entirely.

According to a source, the Flyers' top-level executives presented their own proposal for the collective-bargaining agreement nearly 3 weeks ago. It remains unclear whether their proposal was the engine behind the league's progress last week, when they strung together lengthy bargaining sessions in 7 out of 9 days.

The Flyers have also proposed the use of a high-profile mediator to help smooth things out. Former President Bill Clinton's name has been kicked around, which does not make a whole lot of sense, though, given Snider's conservative political ties. Neither side has officially asked for the use of a mediator.

When Bettman proposed the 2-week moratorium in talks this week, which would cause the players to miss their fourth of 13 paychecks, perhaps he was hoping they would get antsy and ask for a vote to end the lockout. Now, with the way things are going, Bettman is likely just hoping it doesn't result in a vote in his own boardroom.

Philadelphia Inquirer / Daily News LOADED: 11.17.2012

644416 Philadelphia Flyers

Hartnell, Timonen to play in Sandy benefit hockey game in A. C.

Sam Carchidi.

Hockey is back.

Now before you think we're talking about the start of the NHL season, stop dreaming.

Today is the 62d day of the lockout and there is no end in sight.

But a benefit hockey game featuring several NHL players will be held in Atlantic City's Boardwalk Hall on Nov. 24 at 7 p.m., with proceeds aiding those affected by Hurricane Sandy.

The game, billed as Operation Hat Trick because it aids three organizations, will feature all-stars Scott Hartnell and Kimmo Timonen of the Flyers and Brad Richards of the Rangers.

Proceeds will go directly to the Empire State Relief Fund, the New Jersey Hurricane Relief Fund and the American Red Cross, aiding New York and New Jersey families affected by Hurricane Sandy.

Tickets, priced from \$20 to \$100, can be purchased at the Boardwalk Hall box office, ticketmaster.com, all Ticketmaster locations, or by calling 800-736-1420. For more information about the event, visit [www.facebook.com/atlanticcityheroes](http://www.facebook.com/atlanticcityheroes)

"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 will help rally additional support for the three great organizations that are committed to helping rebuild our area."

Richards and Hartnell will each captain a team represented by several of their professional teammates as well as other notable legends from throughout the hockey world.

"The lives that have been touched by the devastation are people in our own communities and the communities of our fans," said Hartnell, calling it "an honor" to participate in the event.

Those joining Richards, Timonen and Hartnell, either on the ice or in support of "Operation Hat Trick, include Bobby Ryan, Braydon Coburn, James van Riemsdyk, Simon Gagne, Ville Leino, Dan Carcillo, Steve Eminger, Jeff Halpern, Brian Boyle, Jody Shelley, John Carlson, Taylor Pyatt, Steve Downie, Wayne Simmonds and James Neal.

"We are grateful that these athletes have come together to assist in our ongoing rebuilding efforts from Hurricane Sandy," said New York Governor Andrew Cuomo. "I'm hopeful their efforts will be met with overwhelming support from those who are in a position to attend to help our recovery organizations."

Philadelphia Inquirer / Daily News LOADED: 11.17.2012

644417 Philadelphia Flyers

A.C. to host NHL exhibition

Randy Miller

#### ABOUT THE EVENT

- What: Operation Hat Trick is an exhibition game to benefit Hurricane Sandy victims in New Jersey and New York.

- When: 7 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 24.

- Where: Boardwalk Hall, Atlantic City.

- Tickets: Can be purchased for \$20-\$100 at Boardwalk Hall box office, ticketmaster.com, all Ticketmaster locations, or by calling 1-800-736-1420.

Seeing and hearing what Hurricane Sandy did to their homeland, New Jersey-born NHL stars Bobby Ryan and James van Riemsdyk had a recent conversation about what they could do to help victims.

"We were looking for a way to donate and, on top of that, maybe have some type of benefit," Ryan, an Anaheim Ducks winger who grew up in Cherry Hill, said Friday from his home in Newport Beach, Calif.

Before their idea was put into action, former Flyers enforcer Todd Fedoruk beat them to it by organizing Operation Hat Trick, a charity hockey game scheduled next Saturday night in Atlantic City to raise money for New Jersey and New York families affected by last month's devastating hurricane.

Ryan and Van Riemsdyk, who was traded from the Flyers to the Toronto Maple Leafs in June, signed on immediately to take part in an exhibition that will be a stage for some of the NHL's locked-out players to showcase skills and give back to people in need.

"We're killing two birds," Ryan said. "We get to play in a hockey game and do something for a good cause."

Flyers All-Star left wing Scott Hartnell and New York Rangers star Brad Richards will serve as captains for the 7 p.m. event at Boardwalk Hall,

which seats about 10,000 for hockey. All proceeds will go to the New Jersey Hurricane Relief Fund, the Empire State Relief Fund and the American Red Cross.

"The lives that have been touched by the devastation are people in our own communities and the communities of our fans," Hartnell said. "To have the opportunity to be able to raise money for the relief effort by participating in this game is an honor and we are asking fans of the tri-state area to assist in any way they can to help the communities and people affected."

Other players scheduled to participate include current Flyers Braydon Coburn, Kimmo Timonen, Jody Shelley and Wayne Simmonds, former Flyers Simon Gagne, Ville Leino, Daniel Carcillo, Steve Eminger and Steve Downie, plus NHL players James Neal, Jeff Halpern, Brian Boyle, John Carlson and Taylor Pyatt.

Based off recent charity hockey games in Los Angeles and Chicago that he played in, Ryan predicted fans definitely will get their money's worth.

"You're going to see a less intense but more skilled game," Ryan said. "The entertainment value probably is a little higher than a regular game just because guys will try to stickhandle through guys and celebrations will be a little more convincing. The two games I've played in, fans absolutely loved them."

As for NHL hockey, Ryan is trying to stay optimistic that a 2-month-old lockout will end in time to salvage a 2012-13 season, even with commissioner Gary Bettman suggesting last Wednesday that owners and players step away from negotiations on a new CBA for two weeks.

"I've been cautiously optimistic, and I'm trying to remain that way," Ryan said. "Hopefully, after this little break, everybody goes back to negotiating refreshed and it happens quickly."

Courier-Post LOADED: 11.17.2012

644418 Phoenix Coyotes

Lockout reaches two-month mark

By SARAH MCLELLAN

Today is the two-month anniversary of the NHL lockout.

And the NHL and NHL Players' Association apparently decided to celebrate by taking a two-week recess from negotiations. Last week, both sides seemed to be moving forward with a slew of meetings but have not met since Sunday.

Here's USA Today's recap on the upcoming hiatus.

Our sister paper also has a great breakdown of the ripple effect of the lockout.

Players have missed three paychecks, about 19 percent of their expected pay for the season.

The league anticipates revenue would be down \$350 to \$400 million if a season were to still happen.

Then there's also the impact on league jobs, the economic repercussions in NHL cities, the league's TV deal with NBC and the momentum lost by teams, like the Coyotes and Los Angeles Kings, coming off successful seasons. For the full story, check it out here.

Perhaps the two-week break is just what these negotiations need. Maybe both sides will come back to the bargaining table with a renewed effort and an added sense of urgency to save at least part of a season.

But the closer we edge to January, the more I'm convinced the season will be canceled. When both sides couldn't reach an agreement to save a full season after Commissioner Gary Bettman set a deadline for that to happen, what will be the motivation to work for a 30-40 game installment?

Arizona Republic LOADED: 11.17.2012

644419 Pittsburgh Penguins

NHL players would not trust drop-dead date in lockout

Rob Rossi

Pascal Dupuis swears he has only one date in mind regarding the NHL lockout.

"Dec. 1, because that is the first day they (NHL owners) say we can play games for now," Dupuis said Friday after a Penguins players-organized practice at Southpointe.

"Other than that, I'm not thinking about dates."

NHL commissioner Gary Bettman has called for a two-week break in talks with the Players' Association.

Games through Nov. 30 are canceled, as is the New Year's Day Winter Classic outdoor game and all surrounding events.

Locked out by owners since the last labor deal expired Sept. 15, Penguins players at Southpointe this week shared assessments on the reason for this work stoppage.

Tyler Kennedy, waiting to play the final season of his second NHL contract, which was worth a total of \$4 million, declined comment.

Eight of his teammates —ranging from veterans such as Dupuis and Matt Cooke to stars Sidney Crosby and Marc-Andre Fleury — cited Players' Association talking points such as revenue split, guaranteed deals and contracting rights like length maximums and free agency.

Craig Adams, the Penguins' union rep, said the root of this dispute is, simply, "money."

"It's completely about money," he said.

Specifically, based off the latest proposals from each side, this fight is about a few hundred million dollars over the course of a labor agreement for an league that last season generated a record \$3.3 billion.

There is no way the league can fairly project growth potential given the anticipated backlash from fans and sponsors over a second lockout in eight years, deputy commissioner Bill Daly has said.

NHL business will take a hit in the short and long term, predicted Ed O'Hara, managing partner of New York-based SME Branding.

"If I'm a sponsor, and I'm already looking at the NHL as a fringe sport compared to the Big Four (NFL, MLB, NBA and NHL), this lockout is a real issue," he said. "It's just not a pretty picture for the NHL going forward."

The NHL has not set a drop-dead date to play games or cancel another season.

The NHL did not cancel the 2004-05 season until Feb. 15, 2005 — its imposed drop-dead deadline. It began playing a 48-game season in late January of 1995.

Adams said he is not sure if a drop-dead date would change the dynamic of this dispute. The previous lockout, which ushered in a salary-cap era, has left players with little trust of owners, he said.

"And, yeah, it's getting worse all the time," Adams said.

Tribune Review LOADED: 11.17.2012

644420 Pittsburgh Penguins

Crosby: Steelers' Clark taking chance

Josh Yohe

Penguins captain Sidney Crosby has spent much of his time during the NHL lockout watching NFL games, specifically when the Steelers are playing.

He will be watching Sunday night's game against Baltimore with a cautious eye as free safety Ryan Clark has been cleared to play despite absorbing two concussions in the past three weeks.

Few athletes are sensitive to concussions like Crosby, who has missed 101 games in the past two years because of concussion symptoms.

"He's taking a chance," Crosby said. "There are a lot of things that can happen."

Clark was cleared to play Friday and seemed miffed that so many are questioning his decision to play. Crosby believes the pressure of a 16-game schedule is typically why football players are quicker to return from concussions than hockey players.

"The fact that there's only 16 games doesn't help," Crosby said. "You miss one game in 16, that's (essentially) a playoff game that you're missing. There's a lot of pressure on you when you're making that decision. If a guy feels like he can get through it, and he's willing to take the chance, then by all means ... but first of all, you've got your health. And then, can you even perform? Those are decisions you have to make."

Crosby wouldn't be surprised if Clark alters his historically tenacious, head-first hitting style against Baltimore.

"He might be different with the way he tackles," Crosby said. "Is he going to lead with his head? Probably not."

Crosby knows about the self-imposed pressure of playing in big games but was forced to miss the 2011 playoff series against Tampa Bay.

"Some guys just get headaches," he said. "Other guys, it's their memory. For me, even if I wanted to play (against Tampa Bay), I couldn't have because I was so messed up."

Tribune Review LOADED: 11.17.2012

644421 Pittsburgh Penguins

NHL lockout: Owners propose halting talks for two weeks

By Dave Molinari

There have been some eye-catching proposals put forth during the negotiations for a new collective bargaining agreement in the NHL.

Most have dealt with issues like how to divide the billions of dollars the league takes in every season and whether there should be limits on the length of contracts.

But one the league submitted to the NHL Players' Association earlier this week might be the most novel to date, on any subject, since the talks began: The NHL floated the idea of simply halting negotiations for two weeks.

The NHLPA has yet to formally respond to that suggestion but, with the lockout that has frozen the league since mid-September entering its third month, the concept doesn't seem to be particularly popular with the union's rank-and-file.

"It's kind of laughable," said Penguins forward Craig Adams after a player-organized workout Friday at Southpointe. "I don't know what good reason they could possibly have for that. It's just another sign of where [league officials'] heads are. That's what they want. They want to drag this thing on."

NHLPA special counsel Steve Fehr issued a statement suggesting that the league's shutdown proposal reflects the lack of urgency it feels to reach a settlement.

"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," Fehr said. "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?"

Although the NHL did not explicitly spell out why it believes the talks should be put on hold, deputy commissioner Bill Daly was quoted as saying that "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," he said.

"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.'"

Daly added that the NHLPA has "made essentially one proposal, five times."

Goalie Marc-Andre Fleury speculated that calling off negotiations for a couple of weeks -- and, in the process, moving a half-month closer toward possible cancellation of the entire season -- might be a tactical move by NHL commissioner Gary Bettman "to put some pressure on us."

Some NHLPA members suspect the league believes the threat of going without paychecks for an entire year will cause the players to cave, but there are others who insist they don't see how putting the talks on ice would benefit either side.

"I don't see how that's going to help anything," Crosby said. "If that's the way [Bettman] feels, ultimately that's up to them."

"I don't really see that being the best way to find a resolution. I guess that's the way this has all gone. It's a frustrating thing to go through."

The NHLPA no longer appears to enjoy unflinching and universal support for the stances it has taken in these negotiations, but that's hardly a surprise in a group whose 700-plus members have a wide range of personal priorities.

What's more, splintering is not synonymous with shattering, and the NHL's negotiators will have to determine whether the players' front simply has developed hairline cracks or actually has deep fissures that could be exploited by ownership.

"The front is solid," Adams said. "We continue to believe in what we're negotiating for and what we've said all along. But it's certainly discouraging."

NOTES -- Penguins winger James Neal is scheduled to participate in a charity game Nov. 24 in Atlantic City, N.J. Proceeds from the event, which will take place at Boardwalk Hall, will benefit victims of Hurricane Sandy in New York and New Jersey. ... Evgeni Malkin failed to record a point for the second game in a row as Metallurg Magnitogorsk lost to Yugra Khanty-Mansiysk, 3-2, in a Kontinental Hockey League game Friday.

Post Gazette LOADED: 11.17.2012

644422 San Jose Sharks

Boyle worried about long-term NHL damage

Dan Boyle: "

SAN JOSE -- There are few words in the English language as wonderful as "payday." In fact, a quick Twitter search of the word shows it's often accompanied by one of those big yellow emoji smiley faces that have become so common in text message conversations.

Paydays can be especially sweet if you're a professional hockey player. But not this week. In fact, Nov. 15 marked the third missed check that players would have received had the season started on time.

Since the early days of the NHL lockout more two months ago, Sharks defenseman Dan Boyle has stated more than once that he thought Gary Bettman and the league owners were going to wait until the players missed a few paydays before getting down to real, actual labor negotiations. The more money that players missed out on, Boyle surmised, the more likely they would be to take a collective bargaining agreement that was more favorable to ownership.

[REWIND: Boyle bothered by NHL owners' tactics]

So far, it's hard to dispute that viewpoint, especially after the league proposed a much-publicized and decidedly wacky two-week moratorium on CBA talks on Thursday.

Boyle is in the middle of a six-year, \$40 million contract that would have paid him \$6.67 million this season. He has one year left on that deal, for the same amount, in 2013-14.

But, it's not the lost wages he's concerned about, as the calendar hits mid-November with no NHL hockey. He's made plenty of money in his 14-year NHL career.

It's the potential long-term damage to the game that has been so kind to him since he signed with the Florida Panthers as an undrafted free agent in 1998, and the chance that many fans could tune out the league for good if this thing goes much longer.

"It's not the checks that I'm missing. My biggest concern is the fans," Boyle said. "I'm so grateful and thankful to be playing this game, but if there's nobody in the stands to play in front of, that's the worst part. And that's my biggest concern, is we're hurting the game."

"We had some good steam coming in here. That's what I worry about every day, and that's what I talk to my wife about. I just don't want to damage the fans, and the game."

The 36-year-old Boyle realizes that not every NHL player in the same situation. The average career lasts less than six years at an annual salary somewhere in the \$2.4 million range.

The lost pay "might affect certain guys. Again, at this point in my career, that's not affecting me as much as a younger guy or a guy in a different position. It's not a paycheck thing," Boyle repeated.

"There are 700-plus guys in the union and guys coming up, so you want to make sure it's fair for everybody. It's a union for a reason. It's got to work for everybody."

Like just about everyone else who has been following this ill-advised and nonsensical debacle, Boyle was perplexed with the owners' most recent tactic of shutting down negotiations until the end of the month, at the earliest.

"I don't understand it, because time is of the essence. I'd rather hammer away at it than waste another two weeks when time is so crucial," he said.

Talks appeared to be picking up steam last week when the sides met for four straight days, but the league's insistence that the union accept its restrictive contract demands led to yet another breakdown. It was reported that Gary Bettman told the players' association that "we're past the point of give-and-take." The league wants to cap contracts at five years maximum, along with a five-percent maximum variance from year-to-year, thereby eliminating the front-loaded deals that are designed to circumvent the salary cap.

Meanwhile, union head Donald Fehr has continually and publically repeated the question -- what's in this for the players?

Besides the obvious answer of a league open for business, Boyle was asked what Fehr might mean by that.

"There's got to be give-and-take. That's my interpretation of it. Maybe we give up a right somewhere, and we gain a right somewhere else. Or, not necessarily gain, but not lose."

"Money has gone down. Every contract right is down, as well. It's kind of across the board. That's what he means by that. There's nothing they are willing to eat up on their side, so far."

Along with Boyle, Patrick Marleau, Brad Stuart and Thomas Greiss skated at Sharks Ice on Friday. Islanders goalie and former Shark Evgeni Nabokov is also among the participants, as is former Sharks forward Jonathan Cheechoo.

Michal Handzus became the ninth Sharks player to commit to playing overseas, when he joined his hometown club of HC Banska Bystrica in Slovakia on Wednesday. Handzus, 35, had been skating with the team in practice.

Comcast SportsNet.com LOADED: 11.17.2012

644423 St Louis Blues

Janssen's charity game details

By Jeremy Rutherford

When: Today, 7:30 p.m.

Where: Hardee's IcePlex in Chesterfield

Players: Cam Janssen, Andy McDonald, David Backes, T.J. Oshie, Barret Jackman, Alex Pietrangelo, Brian Elliott, Kevin Shattenkirk, Chris Butler, Jamal Mayers and Ty Conklin among others.

Tickets: \$20 for general admission, \$200 VIP pass (includes private party after game).

The game is nearly sold out. The last remaining tickets will be available at the door at the IcePlex.

St Louis Post Dispatch LOADED: 11.17.2012

644424 St Louis Blues

Former Blue Janssen fights Hurricane Sandy

By Jeremy Rutherford

St. Louis native and former Blue Cam Janssen has been involved in 170 fights in his professional hockey career. Many of them he saw building before the gloves ever dropped.

As he sat on his couch in Eureka and watched weather reports from the East Coast a few weeks ago, Janssen couldn't believe the one-sided bout he saw brewing. Hurricane Sandy was about to wipe out the East Coast.

"Living out there and knowing people and friends and teammates out there, you see this monster of a storm come through," said Janssen, now in his second stint with the New Jersey Devils. "To see this thing scratch out in the Atlantic (Ocean) ... it blew up and destroyed the East Coast ... it's a scary thing. People aren't used to this kind of thing up there, and there's nowhere to go."

The death toll from Sandy eclipsed 100, power was out for millions and property damage costs have been estimated at \$50 billion. The recovery will be long and require efforts from everywhere. As Janssen witnessed the devastation, he said, "I just wanted to think of something we could do."

The result is an event dubbed "Cam Janssen Fights Sandy." With the NHL currently in a lockout, Janssen has made arrangements for a charity hockey game at 7:30 tonight at the Hardee's IcePlex in Chesterfield.

Current Blues Andy McDonald, Kevin Shattenkirk, David Backes, Alex Pietrangelo, T.J. Oshie, Barret Jackman, Scott Nichol and Brian Elliott, will be on hand, along with former Blues Jamal Mayers, Ty Conklin, Brad Winchester and Tom Tilley.

"I've been working so hard ... day in and day out on this thing," Janssen said. "I didn't have that much time to put it together. It's stressful, but it's going to be a great cause. It's going to be well-put together and the fans are really going to enjoy it."

For a \$20 general admission ticket, or \$200 for a VIP pass, Janssen promises the game will have energy, something the forward provided in his days with the Blues. While many charity games border on a practice pace, Janssen said that he's not interested "in a recreational or beer league game. Fans haven't seen a fast-paced, skilled hockey game in a long time with professionals. They're craving to see an NHL-caliber game. I'm trying to make that as realistic as possible."

That's music to the ears of McDonald, who like other locked-out Blues has been limited to practicing a few times per week to stay in shape. But with only so many players in town, the routine has become a bit monotonous.

"I'm excited to play a game," McDonald said. "We're restricted on numbers in practice. You can do as much as you can, but we don't have enough guys to play a real game. It'll be fun to do that Saturday night. There's a little buildup to it. It's a good chance to get out and see fans and play a game of hockey."

The focus, however, remains the Sandy victims. The far-reaching effects included the Shattenkirk family, but they stayed safe.

"My oldest brother (Eric) lives in Hoboken (one of the hardest-hit areas)," said Shattenkirk, a native New Yorker. "He was out of his apartment for eight or nine days before he could even go back. My parents (Pat and Barbara) lost power for about four or five days. But we were fortunate that

nothing major happened and didn't have anyone else in our family be affected too badly."

Shattenkirk was hopeful to be part of a hockey-related fundraiser back home, but there weren't enough players in the area to get it off the ground.

"Once (Janssen) kind of came up with this idea and started bringing it to fruition, it was something we all jumped on board," Shattenkirk said. "Especially to me, it was pretty special to do and be a part of."

"Every little bit counts. As cliché as it sounds, if everyone donates a little bit here and there, it all adds up to a bigger picture."

With NHL owners and players feuding over how to divide \$3.3 billion in revenue, McDonald acknowledged the hurricane relief effort "certainly makes the lockout sound really ridiculous when you think of how well the NHL's done and how well the players have done over the years. It does put everything in perspective. Hats off to (Janssen) for putting something together."

Tonight, Janssen may not be involved in a fight on the ice. But he's helping win one off the ice.

"If people enjoy themselves and they feel happy where their money went ... if it helps those places out a little bit, then we did our job," he said. "Now that it's a reality, it's a pretty cool thing."

St Louis Post Dispatch LOADED: 11.17.2012

644425 St Louis Blues

Janssen organizes charity game to help Sandy victims

By Jeremy Rutherford

Now in his second stint with the New Jersey Devils, Cam Janssen knew he had to do something after watching TV footage of Hurricane Sandy wiping out the East Coast recently.

He's come up with an idea: On Saturday night, the former Blue will host "Cam Janssen Fights Sandy," a charity hockey game involving several Blues players at the Hardee's IcePlex. The puck drops at 7:30 p.m.

"Living out there and knowing people and friends and teammates out there, you see this monster of a storm come through," Janssen said. "To see this thing scratch out in the Atlantic (Ocean) ... it blew up and destroyed the East Coast ... it's a scary thing. People aren't used to this kind of thing up there, and there's nowhere to go."

The cost is \$20 for a general admission ticket and \$200 for a VIP pass, which includes a party after the game. Proceeds are going to Responder Rescue, which will use the money to help Sandy victims.

"I've been working so hard ... day in and day out on this thing," Janssen said. "I didn't have that much time to put it together. It's stressful, but it's going to be a great cause. It's going to be well-put together and the fans are really going to enjoy it."

Current Blues players Andy McDonald, Kevin Shattenkirk, Alex Pietrangolo, Barret Jackman, T.J. Oshie and Brian Elliott will be on hand, along with former Blues Jamal Mayers and Ty Conklin and others.

Janssen said that he isn't interested "in a recreational or beer league game. Fans haven't seen a fast-paced, skilled hockey game in a long time with professionals. They're craving to see an NHL-caliber game. I'm trying to make that as realistic as possible."

Players have been locked out since Sept. 15, and NHL games have been canceled through the end of November, as the league and players' union seek a new collective bargaining agreement. In the meantime, they've been practicing several times a week.

"I'm excited to play a game," McDonald said. "We're restricted on numbers in practice. You can do as much as you can, but we don't have enough guys to play a real game. It'll be fun to do that Saturday night. There's a little buildup to it. It's a good chance to get out and see fans and play a game of hockey."

For tickets, you can purchase them at [www.responderrescue.org](http://www.responderrescue.org). Responder Rescue's number is 314-627-0700.

St Louis Post Dispatch LOADED: 11.17.2012

644426 Tampa Bay Lightning

Lightning F Crombeen signs with ECHL's Orlando Solar Bears

By ERIK ERLÉNSSON

Tampa Bay Lightning forward B.J. Crombeen has signed a lockout contract with the Orlando Solar Bears in the East Coast Hockey League.

Crombeen practiced with the team on Friday and is expected to make his debut with the team Saturday at 7 p.m. at Amway Center in Orlando. The Solar Bears, which debuted this season as the ECHL affiliate of the Minnesota Wild, also have home games Sunday at 3 p.m. and Tuesday at 7 p.m.

Acquired in a trade from the St. Louis Blues on July 10, Crombeen serves as Tampa Bay's player representative to the NHL Players' Association and is a member of the negotiating committee. Since he and his wife welcomed their second child on September 19, Crombeen has remained in Tampa while skating with about a dozen players at the Ice Sports Forum in Brandon.

Crombeen is the second Lightning player to sign a lockout contract with an ECHL team. Forward Nate Thompson has played in his hometown with the Alaska Aces since the start of the season, scoring one goal and eight points in 13 games.

Tampa Tribune LOADED: 11.17.2012

644427 Tampa Bay Lightning

Tampa Bay Lightning RW B.J. Crombeen will play with the ECHL Orlando Solar Bears

Posted by Damian Cristodero

Another Tampa Bay Lightning player has found a place to play during the lockout as right wing B.J. Crombeen will join the ECHL Orlando Solar Bears.

Crombeen is expected to play Saturday and Sunday for the Minnesota Wild affiliate. His contract allows Crombeen to evaluate on a week-to-week basis if he wants to continue playing.

Crombeen said he took the step not only because of the lockout but because he missed 42 games last season with a shoulder injury.

"Obviously, missing half of last season and not playing games I didn't want to sit too long," Crombeen said.

Perhaps playing some games also will take away some of Crombeen's frustration about the lockout. A member of the Players' Association negotiating committee, he said it was "pretty stupid" for commissioner Gary Bettman to suggest a two-week cooling-off period from negotiations.

"It's frustrating and aggravating the way the NHL is going about this," Crombeen added.

Crombeen is the second Tampa Bay player -- center Nate Thompson is with the Alaska Aces -- to join an ECHL team. Lightning players in Europe are defenseman Victor Hedman (KHL's Barys Astana), goaltender Anders Lindback (Finland's Ilves Tampere), forward Adam Hall (Germany's Ravensburg) and defenseman Brendan Mikkelson (Sweden's Vasteras).

Here is the announcement from the Solar Bears:

The Orlando Solar Bears announced today that they have agreed to terms with RW B.J. Crombeen.

Crombeen (6'2", 212 lbs.) was acquired by the Tampa Bay Lightning (NHL) from the St. Louis Blues (NHL) over the summer. He spent each of the last three seasons (2009-2012) with the Blues, playing in 199 games while scoring 15 goals and adding 17 assists for 32 points along with 393 penalty

minutes (PIM). He also spent the majority of the 2008-09 season with St. Louis, skating in 66 games after moving on to the Blues from the Dallas Stars (NHL). His NHL career includes 288 games with 580 PIM as well as 56 points on 27 goals and 29 assists.

The Denver, Colorado, native was drafted by Dallas in the second round (#54 overall) in the 2003 NHL entry draft and originally broke into the NHL with Dallas when he appeared in eight games during the 2007-08 season. That year, he played in 65 games with the Iowa Stars in the American Hockey League (AHL), where he had 158 PIM to go along with 28 points on 14 goals and 14 assists. Crombeen has played in 21 regular season ECHL games, all with the Idaho Steelheads in 2005-06 and 2006-07, where he had 12 goals and seven assists as well as 48 PIM. He was part of the Steelheads 2006-07 Kelly Cup Championship team, appearing in 22 playoff contests with 10 points (5 goals, 5 assists) and 45 PIM.

Prior to turning pro, Crombeen played four seasons in the Ontario Hockey League (OHL) from 2001-2005, all for the Barrie Colts. He played 248 games over those four seasons, picking up 516 PIM, 86 goals, and 84 assists for 170 points. He served as the captain of his 2004-05 Barrie Colts squad, and also won a gold medal with the Canadian Under-18 World Junior Championships team in 2002-03.

"I had a chance to watch B.J. as he came up through the St. Louis and Peoria organization," said head coach Drake Berehowsky. "He will be a great addition to our team through his skills, leadership, and experience during his time in Orlando."

The Solar Bears continue their seven-game home stand on Saturday, November 17, at 7:00 p.m., Sunday, November 18, at 3:00 p.m., and Tuesday, November 20, at 7:00 p.m. against the Kalamazoo Wings.

St. Petersburg Times LOADED: 11.17.2012

644428 Toronto Maple Leafs

NHL lockout: Cooling-off pitch nothing personal, league says

Ira Podell

NEW YORK—If the NHL and the players' association have run out of things to talk about, how can they ever find a way to make a deal to save the hockey season?

It is a question both sides seem to have trouble answering, and not because they are being guarded or coy. The NHL lockout is now in its third month, and there is no obvious path to progress.

There was a hint of optimism after the league and locked-out players met a few times, but the view quickly became bleak. After a one-day break, the sides met Sunday and that brief return to the table also turned bad quickly. They haven't met — and have barely talked — since then.

Now NHL commissioner Gary Bettman has suggested to players' association chief Donald Fehr that they take a two-week break away from each other. If talking doesn't work, it is possible that not talking will?

More:

Ex-players questioning NHLPA

No season might not be problem for Leafs: Cox

Frustration and a hint of anger have entered the equation. So perhaps a cooling-off period would make some sense before the sides agree to get together again.

"I think what you have seen is disappointment with where we find ourselves in the process," NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly said Friday in an email to The Associated Press. "I don't think it's a case of personal animosity."

That was one of two positive developments on Friday. Daly and NHLPA special counsel Steve Fehr had a brief conversation during the day and planned to talk again over the weekend to discuss the next steps for bargaining.

Any contact qualifies as good news as the lockout drags on.

Staying apart could pose a problem because time has become a major factor. All games through Nov. 30 have already been taken off the

schedule, more cancellations are likely within a week, the Winter Classic has been wiped out, the all-star game is the next event in jeopardy, and the whole season could be lost, too, in the blink of an eye.

Daly said on Thursday that he is more discouraged now than at any other point in the process.

Fehr and the union haven't said whether or not they will agree to the trial separation. Publicly, the players have maintained that negotiations are the only way to work out differences and get a deal, and that they are willing to meet any time the NHL wants to.

"Of course everyone on the players' side wants to reach an agreement," NHLPA special counsel Steve Fehr said 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."

"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?"

That came in response to Bettman's suggestion of a break, and other comments by Daly about the tenor of the talks.

"Gary suggested the possibility of a two-week moratorium," Daly said. "I'm disappointed because we don't have a negotiating partner that has any genuine interest in reaching an agreement. Zero interest."

The NHL contends that the union has submitted the same proposal multiple times without moving in the league's direction. The union says it has agreed to come down from receiving 57 percent of hockey-related revenues to a 50-50 split. The league wants that to go into effect in the first year of the agreement, while the union wants to get there gradually.

Back in 2005, after the entire 2004-05 season was lost to a lockout, the players' association accepted a salary-cap system for the first time and feels it shouldn't have to bear the brunt of the concessions now after league revenues reached a record high of over \$3 billion last season.

This 62-day lockout has claimed 327 regular-season games, and hope of a new deal and the start of the already-shortened season — likely of 68 games per team — on Dec. 1 has been dashed.

It is more than just finances preventing a deal. The disagreements over player contract terms have emerged as just as big an impasse.

The NHL wants to limit contracts to five years, 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.

Players missed their third pay day of the season on Thursday, and the clock is ticking toward more losses. The 2004-05 was canceled in February. A lockout in 1995 ended in January, leading to a 48-game schedule.

In other news, Jets forward Evander Kane has parted ways with Dinamo Minsk of the Kontinental Hockey League. Kane had one point and was minus-8 in 12 games.

"Unfortunately, Evander Kane could not adapt to hockey in the KHL," athletic director Igor Matushkin said on the team's website.

Toronto Star LOADED: 11.17.2012

644429 Toronto Maple Leafs

NHL lockout: Tomas Kaberle optimistic about season

Kevin McGran

Tomas Kaberle has been through this before.

The veteran defenceman — a former Maple Leaf and current member of the Montreal Canadiens — suffered through the NHL lockout of 2004-05 and is going through it again.

But he says, this one feels different.

"In 2004-05, there were no talks," said Kaberle. "Then they'd say: This is our deadline, take it or leave it.

"This time both sides are willing to make the deal happen. Hopefully, sooner or later we'll be on the ice again."

Kaberle may be a tad optimistic.

Another pressure point passed Thursday — the players missed their third paycheque — and the window to return to the ice starting in December is narrowing.

Commissioner Gary Bettman has proposed placing a two-week moratorium on talks after NHLPA executive director Donald Fehr told him that he didn't know how the sides could proceed, multiple sources told The Canadian Press on Thursday night.

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

The threat of more cancelled games looms.

"I was always positive," said Kaberle. "If I have to think of 2005 and now, I have to say I'm more positive this time around because everybody is on the same page and it makes a big difference for every one of us as a group."

As Kaberle correctly pointed out, there were no formal negotiations at all between the NHL and NHLPA during the fall of 2004.

But "there were a lot of talks last week, four days," said Kaberle. "Hopefully, it's good. All the players stay positive, and hopefully we get the deal we should get.

"Both sides need to smarten up. Everybody is missing hockey, obviously. Just have to be calm and practise every day and get ready for the season to start."

There may well be signs of strain showing. Even as the NHL is attempting to vilify Donald Fehr — an old-school, union-busting tactic — some team executives are beginning to speak off the record, urging for a settlement.

"The reality is, neither side is really going to like this deal no matter where it ends up," one unnamed team executive told ESPN on Wednesday. "But to wait until next season to get a deal done helps absolutely no one."

Kaberle returned to Toronto — his adopted home — a couple of weeks ago and has no plans to return to Europe.

J.T. Galiardi of the Colorado Avalanche joined the downtown Toronto skate this week, his time in Germany having come to an end. He'll return to Europe only if the lockout looks like it will go on too long.

"We all want to play but we're sticking together," said Galiardi. "We're not going to take a bad deal just so we could play."

Galiardi defended his choice to go to Europe — where about 100 NHLers are plying their trade. He knows he's taken someone's job.

"Every situation is different," said Galiardi. "It's tough, but we want to play and they want their team to be as good as they can be.

"If that means putting us on the team and someone else losing their job, it's like anywhere. When someone takes an NHL player's job, he's not going to feel bad about it."

Both Galiardi and Kaberle said the NHLPA is doing a great job of keeping players in Europe in the loop.

"There's no issues with that," said Kaberle. "You can look things up 24-7 on the phone, on your computer."

Toronto Star LOADED: 11.17.2012

644430 Toronto Maple Leafs

NHL lockout: Gary Bettman suggests a break in negotiations

Chris Johnson

With another chunk of the NHL schedule in danger of being cancelled, about the only thing the league and NHL Players' Association are talking about is taking a break.

Gary Bettman contacted Donald Fehr on Wednesday and suggested the sides place a two-week moratorium on negotiations, two sources confirmed to The Canadian Press on Thursday night.

A response has yet to be given. Fehr, the NHLPA's executive director, told the NHL commissioner he wanted to take the offer to his membership before providing an answer.

The requested break comes after talks fell silent following six consecutive days of meetings between the sides last week in New York. It was clear by the end of that run that pessimism and some bad feelings had made their way into the proceedings.

The league is close to making another round of game cancellations, prompting some to suggest the season was 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, NHLPA special counsel Steve Fehr indicated that he thought a new CBA could be completed quickly once 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," Fehr said Monday. "One days, three days or whatever."

The right moment doesn't appear to be forthcoming. Fehr acknowledged that the union and league remained split on three major issues: the division of money, player contract rights and who pays for the damage caused by the lockout.

The lack of progress in talks has started raising fears that the NHL might lose another year to a labour dispute. Even though the 2004-05 season was cancelled by commissioner Gary Bettman on Feb. 16, it's believed the league wouldn't put the decision off that long if the 2012-13 season is to meet the same fate.

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

Former Leaf defenceman Tomas Kaberle has lived through this sort of thing before.

Now with the Montreal Canadiens, Kaberle suffered through the 2004-05 washout, but says this one feels different.

"In 2004-05, there were no talks," said Kaberle. "Then they'd say: This is our deadline, take it or leave it.

"This time both sides are willing to make the deal happen. Hopefully, sooner or later we'll be on the ice again."

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Toronto Star LOADED: 11.17.2012

644431 Toronto Maple Leafs

Maple Leafs might be better off without a season: Cox

By Damien Cox

"Stalled."

That was the word used Thursday by NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly to describe the non-talks with the players union. Daly also said "we are done with making proposals and we don't have any new ideas."

Hmmm. Promising.

Nothing going on then except for lots of idle chatter. One of the more intriguing — and totally unconfirmed — bits of speculation making the rounds these days is that there are only two clubs particularly anxious to play, Vancouver and Montreal.

With the Habs, the suggestion has been that chairman Geoff Molson is a dove, which might be a euphemism for a clear-thinking NHL owner/executive who keenly understands his franchise has little to gain in this destructive clash between the very wealthy and rather wealthy.

The Aquilinis in Vancouver, meanwhile, would be forgiven if they were to think a little selfishly. These days, windows for NHL championships open and close very quickly. With key players into their thirties and former No. 1 goalie Roberto Luongo on the trade block, it's possible Vancouver's window for a Cup is already closing.

And once it's gone, it's gone.

So what about the Maple Leafs?

Obviously, it would be the worst way for Bell and Rogers to begin their stewardship of English Canada's most famous franchise. Then again, these companies are so big they might barely notice.

But what about on the ice?

You can construct a case — not that Brian Burke would buy it — that missing the season wouldn't be a bad thing at all for the Toronto hockey club.

For example, it would save the team from a chronic and self-destructive habit that has long bedevilled the team, and that's rushing young players to the NHL without adequate training.

Doing the right thing with young players is more difficult in Toronto than in any other NHL city. Only minor-leaguers who play for the Marlies are the subject of discussion on CBC's Coach's Corner on Saturday nights. Heck, the possibility that Leaf farmhand Leo Komarov might return to the KHL became a national story this week.

If a top draft pick needs two or three years of minor pro experience in the Carolina or Detroit or New Jersey system, he gets it. No big deal. In Toronto, Nazem Kadri's presence on the Marlies roster is treated as though he is a persecuted political prisoner.

So the fact that Kadri, Jake Gardiner, Ben Scrivens, Joe Colborne, Jesse Blacker and others are continuing to serve their apprenticeships with the Marlies and Tyler Biggs learns in Oshawa isn't a bad thing at all.

If the NHL lockout lasts the year, it won't hurt any of those players. They'll only be the better for it.

Similarly, you know that if the lockout ends tomorrow, Moose Jaw defenceman Morgan Rielly will be on his way to Toronto for an abbreviated training camp and there will be, as there always is, intense pressure to keep him in the NHL.

Which would be exactly the wrong thing to do. Again.

So, no NHL, no chance to recall Rielly, who can then continue playing a prime-time role with the Warriors and quite possibly skate for Canada at the world junior hockey championships.

The lockout might save the Leafs from themselves in other words.

In terms of the NHL roster, other GMs have already suggested the Leafs are as well positioned as any franchise in terms of the general youth and affordability of their personnel. They may not have the talent of Boston or L.A., but they have loads of kids and no anchor-like, decade-long contractual commitments.

If this season were to be erased, the contracts to Tim Connolly, Joffrey Lupul, Matthew Lombardi, Clarke MacArthur, Tyler Bozak and David Steckel would expire, making them unrestricted free agents.

Only Lupul would be a major loss and he could be re-signed. Lopping off the \$8.25 million owed Connolly and Lombardi would be a plus, particularly if the salary cap, as most anticipate, drops to \$60 million or less.

A thornier problem would be that both Phil Kessel and Dion Phaneuf would move into the final years of their contracts before they gained UFA status, which would require very tough calls to be made on both.

But in the grand scheme of things you could certainly make argument the Leafs are one of the clubs that, at least purely in terms of hockey, could benefit by having the season lost. It's not like a Cup is on the way next spring, after all.

Sure, that's a cynical way to look at things. But coldly practical. And practicality is in short supply these days in the NHL.

Toronto Star LOADED: 11.17.2012

644432 Toronto Maple Leafs

NHL lockout: Pessimism reigns with negotiations between owners, players at a standstill

Ira Podell, Associated Press

NEW YORK — If the NHL and the players' association have run out of things to talk about, how can they ever find a way to make a deal to save the hockey season?

644433 Toronto Maple Leafs

It is a question both sides seem to have trouble answering, and not because they are being guarded or coy. The lockout is now in its third month, and there is no obvious path to progress.

There was a hint of optimism after the league and locked-out players met a few times, but the view quickly became bleak. After a one-day break, the sides met Sunday and that brief return to the table also turned badly quickly. They haven't met — and have barely talked — since then.

Now NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman has suggested to players' association chief Donald Fehr that they take a two-week break from each other. If talking doesn't work, it is possible that not talking will?

Frustration and a hint of anger have entered the equation. So perhaps a cooling-off period would make some sense before the sides agree to get together again.

"I think what you have seen is disappointment with where we find ourselves in the process," NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly said Friday in an email to The Associated Press. "I don't think it's a case of personal animosity."

That might be the only positive development of this week.

The problem with staying apart is that time has become a major factor working against them. All games through Nov. 30 have already been taken off the schedule, more cancellations are likely within a week, the Winter Classic has been wiped out, the All-Star Game is the next big event in jeopardy, and the whole season could be lost, too, in the blink of an eye.

Daly said on Thursday that he is more discouraged now that at any other point in the process.

Fehr and the union haven't said whether or not they will agree to trial separation from the league. Publicly, the players have maintained the position that negotiations are the only way to work out differences and get a deal, and that they are willing to meet any time the NHL wants to.

"Of course everyone on the players' side wants to reach an agreement," NHLPA special counsel Steve Fehr said 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.

"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?"

That came in response to Bettman's suggestion of a break, and other comments by Daly about the tenor of the discussions between the sides.

"Gary suggested the possibility of a two-week moratorium," Daly said. "I'm disappointed because we don't have a negotiating partner that has any genuine interest in reaching an agreement. Zero interest."

The NHL contends that the union has submitted the same proposal multiple times without moving in the league's direction. The union says it has agreed to come down from receiving 57% of hockey-related revenues to a 50-50 split. The league wants that to go into effect in the first year of the agreement, while the union wants to get there gradually.

Back in 2005, after the entire 2004-05 season was lost to a lockout, the players' association accepted a salary-cap system for the first time and feels it shouldn't have to bear the brunt of the concessions now after league revenues reached a record high of over US\$3-billion last season.

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National Post LOADED: 11.17.2012

Locked-out Maple Leafs disappointing with Marlies

Michael Traikos

TORONTO — Dallas Eakins says he is not "a massive stats guy," but the Toronto Marlies head coach admits there is some truth to be found at the top of the American Hockey League standings this season.

Players who would be in the NHL if there was not a lockout have been dominating in the minors. Edmonton Oilers prospect Justin Schultz leads all scorers with 18 points in 13 games, two ahead of teammate Jordan Eberle and three ahead of Marcus Foligno (Buffalo). Ryan Nugent-Hopkins (Edmonton), Brayden Schenn (Philadelphia) and Justin Faulk (Carolina) are also in the top 10 with 14 points each.

And then, way down the list are Toronto's prospects.

While defenceman Jake Gardiner has a respectable five goals and nine points in 12 games, Nazem Kadri and Joe Colborne — two first-round draft picks who are in their third year in the AHL — went nine games and spent a night in the press box as healthy scratches before finally scoring their first goals of the season last week.

Kadri, who has seven points, is tied for 122nd in the league. Colborne, with six points, is tied for 157th.

If the NHL were to resume tomorrow, Gardiner would be called up to the Leafs but the other two would still be in the minors. It is a sad reality the organization seems to be struggling with.

"I think both those guys should be point-a-game guys."

"These guys aren't rookies," Eakins said. "They need to be in a mindset where they need to be the best players on the ice every night. That hasn't happened every night early. Their production was clearly down and we tried to work through this with them, and it just got to a point where I thought it was best for them to watch one [game] from the stands.

"I think both those guys should be point-a-game guys."

Leafs general manager Brian Burke recently said part of the problem is that Kadri arrived to training camp in less-than ideal shape, while Colborne is still recovering from off-season wrist surgery. The other part is what the players call "puck luck." The chances have been there, but for whatever reason the goals just have not been coming.

"We both pride ourselves on being producers," Colborne said. "That's what we're expected to do on this team. It hasn't been getting done enough. The coaching staff sat us down and said that they realize we're generating chances and they're staying positive with us. They know that we're going to turn the corner."

The night after sitting out, Kadri and Colborne combined for two goals and five points in a 5-3 win against San Antonio. Two nights later, they were a plus-3 in a 6-5 overtime win against Oilers-affiliate Oklahoma City.

"They played great," Eakins said. "They firmly showed our team how they can play. And now it's their challenge to do that every night."

That is what the other NHL prospects have been doing.

National Post LOADED: 11.17.2012

644434 Washington Capitals

NHL suggests two-week break in labor negotiations

Posted by Katie Carrera

Talks between the NHL and NHLPA stalled earlier this week and with no imminent signs of progress, NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman suggested a two-week moratorium on negotiations according to multiple reports.

It's the latest cause for pessimism as the NHL lockout hit its 62nd day on Friday. The league has already canceled 327 regular season games — or about a quarter of the 2012-13 season — including the marquee Winter Classic. Another round of cancellations could come as early as next week.

From TSN, NHL Deputy Commissioner Bill Daly:

"We are extremely disappointed in where we and the players find ourselves," deputy commissioner Bill Daly said Thursday evening. "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'...."

"I find it incredible that the union is suggesting that we are somehow 'close' to a deal," added Daly. "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."

In a statement NHLPA special counsel Steve Fehr reiterated that the union is ready and willing to meet, despite Bettman's suggestion that the two sides take a break.

From ESPN:

"Of course everyone on the players' side wants to reach an agreement," he said. "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?"

Washington Post LOADED: 11.17.2012

644435 Winnipeg Jets

One step at a time for Serville

By: Tim Campbell

ANN ARBOR, Mich. -- Winnipeg Jets GM Kevin Cheveldayoff has so far held true to his philosophy -- the team's prospects will develop at their own pace and they will not be rushed, at least by him.

In any discussion about draft picks and potential future Jets, he never fails to utter the caution.

Brennan Serville will be thankful for it.

The defenceman from Pickering, Ont., a sophomore at the University of Michigan, had his name called by the Jets in the third round of 2011.

Instant fame

A slice of instant fame, being drafted by a Canadian NHL team, has since been sometimes an ordeal, sometimes an education.

"I had a long adjustment period," said Serville, who went from the Ontario Provincial Junior A league before the draft to college hockey last fall.

"Coming from (Tier II), obviously the game play is a lot slower and guys aren't as strong.

"I felt like near the end of last season I figured out my role and played the best I could in that role."

Serville's long-serving coach, Michigan's Red Berenson, didn't sugarcoat the transition.

"Brennan, I told Winnipeg last year, he's a project," Berenson said.

"He came here, he was weak and he was slow and he really struggled off and on here last year with the speed of the game and the strength of the players.

"I think he's learned a lot and he's just starting to show some glimpses of improvement.

"I think his skating is a little better and his work ethic is a little better and he's trying to play more physical. The one thing I've noticed is that he's making better outlet passes. But he's still got to get stronger, both from the waist down and waist up."

Serville, still growing at 6-3 and 202 pounds, is paired so far this season with senior and alternate captain Lee Moffie.

For much of the Wolverines' 3-1 home loss to Notre Dame on Thursday, Serville was barely noticeable apart from good passing choices, always a plus for a defenceman.

It wasn't always so, and the 19-year-old admitted there were stretches of discouragement last season.

"A little," he said. "Half-way through the season, I was battling to stay in the lineup. Obviously that gave me a lot more motivation and at the same time, I realized I was going to have to play a lot better than that if I wanted to do good."

In eight games so far this season (he missed a pair due to injury), Serville is pointless but a plus-four.

And with more ice time, some improved passing and a better idea of how to put his size to use, Serville is aware of another step forward.

"I'd say the biggest thing for me is confidence," he said.

"The players here are a little faster and stronger and a little better with the puck and in the D zone. So everything is baby steps for me until I'm ready to make the next jump."

Aware he had a long way to go, he stayed in Ann Arbor over the summer to concentrate on preparation.

"I trained with the guys here and that was good for me," he said.

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644436 Winnipeg Jets

Trouba tweaking his speaking

By: Tim Campbell

ANN ARBOR, Mich. -- You may be surprised to learn what Jacob Trouba is determined to improve while at the University of Michigan.

"I'm not the best public speaker," says the 18-year-old defenceman, a Winnipeg Jets' first-round draft pick in June. "I'm getting through (speech class). It's presentations, speeches. Do the research, put it together and get in front of the class and do it."

Apparently there's more to being a blue-chip NHL prospect than just skating and hitting and scoring, all things Trouba seems to savour.

The 6-2 blue-liner, chosen ninth overall by the Jets, is also getting plenty of schooling at Yost Ice Arena, home of the CCHA's Michigan Wolverines.

A freshman under the most experienced of college coaches, Red Berenson, Trouba has already been an impact player though his NCAA career is only nine games old.

"Right now he's finding his way and as I said, he has made an impact on our team," Berenson says. "He has played a lot of good games but when you're a defenceman and you make a mistake, it often ends up in the net."

"I like the kid and we're working with him. We sit down and Watch video with him, watch the shifts and watch the things he's doing and we talk about them. He's learning the game with his experiences."

Trouba, a native of nearby Rochester, Mich., is among six freshman in the Wolverines' lineup this week as the team is off to a mediocre 4-5-1 start.

Among those ups and downs of the early season have been several reality checks.

"Everything can really change with hard work," says Trouba, when asked what he hears from Berenson on the not-so-good days. "That's probably, when we get in trouble, where we're lacking. It's winning battles, that kind of stuff, and that's always something you can control. That's something we always need to have."

In the action he's seen so far, Trouba has not changed a style that earned him much recognition and obviously high regard in the draft -- that he was an aggressive, determined, take-no-prisoners kind of defenceman with the U.S. National Development Team Program.

He hits hard --sometimes you'd swear it's to hurt -- and he's already run afoul of CCHA officials, who suspended him for a game a couple of weeks ago after a high, hard check felled a Northern Michigan opponent.

That kind of approach, when (not if) it continues, is sure to lead to a variety of on-ice consequences. Among them surely is dropping the gloves, which will come after college hockey.

The issue, however, is not one of any interest to Trouba.

"No, I'm not going to worry about that this year or tomorrow," he says. "It's some time before I worry about any of that. I'm focused on where I am right now and the things I can worry about right now."

He gave the same sort of answer, asked how much he's looking forward to playing in his second world junior championship for the U.S.

"We've got to start winning some games here first before I can look forward to any of that," he says. "This is my priority, where I want to be, so this is the No. 1 thing on my mind right now. The world juniors will come when it comes and when it does, I'll switch over to that. But right now I'm worried about Michigan."

One item outside of CCHA standings and Yost Ice Arena that Trouba does admit to watching is the NHL lockout. The resolution to the current labour dispute will clearly affect his future.

"I do follow it but you have to trust the guys who are there now, who are going through it and looking out for the younger guys," says Trouba. "I know they were young guys once and they know what they would have wanted so they've got everyone's best interest on their minds. You kind of have to trust they'll do the right thing."

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644437 Winnipeg Jets

EURO-FLOPS

By: Gary Lawless

Money, it is said, can ruin a person. Let's hope that's not the case with Evander Kane and Ondrej Pavelec.

The evidence to this point, however, does not look good.

Both cashed in with huge contracts from the Jets this past summer. Neither has done much since to affirm the faith put in them by the organization.

The money isn't rolling in yet due to the lockout, but the bad headlines have been plentiful.

Kane was released by Dinamo Minsk of the KHL on Friday after just 12 games. The numbers he posted in Russia -- one goal, no assists, one suspension -- are astounding. First he was accused of being out of shape by his coach upon arriving in Minsk, then he failed to produce and then he got cut. The European experiment was toast. Too bad. A lot could have been gained by Kane finding a way to make it in the KHL. Instead he's

returning to Vancouver -- hopefully not to stagnate for a full year if that's where the lockout heads.

Kane scored 30 goals in the NHL last season and cashed in with a six-year deal worth \$31.5 million. Now he's not good enough to stick on a KHL roster.

Kane's agent Craig Oster said the hockey didn't fit his client.

"I've spoken to Evander and he just found the hockey to be different," Oster said Friday. "The style to be different, the training to be different. I think the coaching was a challenge at times. This arrangement didn't have a set time limit. It was a month-to-month deal. For both sides it felt like it had run its course."

There's no question the style of the game in the NHL is less suited to a north-south player like Kane. Just look at his former Jets teammate Tim Stapleton, who was unable to secure another NHL contract this summer but has 11 goals and eight assists in the KHL. Stapleton is creative. Kane is not and a season in the KHL could have helped round out his game. For an unpolished 21-year-old talent, a season in the KHL with its less restrictive play could have been an opportunity to broaden his vision and offensive instincts.

The 25-year-old Pavelec might be a little older, but his latest stretch has been even worse.

Pavelec signed a big-ticket contract with the Jets and then got caught in a lie of omission when it came out he'd been arrested in his native Czech Republic for drunk driving. Pavelec got popped prior to signing the new deal and kept his arrest hush-hush throughout negotiations.

Talk about bad faith negotiating.

Next up was a brownout for Pavelec during his stint with Liberec in the Czech league. The Jets' top netminder posted a goals against average of 3.52 and a .896 save percentage in 14 games with Liberec. When the first leg of his contract expired on Nov. 4, there was no renewal. No kidding.

For a goalie capable of commanding the \$3.9 million per season the Jets gave him, those numbers are troubling.

Pavelec was much better for the Jets in his contract year, putting up a 2.91 GAA and .906 save percentage behind one of the NHL's worst defensive teams.

Pavelec has a date with Jets owner Mark Chipman and GM Kevin Cheveldayoff the next time he sets foot in Winnipeg and if the sting of being deceived last summer during contract talks had worn off, his most recent performance will likely serve as a reminder.

With everything bad, usually some good can be found. For Kane and Pavelec, the adversity they're facing right now could serve to be humbling. It could also re-stoke the inner fires that have got them to the peak of their profession.

Every player in the NHL has been blessed with talent. But hard work, sacrifice and commitment are also a big piece of the recipe. Kane and Pavelec have worked hard to get where they are.

Slip-ups -- happens. What one does with the slip, however, is the most important measure.

Next time we see Kane and Pavelec in Jets jerseys we'll find out how far a dash of humility goes with their personalities.

And, more importantly to Jets fans, how that lesson in humility affects their games.

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644438 Winnipeg Jets

KHL's Dynamo Minsk releases Jets' Kane

By: Staff Writer

Evander Kane has been released by KHL team Dynamo Minsk after a disappointing stint in the KHL.

Kane had just one goal and no assists in 12 games and was a minus 8 with 47 penalty minutes.

The 21-year-old Winnipeg Jets winger signed a new six-year contract worth \$31.5 million on the eve of the CBA's expiration.

Once the lockout began, Kane elected to sign in the KHL but the experience was a flop. He arrived and was immediately chastised by the club for being, in their view, out of shape.

Next he was suspended for a game and couldn't get on the scoreboard. Kane's agent Craig Oster could not be reached for comment and the Winnipeg Jets also had no comment as per the NHL's lockout rules.

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644439 Winnipeg Jets

Wanted: Roll on The Rock

By: Scott Edmonds

Defenceman Paul Postma is hoping the St. John's IceCaps can use a six-game homestand to get back to the winning ways the team showed last season.

"I think we're really looking forward to this weekend, it's a chance for us to make up some wins," said Postma, who missed the start of this season due to injury.

The AHL farm team of the Winnipeg Jets is off to a slow 6-7-0 start.

Last season, the debut of the relocated franchise, they finished atop their division and second in the Eastern Conference, behind only the Calder-Cup winning Norfolk Admirals.

By mid-November they were 11-2-3.

Their latest homestand starts today, with the first of back-to-back games against the Albany Devils.

"We have a fairly similar team to last year but we still have to find our identity I think," said Postma, who is regaining some of his own form after missing the first eight games.

"I think certain players still have to find their roles and stick to what makes us successful."

The NHL lockout has meant an infusion of talent throughout the AHL and that has had an impact on the level of play.

"Teams get better in a hurry," Postma said.

"The skill level's gone up, even from last year it definitely feels like it is a better league. There's less time to react out on the ice."

But coach Keith McCambridge also says more players means a juggling act to keep lines together.

"It's trying to have that consistency in your lineup night after night... that's been our challenge as a coaching staff," he said.

Finding the net also has been a big issue for the IceCaps, who have been outscored 39-27 and have been shut out four times.

McCambridge says it's not from lack of effort. In fact, some nights, there may be too much effort.

"The frustration sets in and guys are overthinking plays," he said. "Where now, the game happens so fast, if you overthink plays... those lanes close pretty quickly."

Postma says no one should point fingers at the top marksmen for the scoring drought.

Jason King, who led the team with 22 goals last season, has managed only one so far in the nine games he's played. Spencer Machacek, whose 18 goals and 32 points produced a team-leading 50 points, has only three goals and two assists so far this year in 13 games.

Postma was no slouch last season, coming in at No. 2 on the IceCaps points list with 44 in just 56 games.

The team's leading scorers this season are Jets import Alex Burmistrov and AHL and NHL veteran Derek Meech, tied with seven points apiece.

"We obviously haven't been scoring goals but I don't think you can put all the pressure on certain guys," Postma said.

"I think we have to play better as a team. You look at last year, our leading point-getter only had 50 points. Our scoring was spread out throughout the entire team."

It's nice to have the extra practice time but McCambridge says the six-game homestand can bring its own pitfalls -- including the challenge of back-to-back games against the same team.

Last season, it was on the road where the IceCaps really started to find their feet, with four straight wins last November, followed by back-to-back wins at home.

"Our challenge has always been here in St. John's, winning the back-to-back games," says the coach, but it's a fact of life given the IceCaps' relatively isolated location.

During a similar six-game homestand last month, the IceCaps won the first and lost the second of all three back-to-back contests.

McCambridge says they want to build on their 2-1 win in Hershey last Saturday and they've been working on some of their weak points in practice.

"We had a chance here, a week in practice, to focus on our power play, which has been an area that we need to be better at, to focus on offensively making sure that we're bearing down on our opportunities as a group," he said,

Now the IceCaps are looking for the usual loud sellout crowd at home to help overcome that back-to-back jinx.

-- The Canadian Press

Winnipeg Free Press LOADED 11.17.2012

644440 Winnipeg Jets

Jets think proposed two-week break 'ridiculous'

By Ken Wiebe

This is one of those times when silence is anything but golden.

After taking part in the regular Friday morning skate, Winnipeg Jets defenceman Mark Stuart expressed frustration in the latest suggestion from NHL commissioner Gary Bettman that the two sides take a two-week moratorium on negotiations.

"I don't really understand it, I don't know why there is not more urgency to get something done," said Stuart. "A break right now sounds ridiculous to me. I wish more talks were going on. This isn't the time for a break really."

Stuart certainly isn't alone in that regard, but he understands the latest development is calculated.

"There are probably tactics to everything," said Stuart. "I'm sure it's part of some kind of strategy."

Jets centre Jim Slater was left scratching his head when he first heard about the idea.

"It's not good," said Slater. "Obviously, if you want to get something done, you have to talk about it. For them to come out and say we're going to take a two-week break at one of the most crucial times in negotiations where we have to get something done just shows you who we're negotiating with."

"It's not easy."

Jets captain Andrew Ladd was clearly disappointed by the latest turn of events.

"That's not what we should be doing at this point," said Ladd. "It doesn't surprise me with them, I guess. Like we've said the whole time, it seems like they're on a timeline and they haven't really been willing to negotiate. If you look at how far we've come, just money-wise. They've really given no

reason at all as to why they need these contractual issues, beside the fact they just want to control us a lot more."

LINEUPS SET: The lineups are set for the Goals for Dreams Hockey Challenge, slated for Saturday at Max Bell Arena.

Team Andrew Ladd includes Jonathan Toews, Duncan Keith, Bryan Little, Ryan Garbutt, Tanner Glass, Troy Brouwer, James Reimer, Shane Hnidy and Slater, while Team Mark Stuart features Chris Mason, Shea Weber, Brian Campbell, Mike Richards, Olli Jokinen, Ryan Reaves, Collin Wilson and Shane O'Brien, with Zach Bogosian serving as guest coach.

Stuart had the first overall selection and chose Mason, the former Jets netminder.

"Hopefully we can put on a good show for the fans," said Stuart. "This (charity game) is very welcome. At least we can forget about (the lockout) for a few days, support a couple of great causes and selfishly, get together with some buddies and be able to play a little bit. It's going to be fun to play an organized game."

Players will be on hand to sign autographs at 2 p.m., with puck drop slated for 3:30 p.m.

Tickets are no longer available as the game is officially sold out.

Proceeds from the game will go to the Children's Hospital Foundation and the Dream Factory.

Winnipeg Sun LOADED 11.17.2012

644441 Winnipeg Jets

Evander Kane parts ways with KHL's Dinamo Minsk

Staff

Evander Kane's season in the KHL has come to an inauspicious end.

The Winnipeg Jets winger, the first Canadian player to sign in the Russian league during the NHL lockout, has parted ways with his club, Dinamo Minsk.

Kane did little in 12 games with the team, recording just one point (a goal) and posting a minus-eight rating.

He was also suspended one game for an illegal hit, and criticized for being out of shape by the team's head coach.

"Unfortunately, Evander Kane could not adapt to hockey in the KHL," athletic director Igor Matushkin said on the team's website.

Both the team and Kane's agent said the decision to cut ties was mutual.

A 30-goal scorer with the Jets last season, Kane was expected to return home to Vancouver, where he could console himself with the six-year, \$31.5-million contract he signed with Winnipeg just hours before the lockout began.

Of course, he won't be collecting on that until the labour dispute ends.

Kane is the third Jets player to leave Europe recently, after goalie Ondrej Pavelec parted ways with his team in the Czech Republic and defenceman Toby Enstrom with one in Austria.

Kane's former Jets teammate and his teammate with Minsk, Tim Stapleton, has had little trouble adapting to the KHL, scoring 11 goals, as many as he had with the Jets all last season, and adding eight assists.

Winnipeg Sun LOADED 11.17.2012

644442 Websites

ESPN / Welcome to Sabres University

By Scott Burnside

For most around the NHL, the ongoing lockout of players -- now in its third month -- is something to endure.

Most teams have tried to keep up charitable works and community outreach in their markets, but credit the Buffalo Sabres for trying to turn a lot of lockout lemon into a little lemonade with their innovative introduction of what is being dubbed Sabres University.

Under owner Terry Pegula, the successful businessman and devout hockey fan who bought the Sabres in February 2011, the team announced early on in the current labor dispute that it would not lay off staff or require employees to take pay cuts, unlike other teams and the NHL itself, which cut staff hours and pay.

But Pegula encouraged staff to take this time away from the normal routine to get better at its jobs and make the Sabres a more efficient organization.

Enter president Ted Black.

Black, who was part of a group that helped advise Pegula on his purchase of the Sabres, was talking to a team marketing executive who had just returned from a seminar on social media. Black suggested the executive report to a group of staffers about what he learned. Then, Black wondered aloud about making it so all employees could have an opportunity to learn about things like social media and a host of other topics related to the running of an NHL team.

Sabres University was the result, an opportunity for employees to listen to lectures given in more than 30 areas of team operation, including ice making, public speaking, coaching strategy, scouting, marketing and fitness and diet.

The unique program, which features classes twice a week, has been a terrific boon to staff morale, which can wax and wane during a lockout, Black told ESPN.com this week.

At the core of its success is a chance for employees to have a bird's-eye view of areas of the Sabres' operation that they might never otherwise have explored.

Ice making, for instance, has proved to be one of the most popular courses. Not even GM Darcy Regier knew how the ice was made, Black said.

"This has been really cool for everyone to learn how to do that," Black said.

The educational tool cuts both ways. Employees have been educated on unfamiliar topics, while those doing the teaching -- such as the ice makers -- enjoy a rare moment of being in the spotlight and explaining a critical job.

"It was really gratifying to see them empowered that way," Black said of those staffers charged with keeping the ice NHL ready.

There are a number of mandatory courses, including the history of the Sabres, and the staff gets binders as though it were real students headed to class.

The scouting lecture, for instance, is particularly interesting given that the Sabres under previous ownership faced significant criticism for cutting their scouting staff and trying to supplement with a heavy emphasis on video scouting. Under Pegula, the high-tech element of scouting remains, but the Sabres, which have 21 scouts on staff, now boast as many amateur scouts as any NHL team and have doubled the number of pro scouts they employ.

Regier stood in to present the scouting lecture recently, as the scouts were visiting the Sabres' AHL affiliate in Rochester to help implement a new iPad program that will allow players to see individual video of different situations in a more timely fashion.

The general manager outlined for his students how the team integrates video of players and situations such as power plays and penalty kills with the reports by the scouts in the field. The video explains how certain things happen on the ice and can help in discussion of schemes and systems, while the reports on individual players can be augmented by video, especially if a significant amount of time has passed from the time the scout made his report.

"You can have all sorts of discussions," Regier said.

Black said he encouraged the team's website and broadcasting personnel to take in the scouting class to see if there was a way it might make use of the video the scouting staff has access to in order to help its own multimedia efforts.

The Sabres University initiative has helped staff, often focused entirely on its own duties, to understand how others in the organization do their job, Regier said.

"It's been very positive," he said.

Sabres University isn't the only positive news coming out of Buffalo during the lockout. The Sabres are also involved in a significant construction development next to their downtown Buffalo facility that will include a new parking structure, double-pad ice facility, giant sports bar, major hotel presence and other retail outlets.

The \$123 million facility will be financed entirely by Pegula and is modeled on the Kettler Iceplex in Arlington, Va., where the Washington Capitals have their practice facility.

The Caps' facility is so impressive that USA Hockey is contemplating using Kettler as its base for the pre-Olympic orientation camp next summer before the 2014 Sochi Games, assuming the NHL continues its involvement in the Olympic Games.

Like Kettler, the Buffalo facility will see the ice pads set on top of the parking structure -- about the same height off the ground as the Sabres' suite level next door.

The ice rinks are set to open in the fall of 2014 and, with some 28,000 people registered by USA Hockey in Western New York, are expected to become a major draw to hockey players and events throughout Western New York and the Golden Horseshoe area of Ontario just across the border.

"I'm hoping it will become that," Regier said. "I think it represents a tremendous opportunity, not just for the team but for the entire Buffalo area. I think it's going to be a tremendous facility."

ESPN LOADED: 11.17.2012

644443 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Spector on CBA: Reflecting on bad decisions

Mark Spector

Led by some Gary Bettman strategies that never quite panned out, the National Hockey League owners have painted themselves into a perilous corner.

So it's time to take a break. Two weeks to ponder a way out of a series of poor decisions that have compounded to the point where getting out from under their collective weight is proving a long and painful process.

As another November week comes to a close with no hockey in sight, we are left with this quote from Deputy Commissioner Bill Daly: "We are done with making proposals and we don't have any new ideas."

When the plan has gone so awry -- when history now tells us that so many of Bettman's signature moves have strayed -- we're not surprised that the NHL has no "ideas" left. It was, of course, a series of NHL "ideas" that got us here in the first place.

How about tagging extra years on those old CBA's with Bob Goodenow, so that the NHL could get the players' permission to take part in the Olympic Games? It still baffles that 85 per cent of the NHLPA membership would receive a 12-day mid-season vacation window, and the other 15 per cent would be furnished with a spot in the Olympics -- a life-changing experience -- yet it was the league that had to give concessions to make that happen, not the players.

Bad call, Gary.

Decisions like that are what led to the players raking in 75 per cent of league revenues. They resulted in salary escalation that would pay hockey players like Major League Baseball players, without the underlying economy to justify it.

This latest lockout, like the one before it, is simply an exercise in moving the pendulum back to the middle after Bettman allowed it to swing so wildly to players' side during his tenure. It took 20 years to get there. Now, it will take two lockouts (at least) to swing it back to the middle.

Of course, bad decisions are like cockroaches. When you spot one, that means there exists plenty more that you just haven't seen yet.

Yes, the NHL has grown economically to a \$3.3 billion business under Bettman. But in doing so, its labour situation has been botched to the point that today's poisonous relationship between player and owner is irreparable.

The players are equally at fault. They and their agents -- in orchestration with the NHLPA -- never missed a chance to sign a ridiculous deal, to prey on some GM whose job was on the line if he didn't improve his roster to win some games, to drive salaries through the roof.

Today, players are paying the costs for 25 years of doing what was good for themselves, yet not good for the game as a whole. They drove the NHL's economy into the ground. Like driving your car too hard, eventually it stops, and there's a big bill involved in getting it started again.

The latest big bill, as of Nov. 15, is three paychecks and counting. How's that Rick DiPietro contract looking now, guys?

Of course, hockey's trough has been a crowded receptacle, as players lapped up money their owners couldn't afford to spend, while owners gobbled up expansion money from a bunch of cities whose presence was supposed to ensure that dream American TV contract that floats all the other big sports.

We know now that a sport that is not indigenous to two-thirds of U.S. states never gets that mega American TV deal with. Simply placing franchises in football states like Texas, Florida, Tennessee and North Carolina doesn't get you football money, a misguided fourth-down gamble that will surely be Commissioner Bettman's legacy.

Today, Gary has his teams in Nashville, Anaheim, Dallas, Florida, Tampa, Carolina, Columbus, Phoenix and San Jose. But he never got the TV deal to go with them.

Worse yet, the only way to make most of those markets tenable is to revenue share.

And isn't that rich?

The collective financial losses of sunbelt teams over the years will one day surpass their sum total in expansion fees gobbled up by Original 21 owners. Perhaps they have already.

Today, a lockout based on forging an economy in which the Columbus Blue Jackets can make a profit is killing the game.

It's not like the days of the Canadian Assistance Plan, when the league propped up teams in Calgary, Vancouver, Edmonton and Ottawa as the Canadian dollar plunged to 65 cents. Those are hockey towns. Cities where hockey is loved and ingrained in the culture. Cities that would recover to become Top 10 revenue clubs today.

Today, the league is dark in Calgary, Ottawa, Vancouver and Toronto while Bettman tries to save his stakes in Phoenix, Columbus, Florida and Anaheim.

Will we look back years from now and see those cities as economic drivers, the way we do those Canadian markets that were given aid? Will they ever deliver the U.S. TV deal for which they were born?

We all know the answer to that. So does Bettman.

Sportsnet.ca LOADED: 11.17.2012

644444 Websites

YAHOO SPORTS / Gamesmanship gone wrong: NHL's desperation evident in 'moratorium' mistake

Nicholas J. Cotsonika

Stop the games, or the games won't start. Stop the attempts to intimidate and crack the union, or this deal won't get done anytime soon. It isn't working. Not only isn't it working, it's backfiring.

NHL commissioner Gary Bettman's frustration with the union is apparent. (AP)The NHL is frustrated with the NHL Players' Association, particularly

with executive director Don Fehr. Fine. It has reason to be. But the league got itself into this mess, and this isn't the way out – at least not the best way.

The latest misstep came Wednesday. Fehr and NHL commissioner Gary Bettman spoke on the phone. Fehr said the players did not want to negotiate off the owners' latest economic proposal, again.

Bettman suggested to Fehr a two-week moratorium.

Apparently the league heard Fehr had told players in a conference call that the owners' "date" was Dec. 1. I could not confirm Fehr said that. The NHLPA is not going to discuss details of an internal meeting, let alone sensitive information. But if true, it would make sense. I know of general managers telling people there won't be a season; I know of others telling people this will be settled soon – even that the puck will drop Jan. 1.

[Related: League asks union for two-week break in CBA talks]

The bottom line is this: We're still stuck in this cycle of mistrust, misinformation and misunderstanding. This is still too much about strategy and not enough about negotiating. And this was a mistake by Bettman, a shrewd man in many ways, but a poor politician.

Taking a breath is one thing. Taking a two-week break is another. Even if Bettman wanted to show the players that the owners have no "date" – let alone a date of Dec. 1 – this came off as a desperate attempt not to look desperate. This was a transparent attempt to put pressure on the players, essentially telling them they could come back to the table after they have missed another paycheck or two.

Through two months of CBA talks, the players appear to remain united behind NHLPA boss Don Fehr. (AP) This was yet another move that could encourage the players to stick together and keep waiting, instead of scaring them into capitulating. It was yet another move that could prolong the lockout, instead of end it.

The owners locked out the players for an entire season in 2004-05 to get a salary cap but failed to lock down the system, which is why the players hired Fehr, the longtime baseball union boss, for this fight. They insulted the players with their opening offer this time, uniting them more than Fehr ever could.

They have set deadlines and declared they have made their best offer, only to make better offers later. They left a meeting after considering three PA proposals in a matter of minutes. Feeling their message wasn't getting through Fehr's filter, they attempted an end-around, posting a proposal on the league website and giving team executives a short, secret window to explain it to players. Many execs didn't feel comfortable and didn't take advantage of it; many players laughed it off and rallied around Fehr.

The NHL had to be frustrated further when the details of a private conversation between the top two leaders leaked into the media Thursday night. But again, the league let its frustration show. Are league leaders making the players sweat? Or are they letting the players see them sweat?

"I find it incredible that the Union is suggesting that we are somehow 'close' to a deal," NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly said in a message relayed by a spokesman. "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 meantime, maybe they can make their position clear to us on 50-50, on the make-whole and on Player Contracting issues."

[Also: Wings' Ian White on Gary Bettman: 'I personally think he's an idiot']

All the NHLPA had to do was issue its standard statement: The players have made major concessions, haven't received anything in return and are willing to meet, as always.

Look, Fehr has dragged his feet. The players have taken shot after shot at Bettman. The sides are close on money only if you accept projections of growth – growth that is being threatened day by day. The players generally have continued to propose a guaranteed share, with raises, refusing to negotiate on a percentage basis.

The farther from the system, the harder to reach a deal. The whole point of the owners' system is to link the players' share to a percentage of revenue, and a big issue this time is financial relief in the first year. I understand why the players want to protect what they have, especially when they blame the owners for the lockout and the damage it is causing, and I understand the first year sets the bar for the following years. But I don't understand why

they think the owners will assume all the risk again, or why they think the owners will cave on the first year.

The players say they want to give the owners incentive to grow revenues, and I think they feel the owners could do a better job. But the owners have incentive to grow revenues already, they had seven straight years of record revenues under the old system, and the players' projections of future growth have been more optimistic than the league's. So why not propose percentages that drop to 50 over time, or why not go straight from the old 57 to 50 and work on the league's "make-whole" provision, which is intended to make up the difference on current contracts with deferred payments?

[More: Teemu Selanne says his career likely over if lockout lasts all season]

The players do need to be realistic. They need stick to their principles, but in a way that appeals to the owners enough to close a deal. They aren't going to shame the owners into agreement. The owners canceled a season before, and no one should underestimate their stomach to do it again.

That said, the owners have to be realistic, too. They have to know who they're dealing with and deal with it – and with him. Their frustration is working against them. I doubt they will break the union again without another long, bloody battle. The players held out for a season before, and no one should underestimate their stomach to do it again.

Why keep attacking the contracting rules? Fehr is right to say entry-level deals, arbitration rights and free-agency eligibility become even more important to individual players as the players' share goes down. It is not too much to ask to keep things basically as they were – except for the elimination of back-diving, cap-circumventing contracts, which the players have been willing to discuss.

If the players' share is dramatically reduced, the owners should relent on how that share is distributed among the players, even if it isn't ideal. The owners will tell you they told the players the principles were important, not necessarily the specifics, and they hint that they can bend on contracting if the players will bend on economics. But the players will tell you the league has showed no wiggle room at the table.

[Also: The two sides of the CBA story]

Though the owners have come a long way on revenue sharing, though they have given the players assorted other things – single rooms on the road, a bigger playoff bonus pool, league-paid bonuses for top-three finishes in award voting, things like that – they have not given them an out, something, anything, that will satisfy them.

The owners have not accounted enough for the emotional aspect of this, and they have made too many empty threats. The players feel bullied. Their backs are up. They don't buy that "enough is enough." They are following their leader and fighting, because that's what players do, and they want to come back to work without feeling beaten up.

"We're comfortable that we have done everything we can reasonably do to get the game on the ice," Daly wrote in an e-mail Friday. "Have we made mistakes along the way? Probably, because obviously we haven't been successful to this point. But nobody should confuse that with a lack of commitment to the game."

I think the NHL wants to make a deal. I think the NHLPA wants to make a deal. I still think the odds are that they will make a deal and we will have some kind of season. I think that there is still plenty of time, and that's why we're still seeing so much posturing and brinkmanship – the NHL showing it isn't afraid to keep canceling games, Fehr coolly keeping a salary-cap challenge in his back pocket, both using the nuclear threat as leverage.

But I think both sides perceive weakness in the other. I think both sides still believe they can get the other to blink. And I think both sides better be careful. What if nobody blinks before it's too late? Push too far, miscalculate too much, and the moratorium will be much longer than two weeks.

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