

# SPORT-SCAN DAILY BRIEF

NHL 11/21/2012

## Anaheim Ducks

644550 NHL expected to review union proposal Wednesday

## Boston Bruins

644551 Mike Eruzione to see name on Winthrop ice rink  
644552 Baby B's growing up

## Buffalo Sabres

644553 NHL, players' association set to meet Wednesday morning  
644554 Players' association has to make the next step in NHL CBA talks

## Calgary Flames

644555 With hat-trick of reliable puck-stoppers on Heat roster, Irving's action limited

## Carolina Hurricanes

644556 STONE COLD LOCKOUT: Another delay to NHL season appears to be here -- again  
644557 NHL asks for full CBA proposal from players association  
644558 NHL labor talks to resume Wednesday morning

## Chicago Blackhawks

644559 NHL's Daly: 'No expectations' on union proposal  
644560 Blackhawks' brass give back for Thanksgiving

## Colorado Avalanche

644561 Avs Mailbag: Can Colorado keep up without Matt Duchene?

## Columbus Blue Jackets

644562 Blue Jackets' Murray could miss season

## Detroit Red Wings

644563 Red Wings coach Mike Babcock keeps tabs on Jan Mursak, who's thriving in Austria  
644564 Red Wings' Cory Emmerton slowly working his way back from shattered index finger  
644565 NHL Lockout: McShane's, Nemo's suffer through loss of Detroit Red Wings crowd  
644566 Red Wings scouting report: Kyle Quincey will be counted on to show significant improvement

## Edmonton Oilers

644567 Both sides too far along not to reach a deal, says Ollers goalie Devan Dubnyk  
644568 Oilers goaltender Devan Dubnyk forced to be mobile to find practice time

## Los Angeles Kings

644569 Hockey: Kings left wing Kyle Clifford signs with Ontario Reign

## Minnesota Wild

644570 NHL wants full, formal proposal from the NHLPA

## Montreal Canadiens

644571 Hockey with high energy at high altitude  
644572 Without fanfare, former Hab Spacek retires  
644573 Star-less Habs blood-donor clinic will go on  
644574 Kraft's Hockeyville a lockout casualty  
644575 Habs, Price feeling sick after fantasy loss to Devils

## Nashville Predators

644576 Economics professor sees framework of deal

## New Jersey Devils

644577 Devils' Lou Lamoriello inducted into Italian American Sports Hall of Fame  
644578 Judge rules against Newark in arbitration appeal stemming from Devils feud  
644579 NHL Players' Union expected to deliver new proposal to league Wednesday as lockout continues to drag on

## Ottawa Senators

644580 Senators players explore birthplace of hockey  
644581 Ottawa Senators' Jason Spezza ponders leaving Swiss team

## Philadelphia Flyers

644582 Flyers' Claude Giroux returning to have his neck examined  
644583 Giroux to visit Crosby's concussion doctor  
644584 Giroux says he's fine, getting tests as precaution  
644586 NHL Notes: Versteeg wants 'cancers' Bettman, Daly gone  
644587 Giroux's injury raising concerns

## Phoenix Coyotes

644588 GM Maloney offers AHL observations

## Pittsburgh Penguins

644589 NHL lockout costs Pittsburgh area economy \$2.1M for each home game lost  
644590 NHL labor meetings resume Wednesday in NYC  
644591 Despite lockout in the NHL, the Malones can talk  
644592 Fehr: Thinking 'about our next step' GAME OFF! NHL LOCKOUT 2012

## Tampa Bay Lightning

644593 When Bolts call, Barberio will be ready

## Toronto Maple Leafs

644594 NHL lockout: NHLPA, league finding common ground  
644595 Barrie lawyer flush with glee over Leafs toilet purchase  
644596 Meet the Leafs fan who bought a dressing room toilet for \$5,300

## Vancouver Canucks

644597 Window of opportunity can close on Canucks at any time  
644598 Gallagher: Canucks coach trusts players are getting in shape

## Washington Capitals

644599 Backstrom, Ovechkin combine for four points in Dynamo Moscow win

## Websites

644600 ESPN / Claude Giroux has neck injury  
644601 ESPN / Next move by the union could be vital  
644602 ESPN / It's feast and famine for Pavelski in Minsk  
644603 ESPN / NHL, NHLPA have abused our trust  
644604 NBCSports.com / Surprise! Predators' "Smashmob" thrills youth hockey teams with NHL-like experience  
644605 NBCSports.com / Kings' Clifford joins ECHL Ontario Reign  
644606 NBCSports.com / AHL Toronto loans Leo Komarov to KHL  
644607 NBCSports.com / Report: NHL and NHLPA agree to move free agency start date, trading cap space  
644608 NBCSports.com / Kraft cancels 2013 Hockeyville program thanks to lockout  
644609 NBCSports.com / AHL to continue with hybrid icing until NHL play resumes  
644610 NBCSports.com / Semin: "I still need to improve my physical condition"

## Websites Continued

644611 NBCSports.com / Report: Blues' Halak to sign in KHL

644612 NBCSports.com / Daly has no expectations for Wednesday's CBA talks  
644613 NBCSports.com / Goldwater still watching as Coyotes lease agreement goes before Glendale council  
644614 NBCSports.com / Report: After wooing Isles to Brooklyn, Ratner to help develop Nassau Coliseum site  
644615 YAHOO SPORTS / Sabres University: Buffalo goes back to school during lockout downtime  
SPORT-SCAN, INC. 941-284-4129  
644550 Anaheim Ducks

NHL expected to review union proposal Wednesday

By TOM GULITTI / THE RECORD (HACKENSACK, NJ)

Thursday is Thanksgiving, but Wednesday could feel like Groundhog Day in the NHL owners' lockout.

The NHL and the players have reached another pivotal day in the negotiating process as they plan to meet at 10 a.m. at the league's office in Manhattan.

During a 90-minute bargaining session Monday, the league requested that the players put together a comprehensive proposal of their positions on the core economic issues. After using Tuesday for internal meetings and preparation, the union is expected to make that proposal Wednesday.

What that offer contains might determine whether this will be another day of rhetoric from both sides with still no end to the lockout in sight, or if there is potential for traction that will lead to a breakthrough in the negotiations and an eventual settlement.

Thus far, the players and the league have been negotiating off their economic proposals. The league has been talking in terms of percentages of hockey-related revenue - specifically proposing a 50-50 split that would begin in year one of the new collective bargaining agreement. The players' proposals have called for the players to receive a fixed monetary figure - and guaranteed increases the first three years - rather than a percentage of the total revenue pie.

NHL Players' Association executive director Donald Fehr has frustrated the league and the owners by not negotiating off their proposals. If the union takes the step of at least talking in percentages of revenue Wednesday, as some have suggested, that would be a significant step.

The players have been apprehensive to move any further toward the owners with it already clear that their share of revenue, which was 57 percent in 2011-12, will be dramatically reduced in the new CBA. The league also has proposed restrictions on player contracting rights (free-agency age, entry-level contracts, arbitration, etc.) that the players oppose.

The league has been unwilling to negotiate on those contract issues without first settling the core economic issues.

LA Times: LOADED: 11.21.2012

644551 Boston Bruins

Mike Eruzione to see name on Winthrop ice rink

By Stephen Harris

Mike Eruzione, who scored probably the biggest goal in American hockey history at the 1980 Lake Placid Olympics — the game-winner against Russia leading to Team USA's Miracle on Ice gold medal — received plenty of honors in the decades since.

But of all the salutes and kudos the 58-year-old Eruzione received, not many have been more meaningful than the ceremony that will take place tonight in his hometown of Winthrop.

The Lawrence Larsen Rink, where Eruzione skated and coached since the mid-70s, will be renamed "The Larsen Rink at the Mike Eruzione Center."

"When they told me this was going to happen, it was mind boggling," said Eruzione. "For once in my life, I was at a loss for words. My line is going to be the same one as coach (Jack) Parker's when they named the rink at BU after him: 'Thank God it's not the Eruzione Memorial Rink.'"

Eruzione described the late Larry Larsen as the original guiding force in Winthrop youth hockey. He recalled that as a youngster there was no rink in town, and Larsen would freeze tennis courts each winter to give kids a place to play.

"That's where I learned to skate," said Eruzione, who went on to star at Boston University and captain the '80 Olympic team. "There's a great deal of pride to be associated with Larry Larsen. He was a great man. For the Larsen family to allow my name to go alongside his is a great honor."

For a town of about 17,000, Winthrop has enjoyed a very strong hockey tradition. Ex-BU standout Dale Dunbar, who played briefly for the Bruins and Vancouver Canucks, coached the high school team for years with Eruzione as a volunteer assistant. Dunbar has overseen a sweeping renovation of the Larsen/Eruzione rink, and hopes to host major tournaments at the facility and perhaps pursue an Eastern Junior Hockey League franchise as well.

"Dale has done an unbelievable job as the coach," said Eruzione. "I love Winthrop. I've never left Winthrop. It holds a very special place in my heart. Now to have this on top of everything else, to have a rink named after you, that's pretty cool."

Boston Herald LOADED: 11.21.2012

644552 Boston Bruins

Baby B's growing up

By Steve Conroy

PROVIDENCE — One of these days, the NHL will flip the lights back on and open for business. But as the league and NHLPA meet again today in New York on this the 67th day of the lockout, pro hockey, and the development of future NHLers, continues.

Down on the Bruins' farm, the Providence Bruins got off to a slow start to the AHL season and are still having trouble putting the puck in the net, averaging a little more than two goals a game. They have been getting better goaltending of late, something that always helps.

Yesterday, with the Baby B's at 6-7-1, coach Bruce Cassidy gave a rundown on some of the organization's top prospects.

- Jordan Caron: The winger was the favorite to slide onto the B's third line left open by the trade of Benoit Pouliot, but he hasn't had a great start. Caron has 4-2-6 totals (three goals came in one game) and is a minus-7. Cassidy allowed that Caron could be adversely affected mentally from the lack of the NHL when he appeared on the cusp of making it. But he'd like to see a little more jump and edge from Caron.

"We're trying to get him involved and use his big (6-foot-2, 202-pound) frame, so he's made some plays there. But in general, 5-on-5, we need a little more from the whole group, him included," said Cassidy. "I don't want to say he's old by any means (at 22), but because he's been here and up in Boston, we want to lean on him a little more. I think his pace needs to pick up. The plus-minus is probably just a reflection of our record, so I don't take issue with his play away from the puck. With the puck, he needs to be a little more assertive, a little higher pace, then the results will take care of themselves."

- Ryan Spooner: The center's draft classmate Jared Knight has been limited to two games and should be out until December with a hamstring injury, but Spooner is coming along nicely. He leads the team in scoring (3-8-11) and his all-around game is good.

"His progression with one of the things we worried about — his play away from the puck — has been very good," said Cassidy. "We're trying to get him to compete a little harder and I think we're seeing that. Offensively, he's making stuff happen. He's really dynamic on most nights. His power play's been good. He's probably a little ahead of where I thought he'd be maybe three weeks ago."

• Chris Bourque: The forward established himself as an elite player at the AHL level while with Hershey, but the points haven't come easily this year (2-8-10). Cassidy likes how he competes for his size (5-8, 180), and the 26-year-old's skill level is still very intriguing.

"He makes high end plays and I'm not sure that some of the guys around him have been ready for the plays he makes," said Cassidy. "You've got to judge him a little different. If you throw him in with some NHL skill, I wonder what you'd get. I'm curious for that reason. If you throw him in there with say, (Rich) Peeverley and (Chris) Kelly, is he going to make plays that are NHL caliber? Because here he looks like he's capable of that."

• Torey Krug: The defenseman has four assists and is a minus-8, but Cassidy said those numbers are a little misleading.

"His minus number sticks out, but I think he's been a bit of a victim. There were some shorthanded goals against, some empty net goals against. So of his minuses, at least half of them were not 5-on-5," said Cassidy. "I think he's been good, not great. But he moves the puck. He's as advertised, I guess. He moves the puck, he has a good stick defending. I think the pace of his game will need to be there every night for him to play in Boston."

• David Warsofsky: Like Krug, Warsofsky is another smallish, puck-moving defenseman. Warsofsky picked up his first goal, along with an assists, in a loss on Sunday.

"He's been a good defender. He's been very steady," said Cassidy. "I think he started out trying to do too much, a little out of control after coming off a real good camp. He's dialed that back. His shot and play on the offensive zone blue line needs to be part of the package for him and it wasn't until Sunday."

• Niklas Svedberg: The goalie got his first taste of three games in three nights Sunday and was yanked after allowing five goals. But other than that, the Swede has been solid and could well be the No. 3 goalie in the organization. He has 6-3 record with a 2.17 goals-against average and .927 save percentage.

"Svedberg's been really good," said Cassidy. "Every day he's tightening up some of those holes that were there. He really battles and the players love his effort. So it's been nice. I don't know if it's a surprise because he won a championship last year in Sweden, so you assumed he was a good goalie. But you also heard that he maybe overachieved as well. So you want to find out which one it is. We'll be able to judge that better in April when he's played 40, 50 games."

Boston Herald LOADED: 11.21.2012

644553 Buffalo Sabres

NHL, players' association set to meet Wednesday morning

John Vogl

The NHL Players' Association, after being asked by the NHL for a complete proposal Monday night, is holding internal meetings today in New York. The sides in the labor battle are set to meet again at 10 a.m. Wednesday.

It's not clear whether the union will submit a full offer, though it would be a wise idea.

"We are considering a proposal, but nothing is definite," Blackhawks defenseman and former Sabre Steve Montador told the Chicago Tribune today in an email. "Time is ticking more now than ever, but we're not at a point where the season would be cancelled -- at least in my opinion. For now, it's a continued reserved optimism."

---John Vogl

Buffalo News LOADED: 11.21.2012

644554 Buffalo Sabres

Players' association has to make the next step in NHL CBA talks

John Vogl

As Gary Bettman and Donald Fehr have said during the lockout, there are ebbs and flows during negotiations.

The water is on the players' shore now. It's up to them to sink or swim.

The NHL asked the players' association for a complete CBA proposal Monday night during the latest gathering between the sides. Fehr, the NHLPA's executive director, said he will take the request to the players and get back to the league, today more likely than not.

When he places the return call, he'd better have a full proposal or this will be another week wasted.

Hopefully by now the NHLPA has realized the league doesn't bluff. Fehr has repeatedly chided the NHL about its use of "artificial deadlines" during talks, but they are not artificial to NHL reps. If the CBA is set to expire Sept. 15, it's going to expire Sept. 15 and won't be extended during negotiations. If the league says it needs a deal in place by Oct. 25 to save a full season and avoid further cancellations, a deal needs to be in place Oct. 25 or November's games will go by the wayside, which is exactly what happened.

In this instance, if the league says it wants a full proposal from the union in order to move forward, it wants a full proposal. The NHLPA can't just string together bits and pieces and hope the NHL bites.

The players' union requested this round of meetings in New York. It's assumed it has something to say. A full proposal will make the NHL listen. Considering the NHLPA has had more than two months to come up with a comprehensive CBA plan, it had better make one or it will inch closer to having a whole canceled season to think about it.

---John Vogl

Buffalo News LOADED: 11.21.2012

644555 Calgary Flames

With hat-trick of reliable puck-stoppers on Heat roster, Irving's action limited

WES GILBERTSON

One of the big challenges of being a backup netminder — especially behind a workhorse like Calgary Flames star Miikka Kiprusoff — is staying sharp despite lengthy spurts without game action.

Leland Irving's patience is already being put to the test.

Once the undisputed starter for the Flames' AHL affiliate, the 24-year-old puck-stopper is suddenly part of a three-man time-share in the Abbotsford Heat crease.

"You know what? It's not necessarily a bad thing," Irving insisted. "A little competition is always good, especially between the pipes."

"For me, I have to be sharp every time I step on the ice, whether it's practice or morning skate or optional skate or even warmup. You just never know when you're going to be called up, and you've gotta stay ready."

Make that, a lot of competition.

Although Irving is the only member of the Heat's three-headed monster who's under contract with the Flames organization, the leading candidate to be Kiprusoff's sidekick after the lockout ends is being forced to earn his minutes in Abbotsford.

Danny Taylor was anointed the opening-night starter for the Heat and has posted a sparkling 1.69 goals-against average and a .938 save percentage in seven appearances.

The numbers look even better for former Calgary Hitmen stalwart Barry Brust, who's allowed just one goal in four starts, good for a mind-boggling 0.25 GAA and .991 save percentage. In fact, Brust has pitched three straight shutouts and is only one scoreless period away from erasing an AHL record owned by Hockey Hall-of-Famer Johnny Bower, who put up a wall for 249:51 during a stint with the Cleveland Barons in the 1957-58 season.

Irving, who made back-to-back starts on the road last weekend — kicking aside 36 shots in Friday's 3-2 victory over the Rochester Americans and then surrendering five tallies on 24 targets in a 5-0 loss to the Toronto Marlies two days later — also has a solid stat-line, with a 2.94 GAA and a .901 save percentage in four starts.

Through the first six weeks of the AHL regular season, head coach Troy Ward hasn't had to use his hook once. He could utilize all three netminders this weekend, when the Heat make a three-game road-swing through the Lone Star State to face off against the Texas Stars, the San Antonio Rampage and the Houston Aeros.

"To be honest, it's just the luck of the draw," Brust said of his shutout streak, which has spanned 231 minutes and 41 seconds so far. "The games I've gotten have been relatively easy. For Irv, he's kind of had hard luck so far. It seems like every game he's played, he's been bombarded.

"So I don't think the shutouts are a product of my play. It's more the team and the quality we've played at in those games. Coach Ward always says that goals-against is a team thing. I think it's a lot like wins in baseball for a pitcher. We have some impact in it, but a bad team is never going to get three shutouts."

So far, the time-share seems to be working for the three goaltenders.

It's obviously been working for the team, too, as the Heat have suffered only two regulation losses — one charged to Taylor, the other to Irving — and sit atop the AHL's North Division standings with a 10-2-1-2 record.

Still, Ward hinted the three-goalie system won't last forever.

"To their credit, they've done a very, very good job. All three of them have given us a chance to win every night. They've all been outstanding for us," Ward said. "But you don't want your best guy or the guy that you feel is your best guy to lose the rhythm.

"At some point in time, I will go with the hotter hand."

Calgary Sun: LOADED: 11.21.2012

644556 Carolina Hurricanes

STONE COLD LOCKOUT: Another delay to NHL season appears to be here -- again

By Tom Hoffarth, columnist

It's gotta be a cruel dream.

After all that scrimping, scraping, slashing and cross-checking to make sure you could pull together the resources to finance a Kings 2012-13 season-seat package, you locked in an entry pass to the coolest party in town.

It starts with Vegas, that annual Frozen Fury exhibition Sept. 29. It leads up to opening night on Oct. 12 for the raising of the NHL championship banner.

You get to the glass doors at Staples Center, arms in the air prepared to be wanded - and you're locked out.

How were you supposed to know you made an investment in what could be the dumbest professional sports organization going today?

Here's a league that has Hollywood thinking it reinvented the sport following the Kings' Quick-and-easy Stanley Cup championship run, and now we're about to have the rink pulled out from under us.

They've turned an L.A. Title Town salsa into a La Tijera In-N-Out drive-thru traffic jam. Nice buzz kill to a killer summer of Stanley Cup ragers.

Any of the Kings' Ice Crew able to scrape up some shavings so we can hold it on our forehead?

Unless someone with a clear vision sees a way to iron things out soon, the owners will make good on a threat to lock the players out of training camps starting at 8:59 p.m. Pacific Time.

Wake us up from this nightmare, Drew Doughty. Give us a good, hard rock into the boards.

There's no way history can repeat itself. The complete loss of the

ads not by this site

2004-05 season had to do with much bigger issues and larger egos.

No, it's not the same. But it's almost as lame.

The disagreement focuses on how to split a pile of crown jewels, and it's down to percentage points.

Those on the inside figure this can only last a couple of weeks, maybe a month. Tops. Probably. Maybe.

By then, the season couldn't start on time, and it likely would shrink to a 70-game schedule, much like what happened to the NBA a year ago.

Still, a \$3 billion industry should have this all figured out long before it gets to this point.

Commissioner Gary Bettman, going for the hat trick after already commandeering the league through two work stoppages, hedges his bets on fans coming back no matter how long an impasse lasts. He's seen L.A. work around Carmageddon. And he knows even when all was shut down last time, there was no major collateral damage.

Donald Fehr, the well-respected labor leader now in charge of the NHL Players Association, is more level-headed, even though we know him to be the Major League Baseball Players Association rep who was partly responsible for the wipeout of the 1994 World Series.

Each side is trying to spin the story into making it seem they're doing all they can in good faith.

Good riddance.

"The fact is, both the owners and players are doing relatively fine," Ken Dryden, the Hockey Hall of Fame goaltender, wrote in a column for the Toronto Globe & Mail. "(The fight is) not one of economic necessity. (Bettman) needs to win because he won last time, and he's a winner. (The players) need to win because they lost last time, and have to prove they're not losers.

"There's no agreement because neither needs an agreement. It's not a fight they need to have. They fight because they can. There's something not quite right about this."

Hockey has penalty boxes to make examples out of those who fight for no apparent reason. Please, don't put the padlocks on them just yet.

If you're Luc Robitaille, the former Kings star who's now head of the franchise's business end, none of this can make much sense.

The day finally has come when he can tell the organization's season-seat salesmen to cut things off, even though they could fill Staples Center with 100 percent pre-purchased entry passes.

Now he's drawing up provisional refund plans based on how long his instincts tell him this could last.

Maybe the best Kings-related tweet about this came the other day from at LetsGoKings: "No matter what they eventually agree on, I'll be thinking, 'Why couldn't they agree on that before the lockout?'"

ESPN's Barry Melrose tried to keep things light the other day when he said, "Instead of playoff beards, we're going to start growing lockout beards."

We've seen Dustin Brown's playoff beard already. At least he'll look fresh and ready once the sides decide it's financially beneficial for them to start playing again.

Wake us up when it's over. Most already aren't sure the Kings' championship wasn't a dream as well.

Thomas.hoffarth at dailynews.com

NUMBERS GAME

8:59 p.m.: Pacific Time today, the designated deadline for a new Collective Bargaining Agreement to be completed between the NHL owners and NHL players association. Otherwise, the owners have agreed 30-0 to authorize a lockout.

\$3.3 billion: Revenue to be divided, from last season. The players' current deal says they get 57 percent of it. The owners want to cut that moving forward.

Six years, 49 percent: The owners offer to the players, in terms of the length of the new deal, and the starting number of shared revenue they would receive.

Five years, 54.3 percent: The players' counter offer.

\$2.4 million: The average NHL player salary.

Sept. 17: The date the Kings have scheduled to start training camp.

Oct. 11: The date set for the first NHL regular-season games. The Kings' opener is Oct. 12, at home against the N.Y. Rangers.

Oct. 15: The first day players would start drawing pay checks.

Jan. 1: The date of the Detroit-Toronto annual outdoor Winter Classic at Michigan Stadium in Ann Arbor, Mich. Neither side wants to see this event canceled.

News Observer LOADED: 11.21.2012

644557 Carolina Hurricanes

NHL asks for full CBA proposal from players association

By Chip Alexander - calexander at newsobserver.com

The NHL made the request. Now, it's up to the NHL Players Association to comply – or not comply.

After a collective bargaining session Monday night in New York, the NHL asked that the NHLPA make a full, complete CBA proposal covering such issues as revenue division and contracting rights. After taking Tuesday to hold internal meetings, the NHLPA is expected to respond Wednesday morning.

"We've never heard a full proposal from them," NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly told reporters Monday night. "Certainly they've given us a variation of the same proposal on economics a couple times, and there was no change in that position. ...

"They're still suggesting that they're moving in our direction on economics, but until we know exactly what their position is on economics now, we think it's all tied together, and we'd like to hear it all together."

The NHLPA requested the meeting Monday and Daly said the union set the agenda. There were media reports late last week that NHL commissioner Gary Bettman wanted a two-week moratorium in CBA talks – an assertion Daly later disputed – but the two sides met Monday for 90 minutes.

"We could have taken a couple of weeks off, I suppose," NHLPA executive director Donald Fehr said Monday. "It's hard for me to see how you make an agreement if you aren't talking. So you talk."

What everyone is hoping for is a breakthrough in the talks that lead to a new collective bargaining agreement. Tuesday was the 66th day of the NHL lockout and without any progress this week, the league soon could begin cancelling December games.

The NHL already has axed all games through the end of November and the 2013 Winter Classic on New Year's Day. The next casualty could be the 2013 NHL All-Star game, set for Columbus, Ohio.

The NHLPA has said the league refuses to budge on its contracting proposals. The league, in turn, has said the players want a guaranteed share of league revenue.

"If their proposal continues to be a guaranteed amount of player-share dollars, we have told them that is not a proposal that is acceptable to us or would ever be acceptable to our owners right now," Daly said.

The players received 57 percent of the annual hockey-related revenue (HRR) last season under the previous CBA, which expired Sept. 15. The league wants an immediate move to a 50-50 split of HRR, offering to "make whole" existing player contracts through deferred payments. The NHL also has proposed spending \$211 million out of its HRR share to help fund the payments.

The union has proposed a gradual reduction to the 50-50 mark during the course of the CBA. It has opposed the league's stance on such contracting

issues as a five-year limit on contracts, shorter entry-level contracts and a change in unrestricted free agency eligibility.

Still to be decided is how to handle the games cancelled this season and revenue that will be lost.

Read more here: <http://www.newsobserver.com/2012/11/21/2498048/nhl-asks-for-full-cba-proposal.html#storylink=cpy>

News Observer LOADED: 11.21.2012

644558 Carolina Hurricanes

NHL labor talks to resume Wednesday morning

By IRA PODELL - AP Sports Writer

NEW YORK -- This time, NHL owners and players are staying apart for just one day.

Negotiations aimed at ending the league's lockout will resume Wednesday morning at the NHL office, the players' association said in a statement Tuesday. Before Monday night's 90-minute bargaining session, it had been eight days since the sides got together.

Whether the players' association will bring a new complete proposal, as requested by the NHL on Monday, to the next round of talks remained uncertain. But the union huddled for internal conversations after negotiations ended, and continued talking on Tuesday - pushing further bargaining back a day.

"It looks like tomorrow," NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly told The Associated Press in an email Tuesday. "No other details at this point."

The lockout entered its 66th day Tuesday and already has wiped out 327 games. More cancellations could be coming soon without a new deal.

While neither side offered much insight following Monday night's talks, there didn't seem to be any of the anger that reportedly existed when the previous negotiations ended a week earlier. Both sides looked forward to when they would reconvene to try to reach the elusive deal that would end the lockout that has already shortened the season and threatens scrap it completely.

"We talked about various things," union executive director Donald Fehr said Monday. "No new proposals were made, they were not expected to be made. We had hoped to engage them in a discussion about the player-contracting issues that are so important to the players. At least (Monday) they were unwilling to do that."

The prevailing question is when will one side say something the other really wants to hear. These negotiations have been going for a while, yet there hasn't been any kind of breakthrough to pave the way to a new collective bargaining agreement.

Both sides know the lockout has inflicted a lot of damage on the sport that produced record revenues of over \$3 billion last season. Every day of lost time is hurting everyone, and at some point owners and players will have to decide how much of the losses each side will have to absorb.

"I think every week is important in the process," Daly said Monday. "I don't attach a particular significance to this week over last week or next week. I want to play tomorrow."

The league contends it is waiting for the players to present a full proposal on all the major issues - including core economics and player contracting, which deals with the entry-level system, arbitration and free agency. After the request was made, the players' association asked for a break and the meeting adjourned soon after.

"We've never heard a full proposal from them," Daly said. "They have given us a variation of the same proposal on economics a couple of times and there was no change in that position. They are still suggesting that they are moving in our direction on economics, but until we know exactly what their position is on economics now, we think it's all tied together and would like to hear it all together."

Union representatives, along with 18 players who were in attendance, returned to the players' association office to have discussions among

themselves. It is unclear if talks will continue through the Thanksgiving holiday if progress is made on Wednesday.

The players tried to put the focus on player-contract issues on Monday night before returning to specific revenue and economic areas, but the NHL wasn't interested in that because the league considers everything to be intertwined.

Neither side wants to agree to anything, or make concessions in one single area, without knowing how those will affect other parts of the CBA that still need to be negotiated.

"Our position all along has been on the player contracting issues that they become considerably more important to players as the cap becomes limited," Fehr said.

After turning down a suggestion from NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman to take a two-week break from negotiations, the union requested another meeting with the league. That produced Monday's get-together.

"We could've taken a couple of weeks off, I suppose," Fehr said. "It's hard for me to see how you make an agreement if you aren't talking, so you talk. Sometimes it doesn't lead anywhere, and perhaps very often it doesn't lead anywhere, but if you aren't talking it's 100 percent sure it doesn't lead anywhere.

"They were willing to have the meeting if we said we wanted to meet. That is about as far as I can go."

Daly said the NHL is always willing to listen if the players have something meaningful to say.

"We're never going to shut down the process," he said. "If they think there is a reason to meet and we can make progress, we're happy to meet. That's what we told them and that's what led to today's meeting."

It was the first bargaining session since Nov. 11, when a busy week of negotiating wrapped up without results. All games through Nov. 30 and the New Year's Day Winter Classic have been called off. More games - including the All-Star game in Columbus, Ohio - could soon be axed, too.

One area in which the NHL hasn't budged is in the area of guaranteed money to players. The league wants a percentage split of actual hockey-related revenue instead of a promised dollar amount to players based on projections of how the game will grow.

"If their proposal continues to be a guaranteed amount of player-share dollars, we have told them that that is not a proposal that is acceptable to us or would ever be acceptable to our owners right now," Daly said. "If that continues to be where we are, we are a long way apart."

News Observer LOADED: 11.21.2012

644559 Chicago Blackhawks

NHL's Daly: 'No expectations' on union proposal

By Chris Kuc Tribune reporter

2:49 p.m. CST, November 20, 2012

The NHL lockout hit its 66th day Tuesday without negotiations between the league and players' union in an attempt to come to terms on a new collective bargaining agreement.

The sides met for nearly two hours Monday night in New York and spent Tuesday apart as the NHLPA is reportedly mulling making a new proposal the next time the sides sit down to talk. Reportedly, negotiations will resume Wednesday in New York.

There is still a wide gap in the division of hockey-related revenue and also contract terms, among other items. The NHL is said to be waiting for the union to offer a new deal -- though NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly told the Tribune in an e-mail that he isn't sure what will transpire.

"I don't have any expectations at this point," Daly said in the e-mail.

Chicago Blackhawks defenseman Steve Montador, a member of the NHLPA's negotiating committee, said via e-mail that "we are considering a proposal but nothing is definite. In fact, we've always been working on proposals, and that's shown in the multiple offers thus far.

"Time is ticking more now than ever but we're not at a point where the season would be cancelled--at least in my opinion," Montador added. "For now, it's a continued reserved optimism."

Thus far, 327 games have been cancelled due to the lockout that began Sept. 15. The Hawks had been scheduled to play the Sharks in San Jose on Tuesday night at HP Pavilion.

Chicago Tribune LOADED: 11.21.2012

644560 Chicago Blackhawks

Blackhawks' brass give back for Thanksgiving

TRACEY MYERS

ROMEDEVILLE -- Blackhawks coach Joel Quenneville knows where he normally is this time of year.

"We'd probably be in San Jose today with the Circus Trip, maybe Las Vegas in the middle," said Quenneville.

Yes, normally this would be the time for traveling and playing. But for the Blackhawks' brass, on Day 66 of the NHL lockout, it was a day of giving back.

Quenneville, team president John McDonough, general manager Stan Bowman and others were at the DuPage Township Food Pantry for the Blackhawks' food drive there on Tuesday. From directing traffic to handing out food, the Blackhawks welcomed the opportunity to give back.

"This has been on our schedule for quite a while," McDonough said. "It's great to see everyone in the organization doing this together. It's in the spirit of what we're trying to do."

It was the first food drive the Blackhawks have done with the DuPage Township Food Pantry, which serves more than 500 families a month.

"They do an unbelievable job 365 days of the year," Blackhawks color analyst Eddie Olczyk said of the pantry. "All the help, all the volunteers, all the corporate sponsors that help out, it's the least that I can do and our family can do. But to be part of it with the Blackhawks and all the people who work here on a yearly basis, it's more than our pleasure."

No, there's still no hockey. No Circus Trip, which the Blackhawks would be in the midst of right now. But there are still reasons to be thankful, and still good causes to give time and energy to.

"It's fun to be a part of it," said Quenneville, who helped load boxes of food into families' cars. "I'm excited to be in Chicago for Thanksgiving. It's a special time of year. All the sharing, giving, appreciate, it comes with a great day."

Comcast SportsNet.com LOADED: 11.21.2012

644561 Colorado Avalanche

Avs Mailbag: Can Colorado keep up without Matt Duchene?

By Adrian Dater The Denver Post

I always want to watch Matt Duchene. But in light of his injury -- again -- I have to ask: Are the Avs appreciably worse without him right now? I mean, it seems like when he was out the first time, they were the same inconsistent team when he was in. How is the team different with and without him, specifically?

--Pavel, Quebec

When Duchene went down again Tuesday, he was playing center. Before he got hurt the last time, he was playing winger. I think his loss as a winger is easier to withstand, but as a center it's tougher.

Now, Mark Olver will probably have to go back to center -- and I think he was better as a winger.

Look, Duchene is a talented guy and the Avs are a better team with him than without him. But with the additions of Steve Downie and Jamie McGinn and Mike Connolly, it's a bit easier to withstand his loss -- at least in the short term.

Adrian, I believe the Avs will always be a bubble playoff team unless ownership is willing to spend more money. Do you agree? As a fan I know the Avs won't make a move for a big name at the trade deadline or in free agency (eg. Rick Nash, Ryan Suter). Do players on the team get frustrated with this and does it affect how players on other teams view the Avs?

--Jay Nishikawa, Englewood

I'm getting tired of the "just spend more money" line of reasoning.

Adding big, expensive free agents hasn't worked so well for Buffalo this year. And Florida, though the Panthers are leading their division currently after a big off-season spending spree, isn't too far from being in ninth place either.

Minnesota spent big money on Martin Havlat, and then traded him a couple years later. Los Angeles spent a ton of money on guys like Drew Doughty and Jeff Carter and they're in a major fight just to make the playoffs.

Develop from within, develop a good core there, then add pieces around the margins. That, I believe is the recipe that works best in the NHL now. I think the Avs are slowly doing that.

Hey Adrian, I was just wondering with Milan Hejduk, do you think he will hang up his skates after this year, or if he still wants to play will we sign him, or would some other team go after him?

--Joe, St. Louis

Hejduk has struggled mightily in the second half, there's no question.

I have no idea what he'll decide this summer, but if he decides to quit, I think he'll want to just retire as an Avs player and not want to go anywhere else. He could change his mind on that, but I believe he wants to say he stayed with one team his whole career.

Taking into account his success in the NHL (a Stanley Cup, a Rocket Richard trophy, 11 consecutive 20-plus goal seasons, three-time All-Star) and international play (one gold and one bronze medal in the Olympics), do you think Milan Hejduk has a shot at the Hall of Fame? If he doesn't make it to 20 goals this year, do you think that hurts his chances?

--Mark, Plainville, Conn.

I'd have to say Hejduk would fall a bit short of the Hall. If he remains in the high 300-goal range, those scoring numbers are probably not enough.

Hey, he's had a great career, but Hall of Fame? I don't quite see it.

When the Avs have the puck in their own zone, why don't they keep the puck, make the line change, and have a break out up the ice? Instead of skating and dumping the puck to go on defense.

--Chuck S., Littleton

Too risky. If you are trying to keep the puck in your own end and make a line change, you're subjecting yourself to getting it stolen too easily by opposing forecheckers. Better to get it in their end and make the change.

The kind of change you want happens a lot on power plays, though. But at even strength, it's too easy to lose it in your own end and subject yourself to good scoring chances.

Hi! A Question from a Sweden Native here! What hockey culture was there in Colorado before the Avs? What teams and players did The Denver Post cover before NHL came to the area?

--Johan Jonsson, Gävle, Sweden

There was a lot of hockey before the Avs. Of course, the NHL's Colorado Rockies played here from 1976-82, and some minor-pro teams such as the Denver Grizzlies, Denver Rangers, Denver Spurs, etc.

Of course, there has always been strong college hockey here in town, with the University of Denver and Colorado College. The Post has covered them all.

Denver Post: LOADED: 11.21.2012

644562 Columbus Blue Jackets

Blue Jackets' Murray could miss season

By Aaron Portzline

The Blue Jackets won't offer a definitive diagnosis on defenseman Ryan Murray's injured right shoulder until he travels to Columbus this weekend to meet with the club's medical staff.

But an MRI taken this week does not portend good news for Murray, the No. 2 overall pick last June and one of the top prospects in hockey. Sources told The Dispatch last night that Murray suffered a torn labrum when he attempted to catch himself falling backward after getting hit hard while playing for his junior club in Everett, Wash.

Results of the MRI are being sent to Murray's agent in Minneapolis and to the Blue Jackets' medical staff.

"Surgery is not a certainty at this point," general manager Scott Howson said. "We aren't going to make a decision until Dr. (Larry) Watson is able to see him and examine him."

If surgery is required, Murray will likely miss at least four months and possibly the remainder of the season. Watson would perform the surgery, Howson said.

Even if surgery is not required — a small possibility — Murray is almost certain to miss a chance to represent Team Canada in the world junior championships beginning Dec. 26 in Russia.

"When I spoke with him (on Sunday), he was in a lot of pain," Howson said. "He was disappointed, obviously. I would say he's very disappointed."

Murray was expected to challenge for a roster spot with the Blue Jackets in training camp, but the NHL lockout forced his return to the junior ranks. Still, he was on the list of cleared call-ups for an abbreviated training camp if the lockout had ended.

"It's a bump in the road, and we'll find out here in a couple of days just how big a bump," Blue Jackets president of hockey operations John Davidson said. "But no matter what, we'll confront it and get through it. We're going to do what's best for (Murray) and get him healthy."

Columbus Dispatch LOADED: 11.21.2012

644563 Detroit Red Wings

Red Wings coach Mike Babcock keeps tabs on Jan Mursak, who's thriving in Austria

By Helene St. James

The Red Wings tentatively had tagged Jan Mursak as a regular in their lineup last season, a plan that went nowhere after a slide into the end boards during an exhibition game shattered his left ankle.

By the time Mursak returned, the season was half over, and he was relegated to spot duty. He's making up for it now, albeit 4,000 miles away, thriving as a go-to guy for his team in Austria.

Mursak has eight goals and 21 assists in 16 games and is tied for the team lead with 29 points. The Austrian hockey league is nowhere near on par with Sweden or Russia, or the NHL, but to see Mursak do well anywhere is great for the Wings, considering he's only 24 and was in his rookie season

last year. Had he not gotten injured, he would have pushed for a spot on the fourth line and as a penalty-killer. He played in just 25 games, producing three points.

"It's interesting with 'Sak, because 'Sak was a guy, before he broke his ankle last year, we had him as being significant," Wings coach Mike Babcock said. "By the end, he never even got to play. And he was disgruntled, probably, with us, and you wonder. Then he goes over, and I hear he's one of the best players in Austria. So, fantastic for him."

Babcock is stuck keeping tabs on his overseas players via the Internet and friends because he's prohibited from contact with NHL players during the labor dispute. Mursak signed to play in Austria shortly after the lockout began Sept. 16.

"I've touched bases with a number of coaches; Pierre Page and George Kingston are over there," Babcock said. "So, I touch base with those guys. So, it's so easy to gather the information with people."

Contact Helene St. James: 313-222-2295

Detroit Free Press LOADED: 11.21.2012

644564 Detroit Red Wings

Red Wings' Cory Emmerton slowly working his way back from shattered index finger

Ansar Khan | akhan1 at mlive.com

That plan went awry in his first game on Oct. 12 with SaiPa Lappeenranta in the Finnish league, when the young forward broke his right index finger.

Following surgery on Oct. 16, Emmerton is back in Detroit, rehabbing and slowly working his way back, in hopes of a resolution soon to the NHL work stoppage.

He has been limited to power-skating drills the past couple of weeks and estimates it will be another one-to-three weeks before he is cleared to participate in informal practices with teammates at the Troy Sports Center.

"I'm not allowed to shoot or put too much pressure on it," Emmerton said. "I just started rehab, just got the cast off (two weeks ago). I'm not really sure how long before I'm cleared to go full out."

Emmerton's injury was the result of being hit in the wrong spot by the puck.

"It was tough. I couldn't really believe it, it happened so fast," Emmerton said. "Nine times out of 10 the puck hits you in a more padded spot in the glove."

"I was hoping it was just dislocated in a way that it could be put back in place, but once I got the X-rays, it was a lot worse than I expected. It was a pretty bad break, just kind of shattered my finger."

He is hoping to be cleared in time to participate in an NHLPA charity game with several teammates and other NHL players Dec. 8 at Windsor's WFCU Center.

Emmerton, 24, played in 71 games as a rookie with the Red Wings in 2011-12, picking up six goals and four assists and posting a plus-1 rating.

The Red Wings have 16 forwards, including Gustav Nyquist, who is playing for the Grand Rapids Griffins, and Patrick Eaves, who is on long-term injured reserve due to a concussion.

They will carry 13 or 14 forwards.

Michigan Live LOADED: 11.21.2012

644565 Detroit Red Wings

NHL Lockout: McShane's, Nemo's suffer through loss of Detroit Red Wings crowd

David Muller | dmuller at mlive.com

DETROIT, MI - On Saturday a young woman walked into McShane's Irish Pub & Whiskey Bar at 1460 Michigan Ave. and asked the bartender if they were hiring.

The bartender, who happened to be co-owner Ryan McShane that day, told the woman that they were not at the moment, but if professional hockey starts back up she should check back.

With the lockout now in its 65th day, McShane said he has not hired any new staff. He has not laid any off either, he said, but bartenders and servers who depend on tips have suffered through less shifts and slower customer traffic.

The Detroit Red Wings hockey games are such a boon for the bar, that McShane said he has lost thousands of dollars each time a home game has not been played. The bar, along with Nemo's sports bar just down the road at 1384 Michigan Ave., has been a hot spot for warm up drinks or post-game celebration in part because of its free shuttle service to and from the Joe Louis Arena downtown.

So far, 11 regular season have been cancelled. The first home game that is tentatively scheduled is a Dec. 1 match-up against the San Jose Sharks.

With the lockout's longevity thus far, there is obviously no guarantee that game will be played. League officials and players are scheduled to negotiations Monday in New York.

In 2005 the NHL became the only American professional sports league to cancel an entire season, as it axed the 2004-05 playing year. A previous lockout shortened the 1994-1995 season to 48 games, and a players' strike postponed 30 games of the 1991-92 season by 30 games.

In the latest chapter of NHL lockouts, top officials from the NHL and the NHL Players' Association have been unable to see eye-to-eye on a new Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Michigan Live LOADED: 11.21.2012

644566 Detroit Red Wings

Red Wings scouting report: Kyle Quincey will be counted on to show significant improvement

By Ansar Khan | akhan1 at mlive.com

Kyle Quincey

Position: Defense

Age: 27

Height/weight: 6-2/207

How acquired: By trade Feb. 21, 2012, from Colorado, through Tampa Bay, for a 2012 first-round draft pick. Originally selected by Detroit in fourth round (132nd overall) in 2003 entry draft.

Contract: Signed a two-year deal on July 18 that has a salary-cap hit of \$3.775 million.

2011-12 stats: 72 games, seven goals, 19 assists, 26 points, minus-1 rating, 89 penalty minutes (with Detroit, 18 games, two goals, one assist, three points, even plus-minus rating, 29 penalty minutes).

Career stats: 257 games, 18 goals, 77 assists, 95 points, minus-5 rating, 250 penalty minutes.

What he's doing during the lockout: He played 12 games for the expansion Denver Cutthroats of the Central Hockey League, picking up two goals and nine assists and posting a minus-3 rating.

Strengths: Has good size and mobility and moves the puck well. He can log a lot of ice time and play in all situations, manning the point on the power play and killing penalties.

Weaknesses: For his size, he could be more abrasive and punishing on opponents. He is prone to making mistakes with the puck when he doesn't make the safe and simple play.

2011-12 in review: Scored a goal in his first game after being reacquired by Detroit, in a 4-3 shootout loss to Vancouver on Feb. 23. ... A healthy

scratch against Nashville on March 30. ... Suspended one game for hit to the head on Florida's Tomas Kopecky on April 1. ... Recorded career highs in goals (seven), power-play goals (four) and shots on goal (168) between Colorado and Detroit. ... Led Avalanche defensemen in points (23) and ice time (22:25) at the time of the trade. ... Scored first career overtime goal Nov. 10 vs. New York Islanders, with Colorado. ... Finished with 101 hits and 94 blocked shots. ... Had two assists and a minus-2 rating in five playoff games. ... Represented Canada at World Championships.

2012-13 outlook: After trading a first-round pick for him and later signing him to a lucrative contract, the Red Wings need him to show significant improvement after a mostly disappointing two-month stretch. He seemed to be pressing too much. The club hopes he will settle down and do the things he showed he can do after leaving Detroit in 2008 – play strong and steady in his own zone, move the puck well and contribute offensively. He'll play in all situations – man the point on the second power-play unit and kill penalties.

What does Quincey need to do to demonstrate he is worth what the Red Wings gave up to get him and are paying him?

Michigan Live LOADED: 11.21.2012

644567 Edmonton Oilers

Both sides too far along not to reach a deal, says Oilers goalie Devan Dubnyk

By Robert Tychkowski

Devan Dubnyk thinks there will be a season. Part of one, anyway.

The Oilers netminder and player rep believes the NHL and NHLPA are close enough in their negotiations that striking a deal simply makes more sense than scrapping the rest of the schedule.

"I really think so," he said. "I just think we're too close to miss an entire season. We (NHLPA) don't think we're too far off. Sometimes they (the NHL) tell us otherwise, but I really think that once we can get some momentum going a deal won't be too far off. It's just when that momentum can be gained."

If the NHL is willing to negotiate, Dubnyk says a deal can be struck in a matter of days.

"Both sides have to be willing to negotiate and so far they haven't seemed too interested. It's kind of been take it or leave it."

As for the NHLPA saying, to heck with it and just taking whatever the NHL offers so they can start playing already, Dubnyk says that won't happen.

"No. The league hasn't really presented us with an offer that we can accept, and everybody knows that. To demand all of those contracting issues and not even be willing to talk about them, that seriously affects our ability to earn money going forward and it's something we can't take."

Edmonton Sun: LOADED: 11.21.2012

644568 Edmonton Oilers

Oilers goaltender Devan Dubnyk forced to be mobile to find practice time

By Robert Tychkowski

Allen Iverson would not approve of Devan Dubnyk's recent schedule.

The Edmonton Oilers goalie has been on the move for weeks, from Edmonton to Dallas to Phoenix to Calgary and then back to Edmonton for a few days until he can find his next destination.

Why?

To practise.

Seriously.

We talkin' practice, man.

Not the game.

Practice.

Unfortunately for Dubnyk, and almost all NHL goalies, practice is all they've got. With their league closed for repairs and European teams unwilling to shelve their own netminders in favour of a tourist who could be gone in two weeks, there simply aren't any games.

So they practise, man. Dubnyk has been hauling his goalie pads all over North America in search of ice with decent shooters on it.

"Pretty much," sighed the 26-year-old keeper. "I've been flying all over the place, it's been ridiculous. I text people I know to see if there's a spot open and if there is, I pack up my stuff and go."

Goalies don't have a lot of options right now. Not even for practice. Sessions that can accommodate 20 skaters, usually only have room for two men in masks.

"It's not fun. It sucks, actually," said Dubnyk. "I'd like to be home in Edmonton, but every time I'm there I end up not skating for four or five days and I can't be doing that. If the NHL gets going I'm going to have to be ready."

"So I'm back to Edmonton on the weekend and I'll decide where I'm off to next."

He's currently in Calgary, getting some pretty good workouts in enemy territory.

"It's a good group of guys who used to play in Europe and obviously a bunch of Flames guys," said Dubnyk. "There's coaches out there and stuff who run drills and it's actually pretty good intensity. The ice is good and I'm able to get out early every day for about half an hour."

Yes, it's come to that, an Oilers goalie finding comfort in skating with Calgary Flames in November. But there just aren't many, if any, options.

"I was talking to (Miikka) Kiprusoff the other day, he's skating here, and he was saying there's only a few goalies over in Europe," said Dubnyk. "I'd certainly like to be, I've tried and nothing has come through."

This isn't the best way for a goal keeper to stay sharp, especially one who has yet to carry the load for an entire NHL season. Between Edmonton's penchant for three-goalie rotations, and a coach who wouldn't play him last year, Dubnyk's collected more dust in his young career than he'd care to remember. Now this.

"It would be nice to just have a normal, full season," he said. "That'll be next year."

In the meantime, practice makes somewhat less than perfect.

"You have to play games to get that feeling back, there's only so much you can do in practice," he said. "I'm sure every goalie will feel it when we come back, but it's something we have to deal with. Everybody is going to be in the same boat."

While he's trained himself not to let outside influences impact his mental state on the ice, Dubnyk admits he can't help it during the lockout. When things look good, he gets excited, when things look bad, his body language sags.

Since there is some progress being made in CBA negotiations, he's allowing himself to be optimistic.

"There's been a lot of ups and downs and unfortunately I do let it affect me," he said. "It's funny because you try and make yourself not do that in a hockey season, and I'm good at that on the ice, but not with this stuff; I've let myself get excited quite a few times."

"I'm keeping my fingers crossed, but I've been doing that the whole time."

Edmonton Sun: LOADED: 11.21.2012

644569 Los Angeles Kings

Hockey: Kings left wing Kyle Clifford signs with Ontario Reign

By J.P. Hoonstra Staff Writer

The Kings' farm system dipped into its NHL affiliate Tuesday.

With the NHL lockout more than two months old, burly Kings winger Kyle Clifford signed with the Reign. He becomes the third locked-out NHL player, joining Paul Mara and Devin Setoguchi, to sign with the Reign since the season began.

At age 21, Clifford has two full NHL seasons under his belt - and his name on the Stanley Cup following the Kings' championship run last season.

Clifford has 12 goals and 264 penalty minutes in 157 games with the Kings since breaking into the league in 2010. He also played three scoreless playoff games during the Kings' Cup run last year and six games in the 2011 playoffs, scoring three goals.

Clifford was a second-round draft pick (35th overall) by the Kings in 2009. After his final junior season with the Ontario Hockey League's Barrie Colts, Clifford appeared in seven playoff games for the Manchester Monarchs.

A prodigious fighter, Clifford will help offset the loss of Reign enforcer Chris Cloud, who's on the 21-day injured reserve with a hip ailment. Listed at 6-foot-1 and 200 pounds, Clifford should also be an imposing net-front presence in the ECHL.

Clifford will not count toward the ECHL limit of four veterans (players who have played 200 career professional games) per team.

The Reign visit the Bakersfield Condors on Saturday.

LA Daily News: LOADED: 11.21.2012

644570 Minnesota Wild

NHL wants full, formal proposal from the NHLPA

Posted by: Michael Russo under Wild off-season news

The NHL and NHLPA met for almost two hours last night in New York. The hope is they'll meet again Tuesday with the union returning with a full proposal. Word is the players may want another day.

The NHL has requested a full, formal proposal from the NHLPA. This has been a source of frustration for the league for some time. It feels Donald Fehr has never made a formal offer on anything other than the original one on core economics that pays players more money next year than last year. It has never, according to the league, spelled out anything on paper in terms of contract restrictions.

So the NHL has indicated to the union that it is not willing to discuss contractual issues until it comes to some sort of understanding in terms of core economics because it's all interconnected. Basically, the NHL wants a full proposal written on actual paper -- a heck of a concept 66 days into a lockout.

The union indicated it'll be back with something.

"We've never heard a full proposal from them," Deputy Commissioner Bill Daly told reporters in New York last night. "They have given us a variation of the same proposal on economics a couple of times and there was no change in that position. They are still suggesting that they are moving in our direction on economics, but until we know exactly what their position is on economics now, we think it's all tied together and would like to hear it all together.

"It's our position that we've made a couple comprehensive proposals in a row. We'd like to know where they are on all of the issues. We asked that they put together a comprehensive proposal for us to consider."

Fehr was quoted in an Associated Report saying, "Our position all along has been on the player contracting issues that they become considerably more important to players as the cap becomes limited. We made proposals in a couple of areas in this regard, which moved toward them, but we wanted to talk about the rest of these to see where we were. We indicated to them the last time we met and again today that if we put aside for a moment the effect of the lockout on revenues — we didn't think we were too far apart on the share — and if that was right we can back into a discussion on the revenues. We wanted to know where we were on the player contracting stuff first, and they were unwilling to do that — at least tonight."

So, the league wants to know where the two sides are on core economics before talking contractual stuff. Fehr wants to know where they're at on the "contracting stuff first" before talking about the economics!

And in the interim, player careers, owner business and a league is being driven right off a cliff.

Here's the deal: whether the players think the league is playing fair or not, the owners control whether this thing will ever end.

The owners feel Fehr's been playing games with them for months, that he routinely shows up with one-page economic proposals that have barely changed. He's driving the owners loco in typical Donald Fehr fashion. They've clearly dug in and are done with it.

So regardless of what the players think of that first NHL proposal in July that clawed back on a ton of their rights, the owners feel they've moved to 50/50 without Fehr coming toward them. They feel Fehr's done a masterful job getting them to renegotiate that initial proposal without getting anything of substance from Fehr.

They say they don't know what Fehr wants with the main contractual changes other than no changes at all, ... and that is not going to happen. The owners are clearly done playing games until Fehr shows up with an actual full proposal. When that happens, the owners indicate they'll do some give and take. Let's hope that's true because the players are being asked to absorb all the burden for a CBA the past seven years that was supposed to repair the economic system in the NHL.

Despite the league canceling a season to get that CBA, that clearly didn't happen and the league is back for me.

So again, whether the players feel the owners are being fair or not (and it's debatable), this is the reality now. If the players want the lockout to end, if they want to play again, they must get Fehr to show up to the next meeting with something that makes the owners feel he's negotiating and compromising.

Then, it's on the owners.

Star Tribune LOADED: 11.21.2012

644571 Montreal Canadiens

Hockey with high energy at high altitude

JORDAN WINNETT

First stop: Zug.

During the NHL lockout, most players in search of work have migrated to the KHL in Russia, the SM-liiga in Finland, and the Swedish Elite League.

In Switzerland, the talent is thinner and most rinks miniaturized by comparison, but for entertainment value on and off the ice, the NHL could learn a thing or two from its top tier: the National League A. In the crowds, no one wears a suit and on the ice, goals are easy to come by.

Gary Bettman (left) Commissioner of the NHL and Bill Daly, Deputy Commissioner and chief legal officer of the NHL leave the NHLPA offices in Toronto on Wednesday, August 22, 2012. Negotiations continue between the NHL and the NHLPA over collective bargaining as both sides try to avoid a potential lockout.

The Great Debate

Video: How far apart are the two sides?

More than 100,000 fans watch the NCAA college hockey game between Michigan and Michigan State at Michigan Stadium in Ann Arbor, Mich., Saturday, Dec. 11, 2010

video

Video: Why the NHL cancelled the Winter Classic

The arena in Zug (pop: 26,000) seats 6,700 and face-painted fans surrounding the net in the defensive zone stand on a concrete slab the entire game. In the opposite end, fans of the visiting team are isolated in a

small section caged-in with plexiglass, isolating them from the home supporters like barn animals and smothering their noise.

The home side hits the ice one-by-one through a ring of fire as the main address announcer shouts out the player's first name, and the crowd responds by bellowing the last.

On this night, with the constant, rhythmic beating of a drum carrying through the rink for all 60 minutes, Detroit Red Wings captain Henrik Zetterberg, playing for EV Zug (and with a McDonald's arches patch sewn onto the back of his pants), picks up four points in a 7-4 win over visiting EHC Biel, a team featuring Tyler Seguin of the Boston Bruins and Patrick Kane of the Chicago Blackhawks.

Kane scored late in the first period, and followed with a trademark low fist-sweep celebration across the ice. The 24-year-old forward was quick to comment on the boisterous crowd, which did not let up all game, cheering, chanting, drumming, whistling or stomping.

"It's more exciting," Kane said. "I love it; it's a different kind of atmosphere."

Seguin is currently third in league scoring with 28 points (16 goals) in 18 games; Kane has 10 points (four goals) in six games.

"I hear it's pretty offensive over here, and you get a lot of chances on the power play and on the big ice – it's fun," Kane said recently. "One of my favourite things to do is score goals."

Scoring shouldn't be an issue for the skilled American, as there's more physicality in the crowd than on the ice.

Days later, a 200-kilometre journey through the scenic Swiss Alps brought the Zug squad to the capital city, Bern.

SC Bern plays before demonstrative crowds, averaging near 17,000 a game. And during a recent two-game losing skid, local fans elected to "voice" their displeasure by remaining completely silent for the first two periods of the next home game. Not a sound. This may be normal in a regular-season NHL game at Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum, but in Bern, this was a direct message that the on-ice performance would not be tolerated.

But when Zug visited PostFinance Arena, the fans' mood was upbeat. They banged drums, chanted, waved flags and whistled continuously.

(The drummer was a character. He was not hired by the team, nor instructed what to do in any way. Yet, his timing was impeccable and thousands of fans followed his lead seamlessly, creating a European soccer crowd crammed into a rink.)

Half of the stadium was filled with loyal supporters dressed in black and red, who began bellowing chants more than an hour before the players stepped on the ice. A monstrous black, red and yellow SC Bern flag was unfolded as players warmed up on the ice, covering thousands of fans as they continued to chant.

The Bern players entered the ice through a steel fence tunnel, reminiscent of a jail cell, while the skate-less cheerleaders occupy the opponents' zone, hindering Zug players from circling the ice.

The end result: a 5-1 win for Bern, led by New York Islanders centre John Tavares with a goal and an assist. Tavares has 18 points (seven goals) in 14 games.

Coming from an NHL franchise which averaged less than 13,200 fans a night in 2011-12, Tavares was quick to praise the boisterous Bern supporters. "It's a good team with high expectations and the support here is pretty incredible. It's hard to beat."

When asked to compare the Swiss league to the NHL, Tavares said: "It's definitely not as physical as back home, but it's a different style here, it's hard to compare."

The first-overall pick in the 2009 NHL draft acknowledged the Swiss league lacks "high-end, elite-level skill," but pointed out the "consistency throughout the teams. And Swiss players are growing."

Tavares and SC Bern next headed southwest toward the French border for a game against league-leading Geneve-Servette HC.

A live eagle weaved above the capacity crowd of 7,000 during player introductions. The rink had an unfinished, caved-in-looking roof that gave the event a bit of a claustrophobic feeling as the fans are almost on top of the ice. And the game had a little of everything: Physical play, a penalty shot, an own goal by Bern when the defenceman accidentally slid the puck

back into his own net with the goalie pulled ... and an incident of shoe-throwing.

Shirtless and face-painted SC Bern fans who accompanied the team to Geneva reacted to a controversial goal call in Geneve-Servette's favour by launching shoes toward the rink-side glass. Hundreds of shoes. Oddly, Geneva supporters and rink security personnel acted as if this was normal behaviour.

Not finished, now-shoeless Bern fans entertained themselves through a slow third period by creating a mosh pit in the stands and violently bashing themselves against one another. Again, security barely blinked an eye.

In the Swiss league, a team's top scorer wears a different jersey and helmet than his teammates, to allow fans to better notice the "best" player on the ice. San Jose Sharks forward Logan Couture, with a Geneve-Servette-best 23 points (seven goals), wore a yellow flame on this night.

"It was an adjustment that needs getting used to," he said.

Besides Bern, Geneve-Servette arguably has the most boisterous fans in the Swiss league. Couture acknowledged the excitement and joy playing in such a different atmosphere.

"Sometimes, I sit and watch the crowd from the bench," he said with a laugh. "They're awesome."

People vacation to Switzerland for the powdered slopes of the Alps, mouth-watering fondue, overpriced chocolate, a do-it-all pocketknife or maybe to pick up a designer watch.

But NHL refugees such as Kane, Couture, Tavares and Seguin have also found the nation's hockey culture is alive and well – and a shoe-throwing, violent-moshing, eagle-weaving, flame-wearing, drum-beating, goal-scoring good time.

Toronto Globe And Mail LOADED: 11.21.2012

644572 Montreal Canadiens

Without fanfare, former Hab Spacek retires

By Dave Stubbs

One day into his retirement, 20 years of serious hockey and 941 NHL regular-season and playoff games beginning to grow smaller in his rear-view, Jaroslav Spacek answered the text message Tuesday from a golf course.

"Call me in 9:30 your time!" the now-former defenceman replied from his native Czech Republic, his thick baritone accent practically audible on an iPhone display.

Spatcho answered at 9:30 sharp on the third ring — 3:30 in the afternoon for him in Rokycany-Borek — and insisted the earlier text message hadn't spoiled a good swing.

"A good interruption!" he said, laughing.

Spacek has been golfing a lot, having played three or four times a week through the summer and fall.

"My handicap's about a 9. Not bad," he said, having stickhandled around the three different courses he's joined.

Spacek's hockey career was in its autumn years last season, traded from the Canadiens on Dec. 9 to the Carolina Hurricanes. It was in Raleigh that he'd reach the end of a three-year, \$11.5-million contract he'd been signed to in Montreal in the summer of 2009.

As July's unrestricted free-agency window approached, the 38-year-old said he was told by the Hurricanes that "they wanted to go a different direction."

Said Spacek: "They told me they might be making a mistake not to sign me, but they said thank you very much and basically let me go."

Spacek's agent explored some interest in Philadelphia, but any deal there stalled in a landscape darkening with a lockout's brewing clouds.

So a few weeks ago, the veteran of seven NHL clubs — eight if you count Chicago twice — had the belongings of himself, his wife, Lenka, and their

sons, David, 9½, and Jacob, 4½, shipped back to Rokycany-Borek, to a summer home that's just become their year-round address.

On Monday, with no fanfare at all, Spacek announced his retirement from hockey and set off into the life of a husband and father who is eager to dote on his family.

"I have nothing left in North America. Except some money!" Spacek said, laughing again.

In his nearly 2½ seasons with the Canadiens, you'd not confuse this man with, say, Larry Robinson. But you would get an honest effort every night from a steady defenceman who played plenty of all-purpose minutes, filled huge gaps left by injuries to others and was a hugely popular figure in the dressing room for his leadership skills and tension-breaking sense of humour that provided more stitches than a tailor.

So far — granted, he's been retired one day — Lenka hasn't thrown her husband out of the house, even though Spacek admits: "I was lying around like crazy."

He's back in hockey with Skoda Plzen, his "home team" for which he played during the 2004-05 lockout. Spatcho has signed on with the club, co-owned and managed by former NHLer Martin Straka, to do a little work on home ice with the team's defencemen, travelling a little on road trips.

"We're leading the league so far," Spacek boasted. "And I'll be in Kladno on Friday, a big matchup against Pleky (Habs centreman Tomas Plekanec)."

It's not that hockey has a magnetic pull.

"No, I just want to settle down right now," Spatcho said. "It's been a long time since I've been in Czech. It's a different lifestyle than North America. I played hockey for 20 years. I just want to settle and see where I stand, but I'm happy for the three, four hours I spend now at the rink."

Spacek says Montreal will forever remain the highlight of his NHL career; he's already eager to return next autumn for the bar mitzvah of a friend's son.

The Canadiens provided more than one difficult moment — he was lustily booed some nights, suffered some tough injuries in a Habs jersey and, finally, was traded by then-GM Pierre Gauthier without being told for some time where he was headed.

Once in Carolina, he described Montreal as having sometimes been a circus, which irked many. But it was an accurate view of a last-place team headed by dysfunctional management that also traded veterans Hal Gill and Michael Cammalleri, the latter in mid-game, without telling them where they were going.

"I love the fans, the city and the great group of players around me in the room," Spatcho said of Montreal. "It was real fun to play again for an Original Six team. It doesn't matter how things finished for me there, I'll always remember Montreal as the best team I ever played for."

His sole NHL regret is that the Stanley Cup eluded him, having come within one win with the 2005-06 Edmonton Oilers. For his homeland, Spacek won politically vital 1998 Olympic gold as well as three world championships.

With any luck, the NHL will be back in business next fall when he returns to Montreal for a visit.

"Think I can use all of my clout and watch the game from behind the bench?" he asked, laughing once more. "That would be awesome!"

Montreal Gazette LOADED: 11.21.2012

644573 Montreal Canadiens

Star-less Habs blood-donor clinic will go on

By Dave Stubbs

MONTREAL — Geneviève Paquette is assured of at least one unit of blood when the Canadiens and Héma-Québec tap into the veins of Montrealers at the Bell Centre on Thursday.

Her own.

"Definitely!" Paquette said with a laugh, pausing from her considerable work organizing the Habs' 31st annual blood-donor clinic. "I've donated four or five times and I'll be back this year."

To a great many, Paquette is the perpetually bright face of the Canadiens. She is both the team's director of community relations and executive director of the Montreal Canadiens Children's Foundation, titles that often intersect to lend a hand to the needy and underprivileged in this city and beyond.

Her work is especially challenging now, the NHL lockout having divorced her from her most valuable asset — the Canadiens players she cannot call for an autograph or an appearance.

(In fact, the lockout dictates that there can be no official contact between the club and its players, so don't blame the athletes for not taking part in team-organized charity/community functions.)

Further complicating the lives of Paquette and her team is that they must accomplish their work in 20-per-cent fewer hours; Canadiens staff, from owner Geoff Molson down, are on a reduced, four-day week because of the lockout.

"It's unfortunate, but I can't grab the phone and ask the players for their help," Paquette said. "We don't make the rules so we just do what we need to do. But we're gearing up and we're ready to flip the switch whenever (the lockout) is settled. I'm sure the players are as anxious as us to get back to our regular work mode."

The blood-donor clinic, from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., returns to the covered ice surface of the Bell Centre for the first time in nearly a decade, in recent years having been held in historic Windsor Station.

Paquette hopes the arena venue, the participation of Canadiens alumni and some from the hockey operations department, the appearance of showbiz guests and probably a few surprises will help the event collect its annual goal of 650 units of blood.

The Canadiens drive began with the Red Cross in 1981, launched by team legend Jean Béliveau and its late director of public relations, Claude Mouton. This is the 15th year the Habs have collaborated with Héma-Québec, which requires 1,000 units daily to meet its hospital needs throughout the province.

Donors on Thursday will find an open door to the Canadiens dressing room and will be visited cot-side by former Habs, members of the management and coaching staff, and mascot Youppi! The involvement this year of Evenko, the Bell Centre's concert-promotion arm, will produce appearances by a number of entertainers.

Because of the lockout, Paquette has cast a wider net than usual to give the clinic the greatest chance to succeed.

Habs alumni president Réjean Houle is organizing the clinic participation of former Canadiens.

Paquette and her team again organized September's annual golf tournament, which netted \$454,000 as the Children's Foundation's most important fundraiser.

The tournament was held without the participation of roster players, similar to how the golf and blood clinic were staged during the 2004-05 lockout.

While golfers didn't tee off with current Habs, many participants of a certain age connected strongly with the alumni, whom many saw play in their prime.

"This is not to take anything away from our (current) players," Paquette stressed, "because working with them is amazing."

"Community service is very important to our organization. When you're preparing an event, you can only use the tools at your disposal. We have an opportunity to continue our support of Héma-Québec, and that's a great need. Part of the Canadiens tradition is to give back."

That there is no hockey being played hardly means that Paquette has time on her hands.

She meets regularly with Molson to keep him abreast of and together plan community and foundation work. Hundreds of requests continue to arrive from not-for-profit groups seeking an autographed cap or jersey for their fundraising, the Canadiens dipping into their inventory to satisfy as many as possible. Letters pour in from parents of struggling children, a signed card of encouragement often a priceless pick-me-up.

There is work that's well underway on the Children's Foundation's fifth community rink, this one in Confederation Park in the district of Côte-des-Neiges/N.D.G. that's pegged for a January opening.

And straight ahead is the team's 48th annual holiday visit to the Montreal Children's and Sainte-Justine hospitals. Pending a lockout settlement, alumni and hockey operations staff will make those visits next month in lieu of the current team, as happened in 2004.

"The idea is to bring a little magic to the kids, to remind them that we're thinking about them," Paquette said. "We'll bring some gifts and try to spend quality time with them.

"It's not the ideal solution, not having P.K. and Carey and Brian and Josh on the visits. Kids' eyes sparkle when they and the other guys walk into a room.

"But we'll do what we can, and the Canadiens can do much good in the community no matter the challenges we now face."

Montreal Gazette LOADED: 11.21.2012

644574 Montreal Canadiens

Kraft's Hockeyville a lockout casualty

By Pat Hickey

MONTREAL — That \$3.3-billion pie the National Hockey League and its players are fighting over continues to get smaller.

The lockout claimed another victim Tuesday when Kraft Canada announced it was cancelling the popular Kraft Hockeyville program.

"The logistics are such that we ran out of time," said Jack Hewitt, Kraft's vice-president of marketing insight and services.

While Hewitt — a self-confessed hockey fan — didn't go into any details about Kraft's long-standing relationship with the NHL and the NHL Players' Association, he said the food giant's contracts include clauses that will require the owners and players to give back some money.

Hewitt noted that CBC, which came up with the idea for the Hockeyville competition and pitched it to Kraft, will also take a hit as a result of the lockout. Kraft is a major sponsor of Hockey Night in Canada and CBC works closely with Kraft on the Hockeyville project, announcing results and producing a special on the winning community.

The good news is that Kraft Canada is taking the money it would have spent on Hockeyville and putting it into a minor-hockey program called Kraft Hockey Goes On. The focus of the \$1-million program will be to recognize volunteers across Canada. In an online survey commissioned by Kraft, 77 per cent of Canadians said local hockey programs couldn't survive without dedicated volunteers.

"There are many things that help set up a game of hockey, but the magic of the sport is the people who make it happen," Hockey Canada president Bob Nicholson said in a statement. "It's the spirit of the Canadian communities that makes the sport so special. You feel it when you catch a game at a local arena."

Scott Smith, the chief operating officer for Hockey Canada, said the association and Kraft have been working together since 2009 with regional programs to help underprivileged youngsters with equipment and ice rentals. Kraft also has promotions set around the world junior championship.

"Clearly, this program moves it to the next level," Smith said.

The lockout provided the impetus for the new program, but Smith said he hoped it would fit into Kraft's business plan and continue in the future.

Communities will be able to nominate locals volunteers from Jan. 21, 2013, until March 8, 2013, by going to [www.KraftHockeyGoesOn.com](http://www.KraftHockeyGoesOn.com). A panel will select 100 volunteers, and that group will be further trimmed to 25.

On March 30, the top five volunteers will be announced and their organizations will each receive \$100,000. The other 20 finalists will be recognized with \$20,000 donated to each of their organizations. Kraft will

also donate \$100,000 to Hockey Canada to distribute to local Learn to Skate programs.

The lockout had already affected the Hockeyville program because the 2012 winner — the Stirling-Rawdon community in eastern Ontario — was supposed to be the site of an NHL exhibition game between the Toronto Maple Leafs and the Columbus Blue Jackets. That game was scrapped because of the lockout, but former NHLer Rob Ray rounded up a group of former and current players to play a game. Kraft did deliver \$100,000 to upgrade the local arena, \$10,000 worth of goods for the local food bank and a promise to provide a future exhibition game.

While Kraft is the first NHL sponsor to announce a change in its marketing strategy, it's safe to assume the league's other sponsors are — or will be — moving in the same direction as the lockout drags into a third month.

While both sides are trying to maximize their share of the revenue, some of that revenue is disappearing.

Montreal Gazette LOADED: 11.21.2012

644575 Montreal Canadiens

Habs, Price feeling sick after fantasy loss to Devils

By Stu Cowan

NEWARK, N.J. — Canadiens coach Michel Therrien said he felt ill when he saw goaltender Carey Price Tuesday afternoon.

But not as ill as Price.

"We had an optional morning skate, but Carey was there because he didn't play last night," Therrien said. "He was fine, but he said that when he woke up from a nap after lunch his sheets were all wet. He was running a fever and our first thought was to keep him away from the other players."

Price's illness forced Therrien to use Peter Budaj in nets, and while the backup turned in a strong 32-save performance the Canadiens finished on the short end of a 2-1 count Tuesday night at the Prudential Center.

"I can't remember the last time I played back-to-back games," said Budaj, who was in nets for a 4-3 win over Nashville Monday night in Montreal. "I wasn't tired, but I was worried about getting hurt because there was no way Carey could have played."

Price was listed as the backup, but stayed in the trainer's room and never put all his equipment on. Therrien said there was no time to summon a backup from Hamilton, because the Bulldogs were in Newfoundland, and he's not too concerned because the Canadiens are idle until Saturday when the Vancouver Canucks are at the Bell Centre.

Budaj and New Jersey's Martin Brodeur were both working on shutouts when Travis Zajac redirected Henrik Tallinder's shot from the point at 16:57 of the second period. Adam Henrique's, who has been experiencing the sophomore jinx, scored what proved to be the winner at 18:16.

"I didn't have a chance on the first one, but I would have liked another shot at the second goal," Budaj said. "I got a piece of it with my blocker."

Brodeur made 31 saves and lost his shutout when Rene Bourque scored his seventh of the season at 12:58 of the third period.

While Therrien said he was pleased with his team's effort, he was disappointed the Canadiens didn't generate more offence on the power play. With Andrei Markov out of the lineup, the Canadiens went 0-for-5 with the extra man. New Jersey had only power play.

The game ended on a sour note when Steve Bernier drove P.K. Subban into the boards from behind with 31 seconds to play and received a major for boarding. Subban had a small cut on his cheek, but skated off under his own power.

Montreal Gazette LOADED: 11.21.2012

644576 Nashville Predators

Economics professor sees framework of deal

Written by Josh Cooper

The Tennessean

As the NHL and NHL Players' Associations continued their collective bargaining sessions, one cliché painfully and forcefully came to light: sports is a business.

Since the league locked out its players on Sept. 15, both sides have hassled over economic elements — namely hockey-related revenue.

In the last year of the previous collective bargaining agreement, the players received 57 percent of hockey-related revenue, the owners 43 percent. The owners have tried to push the split closer to 50-50 in order to recoup some of those losses.

The players have said they can see the difference moving in that direction gradually, but don't want a quick shift. The league said it made \$3.3 billion in revenue in the 2011-12 season.

After months of negotiating and media rhetoric, talks for both sides finally may come to a head this week. With October and November games canceled, the league and the NHLPA are set to engage today in New York to see if they can bridge the gap between the two sides — player contract length and structure also has emerged as a point of contention.

If they can't, a portion of December games likely will be the next to go, though it's unclear if the NHL will cancel the entire month at this point.

To help explain where the two sides are from an economic standpoint, and how the lockout may hurt Nashville, The Tennessean talked with Vanderbilt sports economics professor John Vrooman.

How does this lockout impact the Nashville market?

John Vrooman: "At first the effects of a short lockout would have been minimal, but now I suspect that the longer lockout effect will be similar to the fans' reaction to 2004-05.

"Attendance after 2004-05 was remarkably resilient in the traditional hockey market, but in the non-traditional markets not so much. The gate in the NHL is over 55 percent of overall revenue.

"One of the unfortunate outcomes of the timing is that the NHL was just beginning its symbiotic national TV relationship with NBC after a decade of national media instability."

You've often discussed the NHL's "Southern Strategy" and the issues that have come with it. Is the league's lockout cycle correlated to this?

John Vrooman: "Yes, on both the revenue and cost sides, the Sun Belt expansion has put the squeeze on the NHL bottom line.

"On the revenue side, the Sun Belt clubs have been placed in mid-markets with nontraditional hockey fans. This reduces average club revenue and increases its volatility. Risky cash flow is worth less than certain cash flow in financial terms.

"On the cost side, the addition of nine teams in nine years increased the demand for relatively scarce skilled hockey talent, and as a result player salaries exploded from 1995 to 2004.

"The purpose of revenue sharing is to remedy the first problem, and the imposition of the hard salary cap is designed to remedy the cost side of the problem. In the sports business, cash flow certainty is critical on both the revenue and cost sides of the equation.

"The 2005 CBA rectified the cost problem (with the exception of signing players to long-term salary cap-circumventing deals) but the revenue side ... not so much. Revenue sharing is still a major shortcoming in the current NHL."

How far apart are the sides?

John Vrooman: "The current sets of proposals are not really that far apart, and they further rectify the cost issues of the league, but the revenue-sharing proposals by the league are inadequate.

"Players' share of (hockey-related revenue) should be set at 50 percent, and this was obvious from the beginning. The spread began when the owners wanted to cut the players share from 57 percent to 43 percent and then revised to 47 percent when the players dropped to 53 percent.

"While I think the players' share should be greater than 50 percent, the eventual outcome is obvious ... this is not rocket science. There are associated problems about when the 50/50 split should be reached over the course of the deal (players later and owners sooner), but the basic deal is right there to see.

"The question is also whether the owners will honor existing contracts such as those for (Predators defenseman Shea) Weber, (Wild forward Zach) Parise and (Wild defenseman Ryan) Suter."

Reach Josh Cooper at 615-726-8917 or jcooper2 at tennessean.com.

Tennessean LOADED: 11.21.2012

644577 New Jersey Devils

Devils' Lou Lamoriello inducted into Italian American Sports Hall of Fame

Rich Chere/The Star-Ledger

Devils president and general manager Lou Lamoriello was inducted into the National Italian American Sports Hall of Fame on Saturday in Rosemont, Ill.

Lamoriello, who was already in the Hockey Hall of Fame in Toronto and the U.S. Hockey Hall of Fame, was inducted along with Los Angeles Dodgers GM Ned Colletti, NHL player Mark Recchi, middleweight boxing champion Vito Antuofermo, major league pitcher John Smoltz, Olympic gymnast Alicia Sacramone, pool player Stefano Pelinga, Comcast Sports Net Chicago president Jim Corno and members of the Venturini auto racing family.

The 35th anniversary induction was held at the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center. Mike Piazza was the master of ceremonies.

Among those in the Hall of Fame are Yogi Berra, Rocky Marciano, Joe and Dom DiMaggio, Joe Torre, Phil and Tony Esposito, Eddie Arcaro, Mario and Michael Andretti, Ken Venturi, Lou Duva, Phil Rizzuto, Vince Lombardi, Billy Martin, Roy Campanella, Rocky Graziano, Tommy Lasorda, Eddie Giacomini, Piazza and Andy Robustelli.

Star Ledger LOADED: 11.21.2012

644578 New Jersey Devils

Judge rules against Newark in arbitration appeal stemming from Devils feud

David Giambusso/The Star-Ledger

After years of failed negotiations, the city and the team went to arbitration on a revenue sharing dispute over the Prudential Arena. In April, three out-of-state arbitrators ruled largely in favor of the Devils. The most contentious issue in the arbitration was an annual \$2.7 million parking payment the city owes to the team.

Booker, incensed at the arbitrators' ruling, held a news conference outside the arena and unleashed a string of harsh accusations at Vanderbeek, calling him a "huckster," hustler," and "pathetic penny-pincher."

He vowed to appeal the decision and shortly thereafter the city and their developing agent, the Newark Housing Authority, opened a claim in Newark Superior Court.

In a ruling dated last month and obtained by The Star-Ledger today, Judge Dennis Carey denied the appeal and confirmed the deal set out by the arbitration panel.

In the future, any rent the Devils pay to Newark will be offset by \$2.7 million in parking revenue. Currently the city owes the team about \$600,000.

Neither the Devils nor city officials wanted to comment on the ruling.

Star Ledger LOADED: 11.21.2012

644579 New Jersey Devils

NHL Players' Union expected to deliver new proposal to league Wednesday as lockout continues to drag on

The fact that Donald Fehr and the players took another full day to come up with the full proposal, with the timing and circumstances so dire, indicates they likely believe they still have time left to back the owners into a corner to get the best possible deal before losing a season.

By Pat Leonard / NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

The NHL's high-stakes game of chicken with its players' union will continue on the heels of Turkey Day. But if this meeting in Manhattan goes up in flames, it will result in the cancellation of at least two more weeks of games and also likely the Jan. 27 All-Star Game in Columbus.

Then the season, officially, could be next.

The fate of December's early schedule hinges on a proposal the union is expected to deliver on Wednesday, Day 67 of the lockout, and the NHL's response to that document in a meeting scheduled to begin around 10 a.m. The players' association spent Tuesday working on the proposal, which the league requested in Monday night's meeting after the union tried to address the main negotiating points piecemeal.

"We've never heard a full proposal from them," NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly said after Monday's meeting. "Certainly they've given us a variation of the same proposal on economics a couple times, and there was no change in that position ... and they're still suggesting that they're moving in our direction on economics, but until we know exactly what their position is on economics now, we think it's all tied together, and we'd like to hear it all together."

The primary issues are the debate over how to split hockey's revenue between owners and players — particularly now that the lockout has shrunk this season's pie — as well as player contracting issues that the NHL is determined to amend in the next collective bargaining agreement.

The NHL's most important desired changes to the contracting issues are capping players' maximum contract lengths at five years, extending free agency to eight years of service and 28 years of age, forcing players to wait an extra year (five) for arbitration rights, and installing measures to eliminate 'back-diving' contracts.

But the players are just as adamant about defending the contracting rights, and neither side wants to offer a concession on money or rights without getting something return in the other area.

"Our position all along has been on the player contracting issues that they become considerably more important to players as the cap becomes limited," NHLPA executive director Don Fehr said after Monday's meeting.

The fact that Fehr and the players took another full day to come up with the full proposal, with the timing and circumstances so dire, indicates they likely believe they still have time left to back the owners into a corner to get the best possible deal before losing a season.

That's a dangerous game of chicken (or turkey) to play, considering if the union pushes the other side even a day too far, there may be no turning back.

#### RETURN OF THE MAC

Rangers defenseman Ryan McDonagh left his European club, HC Barys Astana of the KHL, until the international break in December, according to a freelance report. The report said McDonagh was returning due to family issues and to recover from an injury, but the News learned the Rangers have been assured there are no injury concerns with McDonagh.

New York Daily News LOADED: 11.21.2012

644580 Ottawa Senators

Senators players explore birthplace of hockey

Ken Warren

DELINE, NWT — The day in the birthplace of hockey began with National Hockey League players being greeted by the entire population of 600 at the shack which serves as the community airport, the only way in or out of the village.

Children, young adults and elders all opened their arms to the incoming celebrities. Then they opened their truck doors and offered seats on their snowmobiles, shuttling them to the 12-room Grey Goose Lodge, which served as their headquarters for the day.

"One of the local kids offered me a ride and I was on the back of a snowmobile and I think my face just about froze right off on my way," said Ottawa Senators defenceman Marc Methot of the minus-18 Celsius temperatures, not including the wind chill. "He took me on a couple of off trails. Almost killed me on a couple of occasions. But it was the most interesting ride home I've ever had."

And the festivities for the arrival of Northern Lights Dream tour in Deline, 550 kilometres northwest of Yellowknife, were only just beginning.

Winnipeg Jet Grant Clitsome gives Marc Methot a wild and chilly ride, driving a dogsled team in Deline. Hunting, dogsledding and dancing kept NHLers busy during their visit to Deline Monday and Tuesday. The small native community of 600 people is the birthplace of hockey, where skating with stick was first recorded in 1825. (JULIE OLIVER/OTTAWA CITIZEN)

From there, the hockey stars — Methot and fellow Senators Craig Anderson, Chris Phillips (accompanied by his outgoing nine-year-old son, Ben), Chris Neil, Zack Smith, Guillaume Latendresse and Peter Regin, along with Ottawa native Grant Clitsome of the Winnipeg Jets, Jordin Tootoo and Dartmouth College grad Jody O'Neil — were taken to the community high school for a welcoming meal of caribou stew and buttered bannock. Again, they jumped into the trucks and onto the snowmobiles operated by their gracious hosts.

"It's the first time all the big guys have all come in here together and we're probably not going to have this again," said Gordon Tantenon, a 41-year-old who serves as an historian at the local school during the fall, winter and spring, and who hunts caribou during the summer. "Deline is a friendly place. We'll welcome everybody."

As a pair of visitors from Ottawa were warming up inside his truck, his 16-year-old daughter, Hannah, rode in the flatbed, keeping a close tab on all the players, but paying particular attention to Tootoo, the pride of the North.

Once inside the high school gymnasium, the greetings included songs and prayers, in both English and North Slavey, the traditional language in Deline — pronounced Day-Li-Neh — a community which is primarily Dene Indian. The elders couldn't say enough in describing what the visit meant.

"It's important to this community to to promote tourism, it's important to use stuff like this," said Chief Leonard Kenny. "We have such great fishing and hunting and arts and crafts."

Yet for all the brilliant beadwork on display and the outstanding trout fishing, the town is banking on a promising future due to its well-documented claim as the first spot that hockey was ever played.

Diaries belonging to Sir John Franklin, the infamous British explorer who tirelessly pursued the Northwest Passage before freezing to death on an ill-fated voyage, provide the evidence. Franklin wrote that his travelling companions "skated and played hockey" here on Little Lake, in the shadows of Great Bear Lake, on Oct. 25, 1825 — two decades earlier than any previous claim to the game. Did they use field hockey sticks? Branches off trees? What, exactly, served as the skate blades? Almost 200 years later, those questions are unanswerable. Memories, however, have stayed alive from generation to generation.

"The elders who were here said that the white men — that's what they called them then — seemed to be floating on the ice with sticks in their hands while hitting at a rock," Kenny said. "The elders have passed that on. They said that the kids were watching from the shores with their rabbit skin blankets wrapped around them."

With half the town watching before darkness began setting in around 4 p.m., Methot and Clitsome joined a small group of teenagers on a patch of cleared ice on Little Lake, a slapshot away from where it's believed Franklin's men played; paving the way for the likes of Joe Malone, Cyclone Taylor, Frank McGee, Maurice Richard, Gordie Howe, Wayne Gretzky and Sidney Crosby.

"It's pretty cool because it's such a big part of our culture and it's our national pastime and it's such a passion for everyone," said Clitsome. "So, to be able to come up here, where it all originated, and to skate on the same ice, it is special."

Later, Clitsome and Methot explored yet another form of northern transportation: Dog-sledding.

"We didn't think the dogs would be able to pull Grant and I, we're both pretty heavy guys," said Methot, who embraced the winter wonderland as if he was a 10-year-old seeing snow for the first time. "But those little guys are machines and they dragged us around for who knows how long. The dogs seemed to have more fun than we did."

Chris Neil takes part in traditional hand games during a celebration in Deline. Hunting, dogsledding and dancing kept NHLers busy during their visit to Deline Monday and Tuesday. The small native community of 600 people is the birthplace of hockey, where skating with stick was first recorded in 1825. (JULIE OLIVER/OTTAWA CITIZEN)

Meanwhile, the rest of the NHL players were taking snowmobile rides out to the big lake — Great Bear Lake, that is — checking out the ice fishing.

"It wasn't that cold," said Zack Smith, who dipped his hands into the water to scoop out some trout. "Even (the guide) was saying, it gets a lot colder later in the winter, into January. I was really interested in how they set their lines and with the nets. It was really cool."

Darkness was setting in, but the night was still young. The players were treated to yet another feast, this time at the community centre, attached to the Jerry Vital Memorial Arena, where Canadian and Northwest Territory flags are hung proudly. The main course featured fried trout, caught earlier in the day from Great Bear Lake.

More speeches ensued, including tour organizer John Chabot, who poured out his heart in describing the community as "his home away from home." Town leaders offered a reminder about "Alcohol Awareness Week," speaking about the town's difficult fight with booze and drug abuse in the 1970s. You can't buy alcohol here now and there are strict limits on what can be imported. The audience was told that it's message from the elders so that "we can make us stronger again."

On a lighter note, Michael Neyelle, who hosts a radio show here, proudly proclaimed "this is the only place in the world that has the Winter Classic right now."

The call went out for a night of fun, which included the traditional "hand games" and drum dancing. Senators players were in the middle of it all, smiling and dancing the night away.

"Hand games" is a complex gambling game — complete with loud drumming — featuring teams of eight players. Opponents watch closely, betting on whether their competition is holding an object in their left or right hand. It sounds simple, but it's not. It involves wild hand and finger gestures and facial movements, all designed to bluff the other side. Once upon a time, the games got heated, with some betting their family fortunes in contests which could go on into the wee hours of the morning. On this day, Chris Phillips, Craig Anderson and Chris Neil were among those who joined in for fun, trying to learn on the fly.

"I understand it, sort of," said Neil, no stranger to playing passionate games. "They were showing me what to do, but, man, they really get into it."

The crowning touch to the day was the drum dancing. One by one, everyone in the community joined into the fun, circling the room to a steady, ear-piercing drum beat. Once again, the NHL players were front and centre. When it all came to an end, Clitsome stepped to the microphone to thank the town for everything, from the parade of snowmobiles, to tasting a piece of hockey history and native dishes, to dogsledding to dancing.

"We're all going to leave here raving about the generosity and hospitality of these people," Clitsome said. "This will stick with us. I won't forget it."

Ottawa Citizen LOADED: 11.21.2012

644581 Ottawa Senators

Ottawa Senators' Jason Spezza ponders leaving Swiss team

By Don Brennan

Jason Spezza's last games in Switzerland could be for Team Canada.

Currently with Rapperswil-Jona of the Swiss 'A' League, the Senators star said on the weekend that he is prepared to stay put until Christmas, but that he may return home even if the lockout hasn't ended and NHL commissioner Gary Bettman cancels the rest of the season.

"I have already informed the leaders of Hockey Canada that I was willing to participate in the Spengler Cup during the holiday season," Spezza told Le Droit hockey writer Sylvain St-Laurent in Switzerland. "After that, we'll see."

The 2012 Spengler Cup will be held in Davos, from Dec. 26-31.

In 17 games with Rapperswil, Spezza is tied for the team lead in scoring with 17 points (seven goals) and has four penalty minutes and a minus-3 rating. The team is in 10th place with an 8-11-2-2 record.

Ottawa Sun LOADED: 11.21.2012

644582 Philadelphia Flyers

Flyers' Claude Giroux returning to have his neck examined

Sam Carchidi, Inquirer Staff Writer

Posted: Wednesday, November 21, 2012, 3:01 AM

Flyers center Claude Giroux, one of the NHL's best players, is leaving Germany this week to have his neck injury examined by a specialist in Atlanta.

Flyers general manager Paul Holmgren said Giroux was returning for "evaluation and as a precaution. He has a neck injury that has been diagnosed as minor."

Still, it has to be disconcerting that there is a chance the injury is more serious and that a concussion is possible.

"I'll be fine. Just going to make sure," Giroux said in a text message, adding that he will not be examined until next week.

Eisbaren Berlin, Giroux's team during the NHL lockout, said the tests were precautionary so he didn't suffer a more serious injury in the future.

Giroux had a test taken after he was hit last week, and it was inconclusive. The team said he continued to have problems, prompting more tests.

Philadelphia Inquirer / Daily News LOADED: 11.21.2012

644583 Philadelphia Flyers

Giroux to visit Crosby's concussion doctor

Flyers star Claude Giroux is returning to the United States to be examined by the same doctor who treated Sidney Crosby's concussion, the Daily News has learned.

Giroux, 24, suffered a neck injury with an illegal check to the head last Friday night during an overtime loss for Eisbaren Berlin in the German Elite League.

His agent, CAA Sports' Pat Brisson, told the Daily News on Tuesday that Giroux will be traveling to Atlanta to visit controversial specialist Dr. Frederick "Ted" Carrick at Life University in nearby Marietta, Ga.

Carrick is a "chiropractic neurologist" who specializes in traumatic brain injuries. He has been the go-to guy for hockey players when it comes to concussions, having recently treated Crosby (Brisson's biggest client), in addition to Chicago captain Jonathan Toews and Minnesota forward Guillaume Latendresse.

Brisson said Giroux is visiting Carrick as a "precaution" and "we don't believe it's serious."

To this point, the word "concussion" has not been used with Giroux, but clearly when a check to the head is involved and a neck injury is apparent, it is certainly a possibility. Brisson did not immediately respond when asked if a concussion has been ruled out.

When reached via text message in Berlin on Tuesday, Giroux said he is "fine" and "don't read into this too much." Giroux said on Saturday that it was "just a little neck injury."

There is some debate as to exactly when Giroux will be returning to the United States. The release from his Berlin team said he will be flying on Wednesday. Giroux told the Daily News he is not leaving until next week. Usually, flying after head trauma is not recommended - especially when it comes to a 9 or 10-hour jaunt across the Atlantic Ocean.

Dr. Carrick is a Canadian-born chiropractor who has helped many hockey players in his 35-plus years in the industry. He uses no drugs or surgery. He has met controversy on his theories with "blind spots" in the brain, which critics say is "nothing more than placebo" and that his methods have no basis in science or medicine. There is plenty of reading available on Carrick's approach, and this story in MacLean's in Canada is a fine start.

Considering the insurance risks and his concussion history, Giroux leaving Berlin to return to the United States does not absolutely mean his injury is of a serious nature. It could also be a move to stay out of harm's way for a while. Giroux's experience in Germany has been a very positive one, playing alongside teammate Danny Briere. He has racked up 19 points in 9 games.

Giroux suffered a concussion last season - as was well documented in the HBO documentary "24/7" during the Winter Classic - but returned to the ice after just 4 games. It was his second career concussion.

Frank Seravalli

Philadelphia Inquirer / Daily News LOADED: 11.21.2012

644584 Philadelphia Flyers

Giroux says he's fine, getting tests as precaution

Tim Panaccio

Every time you hear that a Flyer has a "minor" injury, you need to hold your breath several days to make sure that's all it is.

Many times over the past several seasons, seemingly minor injuries to Chris Pronger, James van Riemsdyk, Marc-Andre Bourdon and so on, turn out to be worse than expected.

Which brings us to Claude Giroux.

He suffered a hit to the head last Friday playing in Germany for Eisbaren Berlin against Krefeld.

What was originally diagnosed as a "minor neck injury" could be worse, perhaps a concussion, though no one is actually saying that. Still, that can't be ruled out of any head hit.

Giroux is on his way back to the United States and will undergo testing in Atlanta, according to Oliver Koch who reports on the Deutsche Eishockey Liga, via Broad Street Hockey.

Flyers general manager Paul Holmgren told CSNPhilly.com that all he knows is that Giroux is returning for "evaluation and precaution" for what was "diagnosed" as a minor neck injury.

Berlin general manager Peter Lee told the Ottawa Sun that Giroux is being evaluated for a concussion because he was not "feeling right" after taking a high elbow to the head.

"He got hit in the neck area and was feeling a little funny," Lee told the Sun on Tuesday.

"Without even thinking, we wanted to double-check because we weren't going to push him.

"You know how it is with players, we didn't want him to make the decision, we want to make sure he's going to be fine. He's out for the week anyway.

Rather than sitting around we might as well be pro-active so we've sent him back so we know everything is all right."

Reached Tuesday afternoon, Giroux told us, "I'm fine, I'm just making sure that I am 100 percent" with these precautionary tests. "I will be fine."

Needless to say, the very last thing the Flyers need is for their top returning offensive player to be seriously injured, regardless of whether there is ever an NHL season this year.

Giroux's last concussion, incidentally, was Dec. 10 against Tampa Bay when teammate Wayne Simmonds accidentally clipped him in the back of the head.

He missed 10 days and four games as a result of that collision.

Comcast SportsNet.com LOADED: 11.21.2012

644585 Philadelphia Flyers

Giroux says he's fine, getting tests as precaution

November 20, 2012, 11:05 am

Every time you hear that a Flyer has a "minor" injury, you need to hold your breath several days to make sure that's all it is.

Many times over the past several seasons, seemingly minor injuries to Chris Pronger, James van Riemsdyk, Marc-Andre Bourdon and so on, turn out to be worse than expected.

Which brings us to Claude Giroux.

He suffered a hit to the head last Friday playing in Germany for Eisbaren Berlin against Krefeld.

What was originally diagnosed as a "minor neck injury" could be worse, perhaps a concussion, though no one is actually saying that. Still, that can't be ruled out of any head hit.

Giroux is on his way back to the United States and will undergo testing in Atlanta, according to Oliver Koch who reports on the Deutsche Eishockey Liga, via Broad Street Hockey.

Flyers general manager Paul Holmgren told CSNPhilly.com that all he knows is that Giroux is returning for "evaluation and precaution" for what was "diagnosed" as a minor neck injury.

Berlin general manager Peter Lee told the Ottawa Sun that Giroux is being evaluated for a concussion because he was not "feeling right" after taking a high elbow to the head.

"He got hit in the neck area and was feeling a little funny," Lee told the Sun on Tuesday.

"Without even thinking, we wanted to double-check because we weren't going to push him.

"You know how it is with players, we didn't want him to make the decision, we want to make sure he's going to be fine. He's out for the week anyway. Rather than sitting around we might as well be pro-active so we've sent him back so we know everything is all right."

Reached Tuesday afternoon, Giroux told us, "I'm fine, I'm just making sure that I am 100 percent" with these precautionary tests. "I will be fine."

Needless to say, the very last thing the Flyers need is for their top returning offensive player to be seriously injured, regardless of whether there is ever an NHL season this year.

Giroux's last concussion, incidentally, was Dec. 10 against Tampa Bay when teammate Wayne Simmonds accidentally clipped him in the back of the head.

He missed 10 days and four games as a result of that collision.

Comcast SportsNet.com LOADED: 11.21.2012

644586 Philadelphia Flyers

NHL Notes: Versteeg wants 'cancers' Bettman, Daly gone

Once the mess is cleared and a new CBA is reached, ex-Flyer Kris Versteeg hopes "the cancers" of the NHL (Gary Bettman, Bill Daly) are gone.

On TSN 1050 radio (via ProHockeyTalk), Versteeg, a current Florida Panther, had this to say:

"You've got to cut out the cancers and I think when you look at Bill Daly and Bettman, they've been polluting this game for far too long."

Versteeg also said that fans have "been left with too many bad tastes in their mouths for too many years, and I think when this is all said and done, it'll be a good time to finally make that happen."

Spacek announces retirement

Jaroslav Spacek no longer has to worry about the NHL lockout.

Spacek, a 13-year veteran, decided to retire according to reports out of the Czech Republic, via TSN's Amanda Stein and ProHockeyTalk.

The 38-year-old defenseman played for seven different clubs and enjoyed his best seasons in 2002-03 (81 games, 36 assists, 45 points) and 2008-09 (80 games, 37 assists, 45 points).

Comcast SportsNet.com LOADED: 11.21.2012

644587 Philadelphia Flyers

Giroux's injury raising concerns

Written by Dave Isaac | Courier-Post Staff

What was originally classified as a "very minor" injury for Flyers star Claude Giroux is beginning to cause concern.

Giroux, 24, was hit up high in a game last Friday for the Eisbären Berlin of the DEL, where Giroux signed to play for the duration of the NHL lockout.

The Flyers' leading scorer last season is now out indefinitely and will see neurologist and concussion specialist Dr. Ted Carrick in Atlanta. Carrick also treated Pittsburgh Penguins star Sidney Crosby.

However, that doesn't mean Giroux has a concussion. He underwent SCAT (Sport Concussion Assessment Tool) tests in Germany and the results were inconclusive, but he still didn't feel right, according to the German team's site.

"We will discuss the details in the next few days," his agent, Pat Brisson, told the Courier-Post. "He will be back for evaluation and precaution. He has a neck injury that has been diagnosed as minor."

And with the NHL lockout ongoing, better safe than sorry. Because of the labor strife, Flyers management can't even reach out to talk to Giroux, who has a history of head injuries.

Giroux missed four games last season with a concussion when teammate Wayne Simmonds kneed him in the back of the head while attempting to jump over Giroux.

In nine games with Berlin, where Danny Briere is a teammate, Giroux has four goals and 15 assists.

Courier-Post LOADED: 11.21.2012

644588 Phoenix Coyotes

GM Maloney offers AHL observations

By SARAH MCLELLAN

Tue, Nov 20 2012 10:33 AM

The Coyotes' season may be on hiatus, but that doesn't mean the team's front office hasn't been racking up the air miles.

Instead of traveling to NHL cities, General Manager Don Maloney and his staff have visited one destination quite frequently -- Portland, Maine, the home of the Coyotes' American Hockey League affiliate.

"They're probably sick of seeing us down there," Maloney said.

Associate coach Jim Playfair is there this week, and goalie coach Sean Burke will be next in line to make the trek. Coach Dave Tippett has a trip planned for early December.

The Pirates are sitting in the middle of the standings at 6-6-1-1. Captain Alexandre Bolduc is leading the pack with nine goals and 14 points, and defenseman David Rundblad has a team-high nine assists.

Here's a rundown of Maloney's observations of the Pirates:

Aside from Oliver Ekman-Larsson, Maloney pegs Michael Stone as the team's best defenseman. Stone is a plus-9, tied for tops on the team.

Defenseman Brandon Gormley is adapting to the pro game like expected. "From where he was at the start of the year to where he is in mid-November, he's just picking up the pace of the game," Maloney said. "His game has really come on of late."

Most Improved Player award goes to defenseman Mathieu Brodeur. He's plus-5 with five points in 10 games.

Winger Chris Brown has had no trouble in his first professional season. "He's had three or four fights. He's scored some goals. He's getting points," Maloney said. "It's a hard league for young players to come in, so we're really encouraged by his performance."

Goalie Mark Visentin has played only five games but he hasn't looked out of place.

Ekman-Larsson missed about three weeks with a cut on his finger, Maloney said, but the Coyotes are happy with the decision to send him to the AHL instead of letting him spend the lockout in Europe. "It's been really good, and he's been really good and the reason for that is just his attitude," Maloney said. "He wants to be there. He wants to improve. He's working hard. I've actually seen a lot of American games in the fall, and there are players down there that have been in the NHL that have it in cruise control a bit. In OEL's case, that's not him. He's out there to help that team win and so other than the injury, he's been excellent and it's been good for his continual maturation."

Arizona Republic LOADED: 11.21.2012

644589 Pittsburgh Penguins

NHL lockout costs Pittsburgh area economy \$2.1M for each home game lost

By Rob Rossi Updated 5 hours ago

Amy Dilday and Harry Sage live in different states and have never met, yet both planned to spend money in Pittsburgh this holiday weekend.

The NHL lockout, in its 67th day, placed those plans on ice. Their canceled trips cost two city hotels and several restaurants and shops about \$3,000 in expected revenue this week.

This week marks "the unofficial start to hockey season in Pittsburgh," said Dilday, 45, of Sylvania, Ohio, who attends about six Penguins home games every season.

"I told my sister, 'They usually play two games around Thanksgiving, so let's go to Pittsburgh for four days, see the games, and we can do Christmas shopping at the stores,'" Dilday said. She planned to cook a turkey dinner Thursday at the kitchenette inside her room at the Cambria Suites.

She canceled that four-night stay at the hotel next door to Consol Energy Center.

An average Penguins home game is worth about \$2.1 million to the region, according to a study from the tourism bureau VisitPittsburgh. The Penguins usually collect between \$1 million and \$1.3 million in revenue, which leaves restaurants, hotels and other business to share anywhere from \$800,000 to \$1.1 million.

The NHL canceled games through Nov. 30, and the Penguins will have lost out on 11 home dates by then. If negotiators don't reach a new labor deal — the NHL and its Players' Association are to meet again Wednesday in New York — the league will cancel games through Dec. 15.

Sage, 39, a Uniontown native living in Maryland, scrapped his two-night reservation at the Hilton Doubletree, Downtown. His early Christmas gift to his two sons was going to be their first Penguins game, and a chance to "skate at the ice rink in (PPG Place), just like they heard about their parents doing last year."

The lockout began when the contract expired Sept. 15. The NHL has lost an estimated \$600 million, deputy Commissioner Bill Daly said. Revenue hit a record \$3.3 billion last season, but leaders expect financial backlash from disappointed fans and sponsors, Daly said.

No North American pro sports league had lost a season to a labor dispute before a lockout wiped out the 2004-05 NHL campaign. The NHL rebounded to average 95 percent capacity and land a long-term TV deal with NBC Sports worth \$2 billion.

A second lost season in eight years could permanently damage hockey in strong markets such as Pittsburgh, said Lynn Lashbrook, founder of Portland-based Sports Management World Wide.

"I call it a fiscal cliff on ice," he said. "It's real, and we're heading there."

Businesses are feeling the impact in Western Pennsylvania.

"The hotel industry in Pittsburgh is strong, but we've seen impact on both our occupancy and food/beverage revenues," said John Hannon, COO of Horizon Hospitality, which operates the Cambria Suites.

Corporate sponsors such as Dick's Sporting Goods declined to address the impact on their businesses.

A deal between the team and Oakwood-based Cellone's Bakery ended after last season. The last lockout coincided with the first year of that contract, and Cellone's vice president of sales Joe DiCenzo said the canceled season "was rough" for the bakery.

"There is more behind a sponsorship than selling a certain amount of product in the arena," he said. "It also generates sales in the grocery stores because of the advertising aspect. You can't make that up. You just don't get your full dollar."

The Penguins have not laid off employees and have no plans to cut salaries, though radio and TV broadcasters, like the players, are not paid during the lockout.

Penguins games on Root Sports last season averaged an 8.7 local rating — the percentage of available TV audience for Western Pennsylvania and parts of Ohio and West Virginia. That mark was highest for any NHL or NBA team.

Root Sports will lose about \$50,000 for each of the 23 games canceled.

The 550 members of SEIU Local 188 — the union representing Consol Energy Center ushers, security and cleaners — have gone from angry to complacent, union President Robert Fazio said.

"They can't do anything about it," he said. "Why get your hopes up? Our guys think both sides are being (jerks)."

"There are people disgusted," said Paul Elphinstone, an usher at Penguins home games for 14 years who uses his game checks to "buy presents for the grandkids."

Retail stores take a hit because the lockout will impact Black Friday and perhaps the bulk of the December holiday shopping season.

"Christmas is when we do our big Penguins items — the specialized jerseys, and the hats and hoodies," said Carla Jeke, who operates Perani's Hockey World in Scott. "The rest of the year it's only about 10 percent because youth hockey is so big, but at Christmas, it's going to be down if they aren't playing."

Tribune Review LOADED: 11.21.2012

644590 Pittsburgh Penguins

NHL labor meetings resume Wednesday in NYC

By Josh Yohe

The NHL will resume negotiations with its Players Association Wednesday in New York.

Although members of the two sides spoke on Tuesday, no negotiations were held.

Members of the NHL and NHLPA met for about two hours Monday night.

The NHL expressed disappointment that Don Fehr, the NHLPA executive director, did not provide a new proposal even though he called for meetings to take place this week.

Many of the Penguins — and a former Penguins forward — are hoping for good news from New York later this week.

"If we lose another entire season," said Tampa Bay left wing Ryan Malone, "then shame on all of us."

Malone, who is visiting his family in Pittsburgh this week for Thanksgiving, remains close with center Sidney Crosby and a number of other Penguins.

Like his former teammates, Malone is hoping for good news.

"This whole thing is crazy," said Malone, who has already missed one season because of a labor dispute. "You just kind of keep waiting for good news."

Although the NHLPA had internal meetings with Fehr on Monday night and Tuesday, it remains unknown if it will make a new, complete proposal when the sides meet Wednesday.

"I think we (NHLPA officials) are meeting internally right now to decide if we're going to propose something at the next meeting," Penguins defenseman Matt Niskanen said. "I think the plan all along was to move this thing forward. I hope that happens in the next couple of days."

According to Penguins player representative Craig Adams, Monday's meeting touched on "economic issues and contracting."

Tribune Review LOADED: 11.21.2012

644591 Pittsburgh Penguins

Despite lockout in the NHL, the Malones can talk

By Dave Molinari / Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

It might seem, at first blush, to be a clear violation of NHL guidelines.

After all, the league has instructed employees of its teams to avoid communicating with members of the NHL Players' Association until the lockout that has shut down the league since mid-September is over.

There's no exemption for people who are blood relatives and who, say, might end up seated across from one another at a Thanksgiving table.

Too bad, because Ryan Malone, the former Penguins left winger who now plays for Tampa Bay, and Greg Malone, who is the Lightning's head pro scout, would qualify for one.

Now, an NHL official confirmed that the regulations apply only to discussions of "official business," so Greg Malone isn't in danger of being fined if he asks his son to, say, pass the mashed potatoes.

Which might be about as close as they get to crossing any lines the league has drawn.

"The only thing we really talk about is that we both want hockey to start," Ryan Malone said Tuesday after participating in an informal workout with some former teammates at Southpointe. "I don't think we know any significant secrets to tell each other."

No, most of that kind of information can now be found in New York, where the league and union are scheduled to re-start negotiations for a new collective bargaining agreement today.

They met for the first time in eight days Monday evening, and the NHLPA apparently spent much of Tuesday working on the comprehensive economic proposal the league requested.

What the union offers -- or, more to the point, how the NHL responds to that offer -- figures to have a profound impact on the prospects of a settlement anytime soon. The key points of contention appear to be the division of revenues -- the NHL wants to link the players' share to growth and make it a set percentage, while the players have sought a firm figure -- and issues pertaining to the structure and length of contracts.

At this point, if there's significant optimism on either side that an agreement is close, it's guarded. So guarded that it's under lock-and-key and hidden in a dungeon.

"It doesn't, obviously, look good," Malone said. "We just have to wait until we feel there's a fair deal out there."

Malone broke into the NHL with the Penguins in 2003-04, and is a veteran of the lockout that wiped out the 2004-05 season, much of which he spent playing for teams in Finland, Switzerland and Italy. Coping with this shutdown, he said, is "a little easier," perhaps because he has financial security that wasn't present eight years ago. Neither were the two young sons who accompanied him Tuesday to Southpointe.

"Last time, I didn't have any kids, so I got to tour around Europe, which was pretty cool," Malone said.

He is among the players who have joined Penguins center Sidney Crosby for workouts in Vail, Colo., and Dallas this fall, but also has spent time in Tampa. That's where he picked up his blackened right eye, courtesy of a high stick during a practice organized by Lightning players.

Although he has missed three paychecks this season, the seven-year, \$31.5 million deal he accepted in Tampa in 2008 provides an obvious financial cushion for Malone. He's aware that not everyone affected by the lockout is so fortunate.

"People who love the game and people who really depending on hockey for their job or their life ... it affects more people than we think," he said. "That's what hurts the most."

Malone looked entirely at ease with his old teammates and, for that matter, on the ice where he spent so much time earlier in his career.

"Especially in this rink, it [brings back] the high school days for me," he said.

He expects to be back there again this morning, even though this extended lockout occasionally saps his motivation.

"It's kind of hard to push yourself every day when you don't really see a light at the end of the tunnel," he said.

Malone plans to remain here until Saturday and seems genuinely happy to be back in familiar surroundings.

"It's always great to come back to Pittsburgh," he said. "It feels like home."

Especially when he's allowed to speak with his dad.

NOTE -- The group of Penguins who hold workouts at Southpointe generally take Wednesdays off, but at least a few are expected to skate today. Their usual Thursday and Friday sessions will not be held this week because of the holiday.

Post Gazette LOADED: 11.21.2012

644592 Pittsburgh Penguins

Fehr: Thinking 'about our next step' GAME OFF! NHL LOCKOUT 2012

By Dave Molinari / Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

The NHL and its players association met for less than two hours Monday night in New York.

Not nearly enough time to work out a new collective bargaining agreement.

Whether it was enough to lay the groundwork for meaningful progress to be made is a little less certain.

"We are going to think about what was said and think about our next step," NHLPA executive director Donald Fehr told reporters when the meeting ended.

Fehr and the players won't have all that long to consider the situation, however, because they and the league are expected to get together again today.

NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly, who described himself as "frustrated," said the league has asked the union to put forth a comprehensive proposal on economic issues.

"We think it's all tied together and we'd like to hear it all together," he said.

Fehr said the league declined to discuss issues pertaining to player contracts, insisting that the division of revenues be worked out first. Daly, meanwhile, stressed that the owners will not agree to a proposal that guarantees the players a specific amount of money rather than a percentage of revenues.

Penguins player representative Craig Adams and teammate Brooks Orpik were among the 18 players who took part in the session, as well as the internal discussions that followed.

They also likely briefed at least a few teammates on the session.

Good thing, because a survey of Penguins players after their informal workout Monday at Southpointe showed that few, if any, planned to spend the evening monitoring the talks. Hitting the "Refresh" button on their computers every 10 seconds or so to see if any new bits of news were circulating wasn't on many to-do lists.

"I'll be on conference calls if there is one, but as far as waiting [to hear what was going on], I have a life," winger Pascal Dupuis said.

"We're not playing hockey right now, and I have other stuff I have to be taking care off. Obviously, it's not what I want to do right now, but it's what I have to do."

Left winger Matt Cooke was equally emphatic about his plans, none of which involved discussions about 50-50 splits, contract-term limits or revenue-sharing.

"I'll do kids stuff," Cooke said. "Kids sports. Family stuff. Stuff I've been focused on the last two months."

Monday's meeting was the first in eight days. Negotiations to this point have been so contentious, so often that simply getting representatives of both sides into the same room struck some as evidence of progress.

"I don't know what's going to come of it," center Sidney Crosby said. "At least they're talking. ... Just the fact that they're talking is always good. I'll take that over not talking."

DAY 66

Post Gazette LOADED: 11.21.2012

644593 Tampa Bay Lightning

When Bolts call, Barberio will be ready

By ERIK ERLÉNSSON | The Tampa Tribune

With a year of pro experience under his belt and a NHL exhibition game to his credit, Mark Barberio put on a show last season.

The 22-year-old from Montreal was named the Eddie Shore Trophy winner as the top defenseman in the American Hockey League last season after finishing tops in the league among defensemen with 61 points -- 11 more than any other blue liner in the AHL -- and 48 assists to go along with 13 goals.

That sort of a season moved him from a midlevel prospect in the Lightning organization to one that seems sure to get his chance at the NHL level in the near future. Both boltprospects.com -- a web site dedicated to Lightning

prospects – and Hockey's Future have Barberio ranked in the top 10 among the team's top organizational players as well as the No. 2 touted defenseman in the team's system.

Heading into training camp last year, Bolt Prospects had Barberio ranked 13th overall and gave him a slight boost up to 11th after a strong training camp. Moving up into the seventh spot this season is a huge jump, particularly with the improved organizational depth this year after Tampa Bay used two of its first three draft picks on defensemen this season.

But Barberio is hardly getting ahead of himself, maintaining the daily approach to improvement instead of getting caught up in the big picture.

"I guess it's more of a day-by-day thing," he said. "I don't want to put pressure on myself, saying 'I have to do this, or I have to make it to there or make here in a certain time.' I try to get up, do my work that day to try to become a better hockey player and better for the team.

"And as long as you are honest about it and you are willing to put the work in, you will get what you deserve."

That's a lesson the 6-foot-1, 200-pound defenseman learned while playing junior for the Moncton Wildcats. And it has served him well along his current path since being drafted by Tampa Bay in the sixth round of the 2008 draft.

His final year in junior Barberio finished with 17 goals and 60 points – 15 more than his previous best – while helping lead the Wildcats reach the Memorial Cup finals. That led to a rookie year in which he scored nine goals and 22 points in 68 games to set a Norfolk rookie record.

And with that year under his belt, and a confidence boost seeing his first NHL action in a preseason game on Sept. 20 in St. Louis, Barberio went on to enjoy a breakout season that established Norfolk franchise records for points and assists by a defenseman. That has carried over to the start of this season, as the Lightning switched affiliated to Syracuse, with three goals and 11 points in 14 games to start the season.

For Syracuse head coach Jon Cooper, seeing Barberio blossom over the past few years has been a steady and rewarding process.

"He is like a fine wine that had just been bottled," Cooper said "You can drink it right away and it would be okay, or let it sit and mature for a couple of years and you have something special."

For now, with the NHL still under a league imposed lockout, Barberio will just continue to go about his business and try to do what he can to help Syracuse win games. And when the call comes from the NHL – and it will come – he will continue to do what he can to prepare and be ready for that call.

"I just have to keep putting my work in on the ice and in the gym," he said. "The step from junior to the AHL was big and I'm pretty sure the step from the AHL to the NHL is even bigger. So that just means I have to be in better shape, and stronger . . . because the guys up there are even bigger and faster so that means whatever I'm doing now I have to keep improving."

"You always have to try to improve or else you are never going anywhere."

Tampa Tribune LOADED: 11.21.2012

644594 Toronto Maple Leafs

NHL lockout: NHLPA, league finding common ground

Kevin McGran

It looks like Canada Day will no longer be NHL free agency day.

While the NHLPA is expected to make a fresh offer on Wednesday, day 67 of the lockout, details of what has been already been agreed to — and where the NHL has bent — are beginning to emerge.

The Star has learned that the day free agents can talk to teams is expected to move from July 1 to mid- to late June. Various ideas had been proposed to get the day away from the holiday, including July 10 and Aug. 1. One strong idea has the market opening June 15, or 48 hours after the Stanley Cup is awarded — whichever is later — with no deals finalized until July 1.

It's one of 13 NHLPA issues (out of 17) that NHL commissioner Gary Bettman has publicly acknowledged the league has "agreed" to. "Agreed" may be too strong a word, though.

"Right now, nothing is agreed on because we won't agree to anything until we get a deal on core economics," said one insider familiar with the NHL's positions. "But this is stuff where we said, 'Okay, we'll go there.' "

There's no question the key issues — money (including revenue sharing), contract restraints and who pays for damage caused by the lockout — remain outstanding.

Wednesday's meeting comes at the same time the league is expected to cancel more games. According to The Canadian Press, the NHL is close to wiping out the first two weeks of December, which would bring the number of games lost to more than 400.

Just how far the NHLPA moves, if it does indeed make a substantial new offer, will determine where talks are headed. But the sides have already found common ground in some areas and the NHL has moved off some hardline positions. Here's where things stand heading into Wednesday's pivotal meeting:

#### COMMON GROUND

The sides have more or less agreed • Change the free agent calendar (see above). Arbitration dates may change as well.

- Allow cap space to be included in transactions, to encourage trades and get teams out from under heavy contracts.

- A joint health committee.

- Eliminate re-entry waivers.

- A neutral, third-party arbitrator to deal with appeals for on- and off-ice discipline.

- Minimum roster requirements to avoid situations where teams dress fewer than 18 players to save salary cap room.

#### GETTING CLOSER

The NHL has moved closer to the NHLPA position on:

- Entry-level contracts. The league wants a two-year limit. The players want to leave it at three.

- AHL salaries. The league is offering to count only those that exceed the NHL minimum (\$525,000) against a team's cap. The NHL had wanted the number closer to \$95,000. The victory for the PA here is that AHL players won't have their salaries count against the players' share of hockey-related revenue. Accounting would be limited to players in the NHL.

- Unrestricted free agency. The league is offering freedom after eight years of service or age 28, after asking for 10 years. This year, players could become free agents after seven years of service, or age 27.

- Maintaining salary arbitration, but with eligibility pushed back to a player's fifth season. The players are asking for arbitration after four years. The NHL initially wanted it abolished.

#### STICKING POINTS

50/50: Both sides have agreed, on the surface, to a 50-50 split of hockey-related revenue. The players want to get there eventually by guaranteeing certain dollar amounts — starting with the \$1.88 billion they earned last season — will be paid over the first few years of a deal. In percentage of expected revenue, the players are closer to 56 per cent. The NHL wants a strict 50-50 split, with some provisions outside the cap to ensure players under contract get paid in full.

Revenue sharing: The players want a bigger pool of money — about \$240 million — for the smaller teams. The NHL has increased the amount it would put into the pool to about \$200 million.

Contract restraints: The NHL has wanted five-year limits on all deals with no more than a five per cent variation from year to year. The NHLPA seems ready to help teams find a way to discourage back-diving deals, but doesn't like how strict the NHL's proposals are.

Lockout damage: Who pays for the financial cost of the lockout? The league sees that as 50-50. The NHLPA wants the league to pay the lion's share.

#### THE SKINNY

The NHLPA's position is that none of the issues are settled — that they are all linked to the restraints the NHL wants. Both sides agree that anything can change, with nothing agreed to in writing.

"This is all minor stuff," one insider said. "It's great we have deals on these things, but they're not changing the world."

Toronto Star LOADED: 11.21.2012

644595 Toronto Maple Leafs

Barrie lawyer flush with glee over Leafs toilet purchase

staff report

BARRIE, ONT. -

Vigmond was the winning online bidder in the Historical Hockey Memorabilia Auction for the Artifacts of the former Maple Leaf Gardens.

But what was the item he took home from the historic hockey shrine?

While others tapped away on their keyboards to bid on on hardcore Leafs items, such as the change-rooms doors, penalty boxes and a time clock, Vigmond bought the dressing room toilet.

"It's nostalgia from an iconic building from an iconic time," Vigmond said Tuesday after he carried his antique privy to his sports memorabilia room — or man cave — in the basement.

"We bleed blue and white in this house," he said with a laugh, pointing to several framed hockey jerseys on the wall.

Although it sounds like an odd object to covet, let alone spend \$5,300 on, collectors of sports memorabilia say they can understand Vigmond's fascination with the traditional white ceramic bowl.

"The standard saying in the collectors' world is that it's only worth what somebody will pay for it. This is a relatively unique item. I'm guessing a lot of famous Maple Leafs took a break there, so there's a huge value there," said Icebox Cards and Collectibles owner Wayne Frazer.

"It's a one-of-a-kind conversation piece, with an incredible amount of history attached to it," the local businessman added.

"Well, the obsession with the toilet is that a lot of famous asses sat on that," joked auctioneer of the Maple Leafs artifacts, Hersh Borenstein.

Borenstein also said Johnny Bower told him he used to run down to the washroom to sneak a cigarette before the game, and that Terry Sawchuk told him he used to throw up in that throne before every game.

A large grocery store now stands in the place of the original Maple Leaf Gardens on Carleton Street which was home to the Toronto Maple Leafs from 1931 until 1999.

The white ceramic Canadian commode with the black split-seat was handed to Vigmond with a letter of authenticity from Maple Leafs organization.

While he admits he's frustrated waiting for the current National Hockey League lockout to end, when it does he said he's ready for the jokes about the Leafs john on Saturday nights to begin in earnest.

"I've been told I've got s\*\*t for brains today," he laughed. "But to me, it's pure history."

Toronto Sun LOADED: 11.21.2012

644596 Toronto Maple Leafs

Meet the Leafs fan who bought a dressing room toilet for \$5,300

By Canadian Press

TORONTO — An Ontario lawyer is now the proud owner of a toilet from the Toronto Maple Leafs' former dressing room.

Jim Vigmond, of Barrie, Ont., bought the unusual item for \$5,300 at auction after the piece he really wanted — the 1967 Stanley Cup banner — got too expensive.

The toilet was offered up along with more than 100 items from Maple Leaf Gardens, which was home to the NHL team until 1999.

Fifty-five-year-old Vigmond says his friends were skeptical about the purchase.

But the long-time Leafs fan says the item was just too good to pass up.

Vigmond says he was actually willing to spend up to \$10,000 on the throne.

"They thought I had money to burn, and surely there was something that I could have better spent my money on," he said.

"They've got a point. But ... it's a part of an icon. I just thought ... what a rare piece and just think of all of the people that have spent time contemplating in that dressing room what lies ahead of them."

Vigmond plans on putting the toilet in his sports memorabilia room, where he wants to sit on it, light up a Cuban cigar, open a bottle of 30-year-old single malt, and hopefully, watch a Leafs game sometime soon.

National Post LOADED: 11.21.2012

644597 Vancouver Canucks

Window of opportunity can close on Canucks at any time

Jason Botchford

Window of opportunity can close on Canucks at any time

If and when the NHL returns, the Canucks are facing a few issues.

After all, they were unexpectedly bounced from the first round of the playoffs last spring, and they'll return to the league with, pretty much, the same lineup that couldn't get the job done.

Over the course of the next 10 days, Jason Botchford and Ben Kuzma will serve up 10 issues that might concern the Canucks and their fans. The series will be in the pages of Province Sports, with more at our White Towel blog ([thewhitetowel.ca](http://thewhitetowel.ca)) and at [provincesports.com](http://provincesports.com). Back when the NHL still played games, the Ottawa Senators were saturated in confidence to start the 2007-08 campaign.

Following their run to the Stanley Cup, they were heavy favourites to return.

With good reason. They had made the playoffs 10 consecutive years. They had won their division four of the previous six. And they had finished with more than 100 points in six of eight.

The Sens were a team in its prime, capable of greatness.

But five months later, it was all gone. All that promise just vanished in the middle of the night.

On Feb. 23 2008, the Sens sat perched in first place above the din of the Eastern Conference, still riding high from the fastest start in NHL history. What followed was a late-season cruise off a cliff in an injury-riddled collapse that culminated when the Pittsburgh Penguins swept them out of the first round of the playoffs.

In a wink, the run was over, and a long rebuild had begun.

It's the cruel, cyclic nature of sports. The good times don't last forever. Unless you're the L.A. Lakers.

Whenever hockey returns, you will hear a lot about the Vancouver Canucks "window of opportunity." It's the same question Tony Romo got sick of at the start of the Dallas Cowboys season.

But there are two truths you need to understand about windows. They are real, and they close. Not believing in them is like not believing in gravity.

"We're not getting any younger, that's for sure," Kevin Bieksa conceded.

Last season, just seven teams were younger than the Canucks.

Next month, Dan Hamhuis will be the ninth Canuck on Vancouver's current roster to turn 30 years old. It's nearly half the team. It should help crystallize why it's so important for the Canucks to get younger in any Roberto Luongo deal.

The question about how many more opportunities these Canucks have left is weighing on their players, as they confront the reality this month that they may lose one of them to a lockout.

"It would feel like such a waste (to lose the season) because we've been close so far and I think we built some momentum with our back-to-back Presidents' trophies," Bieksa said. "This is our time.

"We have guys who have contracts running out. The years are running out. It would be a disappointment if we lose the season."

The Calgary Flames provide a cautionary tale for teams that don't believe in windows. They've used everything from duct tape to Maple Leafs to keep a veteran team together, trying to stay in a playoff hunt. The results have been ugly. They've missed the playoffs three consecutive years, and if this season ever starts, only three teams will be bigger long shots to win it all.

Are the Canucks hurtling toward the same space?

You could make the case. They have a stable of good, young prospects, but none are poised to dominate and lead this team into the next decade.

But philosophically, the current Canucks executive believes in a total rebuild over trying to hold together a fading team. Now, that would be intriguing.

Imagine, the Canucks sitting millions under the salary cap as they set forth a three-year retooling plan. Is this market sophisticated enough to handle that kind of tough love?

That scenario appears to be a way's off, though in the NHL looks can be deceiving. Just ask the Senators.

For now, most people believe the Canucks' window will stay pried open as long as the Sedins are controlling the ice and playing at a high level. It's a valid point. If the Sedins took a step back at all last year, it was a tiny one. They remain tremendous players, and may be the best leaders the Canucks have ever had. You could easily see them anchoring one of the best lines in hockey for the next three years.

But, interestingly, they don't even know how long they want to keep playing in the NHL. Daniel Sedin revealed this week that after their current contract runs up, they are considering moving forward by signing one-year deals.

"We're already taking it year by year right now," Daniel said. "We have a year and a half on this current contract and then mentally I think it will be easier if we go year by year after that.

"Mentally, when you get to this age, to be able to perform, you have to be there. I really believe if you sign a long term deal it will be tougher to perform on a nightly basis."

Essentially, he's saying to stay motivated and emotionally invested, the 32-year-old Sedins will look at making every year a contract year.

If he were to make good on that, somewhere the Canucks capologist Laurence Gilman would be giving GM Mike Gillis an exploding fist bump.

Vancouver Province: LOADED: 11.21.2012

644598 Vancouver Canucks

Gallagher: Canucks coach trusts players are getting in shape

By Tony Gallagher,

Gallagher: Canucks coach trusts players are getting in shape

Canucks head coach Alain Vigneault was pleased that most of his players chose not to play in Europe during the lockout. Now he is not so sure that was a good thing.

Since this entirely predictable lockout started and many of the players set out for Europe, there's been something of a debate as to whether that's a good thing for teams or whether the risks outweigh the gains.

And when you hear of Claude Giroux sustaining a neck injury and perhaps another concussion while playing in Germany, there is no question there is a clear and present danger that goes along with keeping the guys involved in tip-top shape and ready to hit the ice flying once the NHL season does get going.

The Canucks have been one team that has been happy that the overwhelming majority of their players have opted not to play in Europe, Jannik Hansen, Dale Weise and if you want to include him as well, promising young forward Niklas Jensen being the only exceptions.

But that was early on. Now, things might be changing a little, at least that seems to be the case with Alain Vigneault, the always-affable and charming coach of the Canucks having expressed some doubts as this Gary Bettman-orchestrated theatre drags into late November.

In chatting late last week with the TEAM 1040's Bob Marjanovich and telling some amusing stories about having to stay a couple of weeks in his parents' house because of work on his own home back in Quebec had been scheduled for when he was supposed to be here in Vancouver, AV confessed to some concerns.

"At the beginning I wasn't crazy about guys going over to Europe and I was sort of happy that not a lot of mine were going over, and now while we're a couple of months in, I'm not so sure any more," said Vigneault.

"But that being said, you've got to trust your players, you've got to trust that they know what they're doing, that they understand that once we get going it's going to be seven to 10 days [of training]. That's not a long time."

The Canucks trust their players, no question, and Vigneault went on to make that clear.

"For us, the culture of our organization, our best players have always been our hardest workers and when you have that mentality, everyone that comes in has got to follow suit if they want to be accepted by the group, especially by the core guys. So, they've got to be hard workers."

No, not many Dustin Byfugliens on this team. But with management unable to talk to anyone or get anything organized, you can only do so much by yourself and it would appear most of the Vancouver players are very much by themselves.

They don't even seem to have that hard workout going for them like in Calgary where they're running 20 guys out every day, most of them Flames, with a supervised practice replete with bag skates.

It's optional, of course, strictly drop-in, but a lot of guys are dropping in, not like what's been going on out at UBC the last six weeks or so.

This is particularly salient for the Canucks, who have never been known for quick starts under Vigneault.

But the shorter-by-the-week season (assuming there is a season, because this entire discussion assumes reason will prevail at some point), combined with the fact the Northwest division is no longer the playpen of the lame and drooling, has made a good start essential to nailing down a playoff spot.

Dally out of the gate this time, the way the Canucks traditionally do in October, and they could find themselves having to split a gut late just to get into the playoffs.

The Sedin twins have expressed a view that the Canucks who haven't been playing overseas may suffer early, but will have much more energy once the playoffs begin, as they will still be very fresh.

And that's a wonderful thought, which makes a lot of sense. But first you've got to make the playoffs — and for a team like Vancouver, the longer this lockout lasts and the shorter the season becomes, the more difficult that task becomes.

The most positive development is that Vigneault himself is all over this need to get out of the gate quicker.

"There won't be any exhibition games and we're gonna have to be in playing mode right away, and playing real well," he said, "because if you've just got a shortened season and a short number of games, you can't waste any points."

AV's task will be to design a training camp that will balance getting his largely inactive team as ready as possible without ripping their groins to shreds in the process.

Hopefully we'll all get a chance to see how he handles it.

Vancouver Province: LOADED: 11.21.2012

644599 Washington Capitals

Backstrom, Ovechkin combine for four points in Dynamo Moscow win

Posted by Katie Carrera on November 20, 2012 at 3:50 pm

In the past week, Dynamo Moscow faced and defeated Vityaz Chekhov twice, with Nicklas Backstrom leading the way on both occasions.

Backstrom recorded a pair of goals, including the game winner in Dynamo Moscow's 3-2 victory Tuesday, bringing his two-game goal total against Vityaz Chekhov to five. Alex Ovechkin recorded primary assists on both of Backstrom's tallies, as the duo continues to lead the way for Dynamo Moscow.

Over the past four games, Backstrom and Ovechkin combined for six goals and eight assists. Not too shabby for a week's work.

Washington Post LOADED: 11.21.2012

644600 Websites

ESPN / Claude Giroux has neck injury

By Pierre LeBrun ESPN.com

Star center Claude Giroux of the Philadelphia Flyers is leaving his club in the German league to seek medical attention for a neck injury, his agent Pat Brisson told ESPN.com Tuesday morning.

Giroux suffered the injury in a game last Friday with Berlin. He also underwent concussion tests in Germany over the weekend.

In a text message, Giroux said he'll be "fine."

Brisson said Giroux will visit with Dr. Ted Carrick in Atlanta next week. Carrick is the same doctor who has worked with the likes of Sidney Crosby and Jonathan Toews.

"We want to make sure we get the right diagnosis with the neck injury. It's a precaution," Brisson said. "We believe it's a minor injury. He felt better yesterday, but we just don't want to take any chances."

ESPN LOADED: 11.21.2012

644601 Websites

ESPN / Next move by the union could be vital

By Pierre LeBrun

The ball is now in the NHLPA's court.

Which, depending on how that plays out, could mean it ends up squarely back in the NHL's court soon enough.

The players' union began working on a new proposal Monday night and was set to continue working on it Tuesday.

If that proposal comes back once again asking for a guaranteed player amount -- the union has been steadfast throughout this lockout in saying the players won't make a dime less than the \$1.883 billion in total salaries they made last season -- the next meeting will be a short one.

But if the NHLPA is willing to drop that guarantee -- a source within the players' camp said that was being contemplated -- then, perhaps, depending on how the new proposal is framed, there might finally be some traction here. But one has to assume that if the union is willing to drop that guaranteed player amount, and that's an if, you'd better believe part of the NHLPA's proposal definitely will have the league drop a number of its player contracting rights demands, and so it should be.

If the players are going to move on core economics, the league must move on player contracting rights if we have any possibility of a deal this season.

The NHLPA's fear, according to sources, is that it doesn't want to move on core economics only to have the league not move an inch on player contracting rights. It's the same reason the league hasn't budged on player contracting rights before knowing when/if the NHLPA will move on core economics, with the league concerned that, if it backed off, officially, on some player contracting rights, the NHLPA still would demand a guaranteed player amount on core economics.

The league feels it has moved on the "make-whole" provision -- offering up \$211 million to players outside the system to help protect some of their existing contracts -- plus has moved on revenue sharing among 30 teams, a key NHLPA issue, moving the total up a few weeks ago to \$220 million. The league got frustrated that, despite its doing these things, NHLPA executive director Don Fehr still maintained a desire to protect the guaranteed player amount of \$1.883 billion in salaries (the NHLPA says it obviously would be willing to adjust that figure in a shortened season, but, for the overall deal, that's been the base of its framework economically).

Of course, although the league has been frustrated from that point of view, the NHLPA will point out that it's the players doing all the moving in this deal. And there's some truth to that. It's the players coming down from 57 percent of hockey-related revenue no matter how this CBA ends up looking. But then again, the players should have known it was going to be that kind of negotiation more than a year ago when NBA and NFL players were scaled back in their share of revenues in their respective labor deals. That was always going to be the context of this NHL negotiation: the owners getting the players to back up, just like in other sports.

So, really, the goal here for Fehr and the players should have always been about making the most out of a negative context, cutting the best possible deal out of a reality in which players were going to get downgraded in their percentage from the pie.

And from that perspective, I believe Fehr has done a good job for players in terms of pushing the league this far, getting the league to move on "make whole," on revenue sharing among teams, plus other items.

But it's clear it would take an ugly war to get the league and owners to sign off on any deal that gives that guaranteed player amount Fehr has been striving for all this time.

So the question in the next 24-48 hours: Will the NHLPA make that next significant step and, in turn, put pressure on the NHL if a new proposal has serious potential of ending the lockout?

Or does Fehr feel the union should wait a bit longer before making that type of concession on core economics?

This negotiation either gains serious traction or falls off the rails again. And if it falls off the rails again, you have to begin to worry about having a season at all.

ESPN LOADED: 11.21.2012

644602 Websites

ESPN / It's feast and famine for Pavelski in Minsk

By Pierre LeBrun

I catch up with Joe Pavelski on Monday just after he's had another nice dinner in Minsk.

"The food's good here," the San Jose Sharks center told ESPN.com over a crackling phone line. "There are five restaurants that we go to, pretty much. We rotate among them, and it's quite good."

Life in Belarus has been a learning experience for the Wisconsin native, but he has kept an open mind.

"It hasn't been bad; it's been fun in a lot of ways," said the Team USA Olympian. "It's been really nice having Pekka Rinne and Tim Stapleton here, gotten along good with them. There's enough English-speaking players on the team to get by, joke around enough and feel comfortable."

It's not perfect, of course. He's had to leave behind in San Jose his wife and 2-year-old son.

"That was a big decision that we had to make," Pavelski said, but one that he felt necessary to stay in game shape. "With the 11-hour time [difference from San Jose], you usually do some FaceTime with them in the morning and before you go to bed. It's definitely tough now to miss the holidays coming up..."

Last month, Pavelski's son, Nathan, turned 2, the age when the personality of a child really starts to blossom. It's hard not being around for that.

"I'm missing a lot, I can see that just over the computer," Pavelski said. "I can see that over the computer. But hopefully things end soon and I'll be able to see them."

Either way, he should be with his family. He said that if the NHL season gets canned entirely, his wife, Sarah, and Nathan might go to Belarus for the rest of the season. Of course, he hopes it's the other option, that he's back home to play a shortened NHL season.

"Obviously, Pekka and I talk about it, the NHL is where we want to be," Pavelski said. "But it's been pretty good being able to play hockey here, and the fans here in Minsk are great. It's a great atmosphere."

Pavelski has kept close tabs on the lockout: He said that the NHLPA has kept him well-informed and that he has even jumped on a few players' calls from overseas.

His read on things?

"A lot of players, and I think a lot of owners, have a gut feeling that we'll play this year," Pavelski said. "Are we really going to waste a season over the issues that separate us right now?"

"To be honest, I don't know how there isn't a season," he added. "Maybe I'm kind of naive to say that. You see how players are speaking out, and [have] their frustrations and choice words for certain people. ... Every player has all those feelings. Hopefully, these negotiations keep happening and we can get a deal done."

On the ice, Pavelski is a little banged-up, but it's not serious.

"I've got a lower-body injury," Pavelski chuckled, in fine NHL lingo form. "It's just a minor one. Hopefully I'll be back Thursday and, if not Thursday, then within a game or two of that."

Pavelski was playing mostly with Winnipeg Jets winger Evander Kane before the latter parted ways with Minsk and headed home this past week.

"I wish Evander the best," Pavelski said. "It just didn't work out for him. He's a good player. He just never felt comfortable here."

Adjusting to KHL hockey, especially for a North American player, is not easy, but Pavelski makes no excuses for having one assist in seven games with Dinamo Minsk.

"It's disappointing, and I've had more chances than what I'm showing [statswise], and next thing you know, you get a little banged-up," he said. "It's a pretty slow start. There's an adjustment, for sure. I'll be excited to get back to play some games."

ESPN LOADED: 11.21.2012

644603 Websites

ESPN / NHL, NHLPA have abused our trust

By John Buccigross

ESPN.com

Wherever I go, people keep asking me, "Are you bummed about the NHL lockout?"

My answer? "No." (Then I say I am bummed only for those NHL team employees and fellow broadcasters who aren't getting fully paid. That angers me. More below.)

Listen, I'm a hockey fan and an NHL fan. Youth, high school, prep school, Junior, NCAA, minor league, NHL, World Junior Championship, Frozen Four, Swedish Elite, WHAAAAAAT-EVAH. It all entertains me. No NHL game has ever captivated me like watching my oldest (now retired), Brett, play and today watching 13-year-old Jackson wheel, sauce and snipe. #bardownhandsupcrowdcheersmomcries

Today, I'm even less of an NHL fan and more of the above enterprises. (You think people aren't making money off your 12-year-old's "elite" travel sweat? Think again, Ma and Pa. And make that check out to Coach Ca\$h-a-lot).

Two NHL betrayals in eight years? No, thanks. One infidelity changes a relationship forever, even if one side decides to outwardly forgive. Two? The relationship is either over lawfully or in the heart. It will never be the same, even after it continues and we continue watching games. You can take your Peaches and Herb, throw it in a 40-ounce juicer and pour it slowly on the sidewalk in mourning, humming Alanis Morissette's "You Oughta Know."

I and many other adults will now be distrustful of the NHL as long as the principle principals remain. Like baseball was after its canceled World Series, the game has been irrevocably stained. The scarlet letter is "G" for "greed." Some baseball fans never came back after the 1994 strike that canceled a World Series and ended all strikes. Now there are only lockouts. Or really contracts that end. Leagues can't afford to work on expired agreements because some teams can't afford to bleed more money and leagues don't want players striking before the playoffs like the baseball players did in 1994.

#### NHL Fans

Young fans will forget this lockout, but adults will never forget living through two work stoppages in eight years.

As with baseball fans not forgetting 1994, NHL fans won't forget this time around. The truly sad part is that some people will not just leave the NHL but leave the sport entirely. All hockey suffers when the head is severed.

Yes, we are all connected in this mess. The mite, the pee-wee, the preppy, Boston College's Johnny Gaudreau, Minnesota's Nick Bjugstad, Sean Whitney of the ECHL's San Francisco Bulls and AHL Hershey Bear Jon DiSalvatore. The NHL's sins are felt across the hockey board. We play together on one big, perfect, outdoor sheet of new ice. We all enjoy chicken parm.

The NHL, its logos and the Stanley Cup are the birdhouse in our souls. The lighthouse. Instead of compromise, they choose to act like Washington, D.C. They turned their backs on the rest of the game, arms folded in that wine-drinking, cigar-smoking, self-absorbed way.

Screw 'em. We're set. Yes, sometimes one side IS more to blame. It is not 50/50, even as they slog to 50/50.

In the long term, the sport will survive because, like all excellent sporting enterprises, it regenerates with youth. Gigantic crowds followed Bobby Jones play golf in 1929, and throngs watched Tiger Woods in 1999. They will follow Rory McIlroy when he wins the Masters next April with a Nike swoosh on his hat.

Ten-year-olds won't remember this NHL work stoppage. When Sidney Crosby is inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame in 2030, a 28-year-old hockey journalist will write of Crosby's amazing career with joy, innocence and sentiment. The game is irresistible. It belongs to the young, and thus it will never die.

In the #rockoutwithyourNHLlockout meantime, there is plenty of great hockey to consume in North America. Gary Bettman's and Donald Fehr's, ah, um, "relieving oneself" contest will not raise my blood pressure by one number. (I've got to get on Grantland so I can use naughty words. Simmons, call my agent.)

Wait, that's right, I don't have an agent. Like the NHL (Bettman) and the players (Fehr), just about every newsperson you watch on TV has an agent who the TV person pays anywhere from 5-10 percent of his or her gross paycheck. (Athletes usually pay around 3 percent.)

Besides not being able to stomach paying someone 10 percent of my gross for information and leverage I can easily find and implement myself, the biggest reason for my going sans agent is that I want to control the process and the narrative so I know: 1) What's going on? 2) What's being offered? 3) What is the tone? 4) Who's really working for me and not some other client? When I had an agent, I didn't feel in control and felt uneasy. Like Sully Sullenberger, flying to Cincinnati on one of them regional airlines.

#### Cast of

Bucci says it is better to bargain for yourself than to use an agent, although that is easier to do when you have the relevance of a coaster on "The Big Bang Theory."

The players and some owners have given that power up to someone else. I understand both sides are "collectively" bargaining, whereas ESPN and I bargain on behalf of just me and the corporation, which makes it much simpler. The fact that I have the telecommunications relevance of a coaster on "The Big Bang Theory" also makes negotiations a five-meeting venture.

The 2005 NHL CBA was 454 pages. My contract with ESPN is three pages. Well, two and a half. Just how I like it. I show up. I do "SportsCenter," I write about hockey, and I do play-by-play of the Frozen Four. And they pay me. Match a little for my 401(k). (Disney, ESPN's parent company, still has a pension!) Seems fair to me. Could I have gotten a little more at ESPN or left for more money somewhere else with an agent? Maybe. Maybe not. Doesn't matter.

Fair is what you think is fair. I know what I want and what makes me happy and don't focusing on getting every last single penny coming my way. I want less crap around me anyway. The last person I want to be like is like the person who wants every last freaking penny.

Yes, the players, especially those with millions banked (Iginla, Brodeur et al.) have to think a little bit about others coming after them, but the financial cat is out of the bag. Players are making more money than ever, and they will continue to make large amounts of money in the NHL because the incentive to win championships is what pays. Coaches will coach to get a better contract, GMs GM to get a better contract, and owners own to increase their franchise value. The way all this is accomplished? GETTING GOOD PLAYERS! And winning playoff games. Teams will ALWAYS pay for them. They have forever. These are competitive, proud people. They will continue to do it because even more is on the line.

If the players really cared about one another, they would fight to raise the minimum salary. Currently, it's \$525,000. Make it a million. Let's redistribute that wealth while we're at it, boys.

Put all the NHL owners in a room and five players from each team in another room. And then line up the owners on a dais with 30 chairs in front of the players' much bigger room and gave me a Frank Luntz-endorsed cordless microphone to mediate the Q and A and hash out some real revenue-sharing/contract restrictor-plate language, and I'm sure we could have had figured this thing out in five days in late August. Then the lawyers have another week to draw it up. Boom. Done. Drop the mic and grab the make-up bag.

Then both sides could save the millions they pay Bettman and Fehr and have even more for themselves. Would the Columbus Blue Jackets gladly take Bettman's salary the next 10 years? You betcha! That's about \$100 million. The agents are killing the process as they wait for their time to make their best offer come December. They are prostituting the game, injuring the game, to make a negotiating point. People don't need NHL hockey. It's a choice in a world with more choices than ever. Way more than in 2004-05.

The other issue at hand is that both Fehr and Bettman are very good at what they do. They are smart, ruthless and don't care what you think about them. Deputy commissioner Bill Daly and former NHLPA executive director Paul Kelly would have struck a deal by now. I also believe that Fehr and the players don't believe that Bettman has the stones to cancel ANOTHER season, which would essentially bury his legacy and cement his everlasting image as a toothless villain. I agree, and that's why I have felt all along we would have a season.

It's almost comical that players and owners, and you the fan, are relying on two men with not one hockey cell in their body to determine your fate. I won't let that happen with my love of the sport. I've moved on to other hockey. I watch, read and follow more college hockey than ever before, which will continue whether or not the lockout ends.

My message to the NHL player is to think long and hard about is this: The worker is ALWAYS going to have to take less. ALWAYS. Get over it. We are ALL cattle.

And get over an incredibly low, disrespectful first offer. Welcome to real world. All your fellow workers out here in Real Worldsville receive those. I have a buddy who works in the public school system in Miami who got his first raise in five years. It was a \$1,000. (The shift then blames to the NHL to not getting where it is now by Sept. 1, but maybe it sensed it would never be enough for Fehr. So far, Fehr has cost only the players money with lost, never-to-be-cashed paychecks.)

Yes, "talent" will always have more leverage than the average North American worker, and NHL players are not your average union. They have all-world physical talent in their chosen field. That has value in a multibillion-dollar industry where pride and profit escalates profits and thus salaries.

And you, the player, are reaping it. Wildly. As Keith Jones would tell me over and over again while I was working on his book "Jonesy" with him: "It's all fantasyland, man."

But the more games are canceled, the more the players will lose -- even if they think they will win. CBAs come and go. Careers are short. Players are EXTREMELY well paid. Live below their means and many can be set for a life of choice. Sacrifice a year (or more) of that for ... what? The players would be smart to push for a deal. Your business is your play; they are NOT separated. If you want to sit, by all means sit. If you want to play, fly charter and stay in Ritz-Carltons and enjoy a pension and summers off, tell Fehr to make a deal. And the season would start in two weeks.

I've written in this space a million times: I want NHL players and coaches and employees to be highly paid. I want good, talented, hard-working, selfless, come-from-middle-class people to get highly paid. Better they have it than an NHL ownership group that inherited it or fleeced taxpayers to increase their franchise value and thus their portfolio and wine cellar.

Gary Bettman

Bucci says Gary Bettman should not be allowed to hand out the Stanley Cup anymore.

But, get rid of the salary cap? The NHL fears that is Fehr's deep, dark secret and goal. Are you kidding? Do you know how well you players do BECAUSE of the cap and the floor? Do you know how many Miami Marlins there would be in the NHL if there were no cap and no floor? Do you know how many third-line centers and sixth defensemen are overpaid BECAUSE of the cap? Every NHL team really believes it can win the Cup (seven different winners in seven postcap years), and boy do they try every summer, wildly overpaying many of you. And I cheer every time you get it. I'm happy for your luck.

Because, in the end, it's all mostly luck for all of us. Lucky when Daddy has hundreds of millions and gives you a cushy front-office job. Lucky you have good genetics and loving parents. Lucky, for me, to live in a country that loves sports so much it can support so many 24-hour sports cable enterprises and lucky enough that I work for the biggest one that gives me free Disney passes.

It's all luck, and then we die. Don't be so caught up in greed and money and "winning." This isn't the Industrial Revolution; Donald Fehr isn't Che Guevara.

Be smart, make aggressive compromises/deals, and grab your hockey bag. I know you're going nuts anyway. You're still going to be rich, and the fans will still love you and hate the suits.

And hate the suits they will. Like I said, sometimes one side is more to blame, and the league has to garner most of the blame in this mess with Fehr only now closing fast.

Bettman should not be allowed to pass out the Stanley Cup to the winning team anymore. The deserved boos toward him will sully the moment. He should do the honorable thing and recuse himself from this beautiful and meaningful ceremony involving the ultimate symbol of hockey excellence.

Bettman and a handful of owners have blindsided the fans. For years, we heard "partnership" and "business partners" and then a \$2 billion TV deal with NBC and wildly profitable Stanley Cup wins for the Bruins and Blackhawks, a new arena for the Penguins, an obvious upgrade from Atlanta to Winnipeg, an amazing array of talent entering the league year after year, and then suddenly, the whole thing is big, pile of steaming doggy wallop? Again, the partnership word is a fraud.

Yes, there needs to be adjustments in revenue sharing to help some teams, because we are selling competition. And the players should not share the bulk of this sharing. The teams should. They are the investors. They reap the windfalls.

As Peter Keating wrote in ESPN The Magazine in October, "Last year, NFL teams shared about 60 percent of \$9 billion in revenues, while NHL teams shared about \$150 million of \$3.3 billion, only about 4.5 percent." The sharing has to increase. I understand one can never tell when a market, a country or a league will suffer downturns. Again, these things can easily be dealt with by a room full of smart people.

I believe having more NHL teams creates more fans and an expansive feel that is good for the game and will bring more and different people into the game. I believe over time, like 30 to 50 years, that will show dividends. The NHL had only 4 U.S. teams in the late 1960s. It remains a young league.

A reasonable, concerted effort a year ago could have moved this thing along. The transparency the NHL showed late in the game would have been better received instead of cynically viewed as desperation. Fehr's personality is now a negative and adding fuel to the fire, but to use an elementary school phrase, "He started it!"

Yes, no more Bettman at the Stanley Cup handoff ceremony. I've been one of the few people who feel Bettman has been overall GOOD for the league, despite his heavy starched-shirt personality and defensive nature. He has given the game a larger North American footprint, and I say that is good. If you don't think hockey can work or grow in some places, then you don't believe in the game.

Yes, instead of Bettman passing out the Cup, have a legend from the winning team make the presentation and maybe a contest-winning fan. You know, the people who REALLY pay the players', coaches' and commissioner's salaries. The young working men and women season-ticket holders in the 300 sections, the purchaser of team merchandise, the old couple on the couch watching on TV.

The fight goes on. But so does the hockey. There is plenty out there. No need to get angry. You've got choices. Love the game. Hate the league.

As I mentioned, only one portion of this lockout bothers me: team employees losing jobs or pay. Here is an email I received last week from one of those NHL team employees who has survived.

Honestly, it's difficult to explain the mood right now. Malaise? I think that's the best way to put it. The days are getting shorter, the air is getting colder, both things that feel like hockey, yet the only news we get is that the sides are "talking" (sort of). It just feels off. At this point, no one in our office really thinks anything in the news means anything anymore. We frankly don't care. One thing I find very interesting is that the average employee in our organization doesn't side with one side or another. Most have sympathy for the players' gripe that all contracts be honored (mostly because of the last three summers), but we also understand that the league can't survive when only a handful [of teams] turn a profit and another handful can choose between a slight profit or spending to the cap. What fuels the indifference too is the constant spin we see every day in the press. The average person here sees through the B.S. We're not idiots, nor is the average fan, so it would be great if the NHL and NHLPA would stop talking to us like we'll believe anything they say. It's arrogant. All that does is damage the trust between the fans and those groups. Why can't they get that?

As for our staff, no new cuts since the last time we talked, but many people have started leaving on their own. We've lost a couple a week for the last three weeks, and that makes sense if you figure a lot of people started looking after they started canceling large chunks of the regular season. I expect this to continue. Those who are leaving don't want to leave. They like the work and love the team. They simply want stability.

ESPN LOADED: 11.21.2012

644604 Websites

NBCSports.com / Surprise! Predators' "Smashmob" thrills youth hockey teams with NHL-like experience

Joe Yerdon

Nov 20, 2012, 11:00 PM EST

It's easy to get jaded by how things are going with the lockout. Wealthy owners bickering with wealthy players over how to divide up a multi-billion dollar pie of revenues.

The Nashville Predators decided to show a youth hockey team in the Nashville area that hockey doesn't stop just because the NHL is on a break.

Under the guise of hosting a pizza party for the youngsters, members of the Predators showed up en masse to give them the thrill of a lifetime.

Led by head coach Barry Trotz, the team brought a virtual army with them featuring the team's PA announcer Paul McCann, their radio team of Tom Callahan and Stu Grimson, the team's Ice Girls, and mascot Gnash to give the kids a moment they'll never forget.

NBCSports.com / LOADED: 11.21.2012

644605 Websites

NBCSports.com / Kings' Clifford joins ECHL Ontario Reign

Joe Yerdon

Nov 20, 2012, 10:00 PM EST

Kyle Clifford Getty ImagesL.A. Kings forward Kyle Clifford got tired of not playing hockey but didn't want to go far away to play during the lockout. Luckily for him, the Ontario Reign play in California and were happy to welcome him into the fold.

The Reign announced they've signed Clifford to play for them during the NHL lockout. Coincidentally enough, they're the ECHL affiliate of the Kings so he's not even straying from the organization, never mind Southern California.

At 21 years-old, Clifford wouldn't seem like a natural candidate to be locked out of playing in the AHL, but he's spent the last two seasons with the Kings as their tough-guy forward racking up a total of 264 penalty minutes over 157 games. He likely won't have a hard time looking for people to dance with in the ECHL if the mood strikes him.

NBCSports.com / LOADED: 11.21.2012

644606 Websites

NBCSports.com / AHL Toronto loans Leo Komarov to KHL

Joe Yerdon

Nov 20, 2012, 8:30 PM EST

Leave a comment

Mike Blunden, Leo Komarov APThings haven't played out quite the way recent Maple Leafs signing Leo Komarov wanted.

When he came over from Europe this summer, it was to try out for the NHL and give the Leafs a bit more snarl for their third or fourth lines. Thanks to the lockout, he started the season in the AHL with the Toronto Marlies but now the team is loaning him to Dynamo Moscow in the KHL.

Komarov was picked by the Leafs in the sixth round of the 2006 draft but played in Finland and Russia before coming over to North America this season.

It's expected that when/if the NHL gets a CBA done and there's a season to be played this year, Komarov will return to try and win a spot with the Leafs. In 14 games with the Marlies, Komarov had six goals and three assists. Not too bad.

NBCSports.com / LOADED: 11.21.2012

644607 Websites

NBCSports.com / Report: NHL and NHLPA agree to move free agency start date, trading cap space

Joe Yerdon

Nov 20, 2012, 7:00 PM EST

NHL and NHLPA logoWe know the talk between the owners and players has been littered with talk about how far apart they are on many issues, but there is common ground being reached.

Kevin McGran of the Toronto Star reports the two sides have "more or less" agreed on a number of issues and some of them are pretty fun.

Moving the start of free agency to June 15 or 48 hours after the Stanley Cup has been awarded, whichever is later.

Ability to trade salary cap space and give teams better ability to get out from loaded deals.

Elimination of re-entry waivers.

Neutral third-party arbitrators to weigh in on on-and-off-ice punishment.

A joint health committee.

Minimum roster requirements so teams couldn't dress fewer players to dodge salary cap problems.

While none of these have much to do with the major problems causing issues in negotiations, they're still interesting.

Free agency being moved to right after the season ends takes a page out of Major League Baseball's book as their method is somewhat similar. It also moves the start of free agency off of July 1, a national holiday in Canada. That's something a lot of players, agents, and executives would be ecstatic about.

Cutting out the ability to dump guys in the minors to save on cap space is one that's been discussed before. Dealing away cap space to help move guys with monster deals will help make sure guys with NHL deals can stay out of the minors.

NBCSports.com / LOADED: 11.21.2012

644608 Websites

NBCSports.com / Kraft cancels 2013 Hockeyville program thanks to lockout

Joe Yerdon

Nov 20, 2012, 6:01 PM EST

Kraft Hockeyville LogoThe lockout has caused yet another casualty in Kraft Hockeyville.

The league's work stoppage wiped out the CBC event this season and with the league not having found labor peace yet, next year's event has already been axed as The Canadian Press shares.

If you're unfamiliar with Kraft Hockeyville, the NHL brings a preseason game to a small Canadian town and CBC's Don Cherry and Ron MacLean help bring the "Hockey Night in Canada" aura to the setting. Losing out on that two years running doesn't do a lot of good for positive publicity.

While the event is toast, Kraft, the lead sponsor, said they would donate \$1 million to Hockey Canada affiliated minor hockey associations. The money is nice, but the minor hockey teams and communities that support them miss out in a big way in not having the show come to town.

NBCSports.com / LOADED: 11.21.2012

644609 Websites

NBCSports.com / AHL to continue with hybrid icing until NHL play resumes

Mike Halford

Nov 20, 2012, 4:34 PM EST

IcingOn Tuesday, the American Hockey League announced it would extend its trial period of hybrid icing.

From the AHL website:

American Hockey League President and Chief Executive Officer David Andrews announced today that the league's Board of Governors has voted to continue the current test of AHL Rule 82 ("Icing") until the resumption of play in the National Hockey League, at which time it will be reconsidered by the AHL Board.

At the request of the National Hockey League, the AHL Board of Governors in June approved a test of a variation of Rule 82 that, in the event of a potential icing violation, completes the play should a defending player be the first to reach the end zone face-off dots and provided the puck will cross the goal line at that point.

In late October, Andrews spoke with The Sporting News about the implementation of hybrid icing and was quick to call it a success:

SN: You have hybrid icing this year. It's not the first time you've tested rules for the NHL. How is this one going?

DA: Perfect. I have had nothing but positive feedback from coaches, from players, from scouts. It's going really well. We're going to evaluate it on Nov. 19, when we meet with the competition committee, and we'll get feedback from NHL general managers, but I expect we'll leave it in for the rest of the year.

Sabres GM Darcy Regier has been following AHL Rochester throughout the year and said he's on board with the hybrid idea.

"I've seen enough of it that I want to see more of it," he told the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle.

NBCSports.com / LOADED: 11.21.2012

644610 Websites

NBCSports.com / Semin: "I still need to improve my physical condition"

Mike Halford

Nov 20, 2012, 3:34 PM EST

Alexander Semin Getty ImagesAlex Semin has been in the KHL for the last two months, but feels his conditioning isn't up to snuff.

"Without a doubt, I still need to improve my physical condition," Semin said, despite scoring two goals and seven points in eight games for Torpedo Nizhny Novgorod. "I could have scored more points. A lot of chances have come up, but I don't always have enough composure yet."

Semin jumped to Russia soon after the NHL lockout began on Sept. 15. He first joined his hometown club, Sokol, which plays in the Russian second division (VHL).

After a short stint in Sokol, Semin was on the move again — he signed with Torpedo in mid-October and joined a club boasting a number of current and former NHLers: Anton Volchenkov, Denis Arhipov, Robert Nilsson, Dmitry Bykov and Peter Schastlivy.

Semin missed a handful of games at the beginning of his Torpedo tenure with the flu.

The 28-year-old sniper signed a one-year, \$7 million deal with the 'Canes in late July and was expected to shine in the team's new-look top six forward group — projected to be Semin, Eric Staal, Jordan Staal, Tuomo Ruutu, Jeff Skinner and Jussi Jokinen.

NBCSports.com / LOADED: 11.21.2012

644611 Websites

NBCSports.com / Report: Blues' Halak to sign in KHL

Mike Halford

Nov 20, 2012, 2:38 PM EST

Leave a comment

Jaroslav Halak Getty ImagesJaroslav Halak is set to become the latest locked-out goalie to find work overseas.

According to multiple reports (see here and here and here), the Blues netminder has agreed to terms with KHL club Spartak Moscow.

In doing so, Halak will join Pekka Rinne, Ilya Bryzgalov, Semyon Varlamov and Sergei Bobrovsky (KHL) Tuukka Rask and Ondrej Pavelec (Czech Extraliga), Antti Niemi (Finland) Viktor Fasth (Sweden) and Jonathan Bernier and Rick DiPietro (Germany) as NHL netminders that have signed abroad.

Last year, Halak teamed with Brian Elliott to give St. Louis the best goaltending tandem in hockey. The pair combined to win the William Jennings Trophy (fewest goals allowed) while Halak finished sixth in save percentage (.924), fourth in goals against (1.97) and fifth in shutouts (six).

Halak got the call to start for St. Louis in its opening-round playoff series against San Jose, but only lasted two games before suffering an ankle injury that ended his postseason.

The injury was significant enough that its effects lingered until mid-July, possibly why the 27-year-old waited so long before signing with a European club.

In Moscow, Halak will join a Spartak club currently employing ex-NHLers Shaone Morrisonn, Branko Radivojevic, Oleg Petrov and Bruins prospect Alexander Khokhlachev.

NBCSports.com / LOADED: 11.21.2012

644612 Websites

NBCSports.com / Daly has no expectations for Wednesday's CBA talks

Jason Brough

Nov 20, 2012, 3:22 PM EST

BillDalyWednesday could mark a major turning point in CBA negotiations between the NHL and NHLPA; however, deputy commissioner Bill Daly isn't getting his hopes up.

Or down, if you're an optimist.

"I don't have any expectations at this point," Daly wrote to the Chicago Tribune in an e-mail.

Daly has expressed frustration at what he deems the NHLPA's unwillingness to compromise on the issues that continue to divide the two sides. Thus, the importance of tomorrow's talks when the players are expected to present the NHL with a new offer.

"If their proposal continues to be a guaranteed amount of players' share dollars," Daly said Monday, "we have told them that sitting here on Nov. 19, that's not a proposal that is acceptable to us or would ever be acceptable to our owners right now."

Daly is also hoping the union's proposal will encompass all the issues, not just a select few.

"We think it's all tied together and we'd like to hear it all together," he said.

Safe to say, if the union maintains its demands for a guaranteed dollar amount of revenue and/or doesn't address all the issues in its proposal, tomorrow will not bring this dispute any closer to a resolution.

In fact, it may drive the sides further apart.

NBCSports.com / LOADED: 11.21.2012

644613 Websites

NBCSports.com / Goldwater still watching as Coyotes lease agreement goes before Glendale council

Jason Brough

Nov 20, 2012, 1:51 PM EST

Jobing.com ArenaToday in Glendale, city council will discuss a re-worked lease agreement with prospective Phoenix Coyotes owner Greg Jamison at the city-owned Jobing.com Arena.

The lease could go to a vote on Nov. 27.

If you're curious (or would like to punish yourself by reading boring legalese,) for the proposed agreement in full.

The agreement, which calls for the city to pay Jamison an average of \$15 million over 20 years for arena management, is a controversial one.

Some say it's nothing but a subsidy and that the arena could be managed for considerably less.

The counterargument is that it's the only way to keep the Coyotes from moving and that, with the potential loss of jobs and indirect business taxes, things would be worse for the city without the NHL franchise.

But the fact some deem the agreement a subsidy raises the specter of the Goldwater Institute, a taxpayer watchdog group, intervening and arguing that the lease contravenes the state's gift clause.

That clause reads as follows:

"Neither the state, nor any county, city, town, municipality, or other subdivision of the state shall ever give or loan its credit in the aid of, or make any donation or grant, by subsidy or otherwise, to any individual, association, or corporation, or become a subscriber to, or a shareholder in, any company or corporation, or become a joint owner with any person, company, or corporation, except as to such ownerships as may accrue to the state by operation or provision of law or as authorized by law solely for investment of the monies in the various funds of the state."

The Goldwater Institute tells PHT via email that it continues to monitor the situation; however, it has no comment at this time.

NBCSports.com / LOADED: 11.21.2012

644614 Websites

NBCSports.com / Report: After wooing Isles to Brooklyn, Ratner to help develop Nassau Coliseum site

Jason Brough Nov 20, 2012, 11:31 AM EST

Shawn Jay-Z Carter, Bruce Ratner APThe man who wooed the New York Islanders into his new Brooklyn arena is reportedly set to advise Nassau County officials on what to do with the Isles' soon-to-be former rink.

Which is a bit ironic, no?

That man, of course, would be Bruce Ratner, the developer and majority owner of the Barclays Center.

According to Newday, Ratner "will play a strategic role in developing an entertainment facility" on the site of the obsolete Nassau Coliseum and "will come up with a plan in 2013 to increase the arena's viability and allow it to compete for shows, concerts and other events."

The Isles signed an "ironclad" 25-year lease at the Barclays Center starting in 2015-16, so unless the iron can be melted down on that agreement, they won't be moving back once they leave Nassau, even if there's a new arena there.

NBCSports.com / LOADED: 11.21.2012

644615 Websites

YAHOO SPORTS / Sabres University: Buffalo goes back to school during lockout downtime

16 hours ago Nicholas J. Cotsonika

Typically, you start with a university, and then you add sports to bring people together, create that old college spirit and learn lessons that would otherwise go untaught.

In Buffalo, they did it the other way around. They started with a team and added a university – "Sabres University," an internal educational program complete with classes, requirements, binders, T-shirts and even a student mixer.

"I was reluctant to call it a 'frat party' because of liability," laughed Ted Black, the team president. "We'll call it 'student rush' or something like that."

Amid the NHL lockout, the Sabres built fraternity within their organization – call it "Beta Sigma," maybe – but not a fraternity. This was not "Animal House." This was not a really futile and stupid gesture. (Watch this clip to the 2:26 mark – and beware strong language.)

Give 'em an "A" for the effort. Sabres employees shared their expertise with other Sabres employees – from general manager Darcy Regier and coach Lindy Ruff, to the folks in broadcasting and marketing, to everyone in between. People gained deeper appreciation for what others do.

The best was made of a bad situation, and at least someone learned something from it.

"The morale part of it is huge, and the interaction," Black said. "Sometimes there can be an invisible wall between the hockey department and every other part of the organization.

"Here we have Darcy Regier sitting next to the guy who runs the Zamboni, sitting next to the guy who sells tickets, sitting next to the woman that's the receptionist. So a lot of those interactive barriers are kind of broken down."

It began with owner Terry Pegula, the billionaire who has sought to build a first-class winner since purchasing his favorite team. He did not lay off anyone because of the lockout. He did not cut anyone's pay, either. But he did challenge everyone to use the downtime productively.

Black met with Brent Rossi, the Sabres' vice-president of brand strategy and marketing, who came back from a social media seminar wanting to share some ideas with the executive staff. Black suggested Rossi could teach a class to everyone on social media and what it means to the organization.

The Sabres dressing room remains empty, but the organization has kept busy during the lockout.

They kept brainstorming. What if they had a class on this? What if they had a class on that? Black suggested they call it "Sabres University" and left Rossi to come up with a curriculum.

And so Pegulaville became a college town.

For four days this month, from 9 a.m. to the close of business, school was in session. Conference rooms – even the Sabres' dressing room – became classrooms. Each "student" was required to earn 30 credits to "pass" the semester.

There were core classes mandatory for everyone, from "Customer Service Training" to "History of the Sabres." Regier said he gained a better understanding of the customer service reps and "the things they deal with, especially now."

There were elective core classes mandatory for specific departments, such as "Public Speaking" and "Salary Cap & Player Transactions."

Then there were electives open to everyone, like "Putting the Ice in Hockey," which examined the technique for making the ice itself, and "The Scouting Process," which reviewed how the Sabres identify draft prospects.

One class illustrated the evolution of the Sabres, both in general under Pegula and in particular with Sabres University. "Hockey Operations Scouting Software" highlighted the sophisticated tools used by Sabres scouts and examined "possible applications for other departments."

Back when the Sabres pinched pennies, they cut their scouting staff drastically. "We had to figure out ways to get things done with less, and it forced us very much to the technology side," Regier said.

Then Pegula arrived. He wanted more boots on the ground, and he made an investment in the scouting staff, swelling its ranks from 11 to about two dozen. Now the Sabres have the best of both worlds – the technology and the manpower.

"We're one of the biggest scouting staffs league-wide, and so for us, we're also using this time to try to merge what we learned from being lean into helping us become more effective with a big staff again," Regier said.

Regier has been both a teacher and a student.

In class, Regier showed how scouts mark video clips with comments, so they can look at the video together later, discuss their individual views and come to a consensus. "We used to have tell, and now we've got show and tell, and then you've got conversation," Regier said.

The broadcast team learned how the scouts evaluate players and how they mark video – things they can apply directly to their work – just as Regier picked up something from "Behind the Scenes of a Sabres Broadcast."

"You don't understand, on things like replays, the work that's done," Regier said. "It's obviously a lot simpler now because it's digital versus the old tapes, but all the queuing up of things, the rolling of things, it takes time."

It isn't as easy as flopping onto the sofa and reaching for the remote.

Said Black: "Somebody spoke up at the last class, and said, 'You know, I just turn on the TV and watch the game. I didn't realize how involved and intricate the TV production is. Now I realize how hard they work on a game day to put on a telecast.'"

The same could be said for "The Anatomy of an Arena Event," or "The Ins & Outs of Game Entertainment," or "Media Buying" or ... coaching. Ruff, the guy whose job is constantly second-guessed, explained things like how opponents crowd the box and why he wants his defensemen involved in the attack.

"Lindy Ruff just taught anyone that wanted to sign up just an overview on how his coaching system works," Black said. "He sort of took everyone through that from a higher level. You didn't have to be a hockey coach or an expert to understand what he was saying."

There will be no final exam, but the students will complete a detailed survey. Even before this semester finished, the Sabres decided there would

be another – and they want the next one to be bigger and better. They might include partners and sponsors next time, maybe even the media.

"This is going to be part of who we are going forward," Black said. "So there will be a Sabres University 2.0."

Let's just hope there's no time for a spring semester. Summer school never sounded so good.

YAHOO.COM LOADED: 11.21.2012