

# SPORT-SCAN DAILY BRIEF

NHL 11/24/2012

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NHL cancels games through Dec. 14 and the All-Star game, too

The league has lost 34.3% of this season's games to lockout, and with sides trading barbs instead of negotiating, an end to labor dispute does not appear close.

By Helene Elliott

6:20 PM PST, November 23, 2012

Leaders of the NHL and the NHL Players' Assn. traded barbs instead of labor proposals Friday as the league extended its cancellation of regular-season games through Dec. 14 for a total of 422, or 34.3% of the schedule. It also canceled the All-Star game, scheduled for Jan. 27 at Columbus, Ohio.

NHL Deputy Commissioner Bill Daly said in an interview on Toronto radio station The Fan 590 that he has doubted the NHLPA's willingness to make a deal. "I would hope the players want to play and want to have a season but I'm not so sure at the end of the day that unless it's on certain terms that union leadership necessarily shares that goal," he said.

Daly also took an ominous view of a possible vote by players to decertify their union, as NFL and NBA players did in recent labor disputes. "I think it's a time-consuming process that would likely lead to the end of the season," he said.

Steve Fehr, the NHLPA's special counsel, declined to say if the decertification process has begun but said all options are being considered. He said the union wants to complete a deal but has questioned the NHL's intentions. "We have our doubts, how's that?" he said in a separate interview on the same station.

Fehr also said the league has moved toward players. "But on the things that matter — dollars, free-agency rights, salary arbitration rights, some of the other player contracting rights they're trying to take a meat ax to — there was not movement," he said. "If it was Thanksgiving dinner, they gave us a relish tray but no turkey."

The sides have agreed to evenly split hockey-related revenues but differ over transitional payments to players who will lose a chunk of their salaries to escrow as they move from a 57% share of hockey-related revenues under the previous collective bargaining agreement to 50%.

NHLPA Executive Director Donald Fehr called the new cancellations disappointing because the economic gap has shrunk to \$182 million in transitional payments. "On Wednesday, NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman said that the league is losing \$18 [million]-\$20 million per day during the

lockout, therefore two more weeks of canceled games far exceeds the current economic gap," he said.

LA Times: LOADED: 11.24.2012

644736 Anaheim Ducks

One-third of NHL season now canceled; All-Star Game also lost

By ERIC STEPHENS / The Orange County Register

The continuing labor battle between NHL owners and players took its latest toll Friday as the league canceled two more weeks of scheduled games along with the 2013 All-Star Game and other festivities that were set for Columbus, Ohio in late January.

Games have now been canceled through Dec. 14, bringing the total to 422 in all, which represents more than one-third of the season. And now another marquee event has been wiped out after the league earlier canceled the Winter Classic that was set for New Year's Day at Michigan Stadium in Ann Arbor, Mich.

Article Tab: Gonzaga logo for NCAA Tournament.

Gonzaga logo for NCAA Tournament.

The Blue Jackets, part of the NHL's expansion phase that began play in 2000-01, were to host the All-Star contest along with its complementary weekend events for the first time on Jan. 26-27 at Nationwide Arena.

"The reality of losing more regular-season games as well as the 2013 NHL All-Star weekend in Columbus is extremely disappointing," NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly said in a statement. "We feel badly for NHL fans and particularly those in Columbus, and we intend to work closely with the Blue Jackets organization to return the NHL All-Star events to Columbus and their fans as quickly as possible."

It would appear that a 60-game season and full postseason could still be salvaged if the two sides can find some means of breaking their impasse and negotiate a new collective bargaining agreement within the next two weeks. But the NHL and the NHL Players' Association have found little common ground in a lockout that began Sept. 16 and is now 69 days old.

The latest round of negotiations ended Wednesday with the league rejecting the union's latest offer of a five-year deal based on moving toward the NHL's desired percentage share linked to hockey-related revenues instead of guaranteed real dollars.

The NHLPA agreed to a 50-50 split of revenues from the beginning of a new CBA but asked the NHL to pay \$393 million over four years to "make whole" existing player contracts. The league, which wants a new deal to last six years or longer, has countered by offering \$211 million over two years.

NHLPA executive director Donald Fehr referred to the difference in his statement, citing that two more weeks of lost games based on NHL commissioner Gary Bettman's assertion of the league losing \$18-20 million per day during the lockout is an amount that "far exceeds the economic gap" between the sides.

"On Wednesday, the players presented a comprehensive proposal, once again moving in the owners' direction in order to get the game back on the ice," Fehr said. "The gap that remains on the core economic issues is \$182 million."

"It makes the NHL's announcement of further game cancellations, including the 2013 All-Star weekend, all the more unnecessary, and disappointing for all hockey fans — especially those in Columbus. The players remain ready to negotiate but we require a willing negotiating partner."

The Ducks were to have hosted the Chicago Blackhawks on their annual Black Friday matinee game after Thanksgiving. They've now had five more contests erased and 28 in all, 16 of which were dates at Honda Center that include four consecutive games from Dec. 5-13.

Meanwhile, the Kings have had 29 games canceled and have yet to have the opportunity to unfurl their first Stanley Cup championship banner inside Staples Center.

Player anger continues to rise, particularly after the latest union offer to negotiate off the league's preferred revenue system model was largely

dismissed. Bettman has been the target of their vitriol, mainly due to the threat of a \$1 million fine for any team that speaks publicly about the ongoing lockout.

Detroit Red Wings defenseman Ian White called Bettman an "idiot" and Florida Panthers winger Kris Versteeg referred to him and Daly as "cancers" who've been "looting this game for far too long."

Dallas Stars forward Ray Whitney, who has been through four work stoppages, told ESPN.com's Pierre LeBrun that those in charge of the league are "not really hockey people" who are "like schoolyard bullies right now." But players have also shied away from criticizing the owners of their own teams.

Several Ducks working out at Anaheim Ice chimed in with their thoughts to the Register's Tanya Lyon earlier this week. Ryan Getzlaf contends that the NHL has its own timetable to settle the labor dispute on its terms while Teemu Selanne reiterated that he would strongly consider retirement if the league were to cancel the remainder of the season.

"The league has done a lot of damage right now," Ducks defenseman Francois Beauchemin said. "We just keep doing it every day that we're not playing. We're losing fans."

Orange County Register: LOADED: 11.24.2012

644737 Anaheim Ducks

NHL cancels more games, All-Star festivities

November 23rd, 2012, 11:29 am · · posted by Eric Stephens, Staff writer

The continuing labor battle between NHL owners and its players took its latest toll Friday as the league canceled two more weeks of scheduled games along with the 2013 All-Star game and other festivities that were set for Columbus in late January.

Games have now been canceled through Dec. 14, bringing the total to 422 in all that represent more than one-third of the season. And now another marquee event has been wiped out after the league on Nov. 2 canceled the Winter Classic that was set for New Year's Day at Michigan Stadium in Ann Arbor, Mich.

The Blue Jackets, part of the NHL's expansion phase that began play in the 2000-01, were to host the All-Star contest along with its complementary weekend events for the first time on Jan. 26-27 at their Nationwide Arena.

"The reality of losing more regular-season games as well as the 2013 NHL All-Star weekend in Columbus is extremely disappointing," NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly said in a statement. "We feel badly for NHL fans and particularly those in Columbus, and we intend to work closely with the Blue Jackets organization to return the NHL All-Star events to Columbus and their fans as quickly as possible."

It would appear that a 60-game season and full postseason could still be salvaged if the two sides can find some means of breaking their impasse and negotiate a new collective bargaining agreement within the next two weeks. But the NHL and the NHL Players' Assn. have found little common ground in a lockout that began on Sept. 16 and is now 69 days old.

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ice," Fehr said. "The gap that remains on the core economic issues is \$182 million.

"It makes the NHL's announcement of further game cancellations, including the 2013 All-Star weekend, all the more unnecessary, and disappointing for all hockey fans – especially those in Columbus. The players remain ready to negotiate but we require a willing negotiating partner."

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"The league has done a lot of damage right now," Ducks defenseman Francois Beauchemin said. "We just keep doing it every day that we're not playing. We're losing fans."

Posted in: Columbus Blue Jackets • Ducks • Labor issues • NHL • NHLPA • Bill Daly

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644738 Boston Bruins

NHL cancels games through mid-Dec.

By Steve Conroy | Saturday, November 24, 2012 | <http://www.bostonherald.com> | NHL Coverage

As the NHL continues to ebb from the consciousness of the average American sports fan, the league's powers that be did what was fully expected of them yesterday: They canceled more games.

After formal negotiations broke down Wednesday following the NHL's rejection of the NHL Players Association's latest proposal, the league whacked 96 more regular-season games, through Dec. 14, as well as the All-Star weekend that had been scheduled for Jan. 26-27 in Columbus.

"The reality of losing more regular-season games as well as the 2013 NHL All-Star Weekend in Columbus is extremely disappointing," NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly said in a statement. "We feel badly for NHL fans and particularly those in Columbus, and we intend to work closely with the Blue Jackets organization to return the NHL All-Star events to Columbus and their fans as quickly as possible."

To date, 422 games have been canceled, or 34.3 percent of the season.

Though commissioner Gary Bettman maintained Wednesday that the two sides are still far apart, NHLPA executive director Don Fehr, in his statement yesterday, said that's not the case.

"The gap that remains on the core economic issues is \$182 million," Fehr said. "On Wednesday, NHL commissioner Gary Bettman said that the league is losing \$18 (million to) \$20 million per day during the lockout,

therefore two more weeks of cancelled games far exceeds the current economic gap. It makes the NHL's announcement of further game cancellations . . . all the more unnecessary."

There are rumblings that the NHLPA's next step could be to decertify the union in order to file an antitrust suit.

Boston Herald LOADED: 11.24.2012

644739 Buffalo Sabres

Black Friday has different meaning: More games canceled, including All-Star weekend

November 23, 2012 - 2:35 PM

Lots of items floating around the rinks on Black Friday, which just got blacker with the announcement the NHL is canceling all games through December 14 -- and the All-Star Weekend for late January in Columbus.

The cancellations take the total number of games lost to the lockout up to 422, or 34.3 percent of the schedule. The Sabres have now had 27 games wiped off the original schedule (15 at home).

Seven more games were lost today (home against San Jose, Montreal, Ottawa, Chicago and road against Boston, Toronto and Montreal). Of course, if there's a season, a completely new schedule is going to have to be drawn up anyway at this point.

"The reality of losing more regular-season games as well as the 2013 NHL All-Star Weekend in Columbus is extremely disappointing," said NHL Deputy Commissioner Bill Daly. "We feel badly for NHL fans and particularly those in Columbus, and we intend to work closely with the Blue Jackets organization to return the NHL All-Star events to Columbus and their fans as quickly as possible."

There is not expected to be an All-Star Game in 2014 because of the Winter Olympics in Sochi, so Columbus' next chance appears to be 2015.

3:25 p.m. update -- Statement from NHLPA executive director Donald Fehr: "On Wednesday, the players presented a comprehensive proposal, once again moving in the owners' direction in order to get the game back on the ice. The gap that remains on the core economic issues is \$182 million. On Wednesday, NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman said that the league is losing \$18-20 million per day during the lockout, therefore two more weeks of cancelled games far exceeds the current economic gap. It makes the NHL's announcement of further game cancellations, including the 2013 All-Star Weekend, all the more unnecessary, and disappointing for all hockey fans -- especially those in Columbus. The players remain ready to negotiate but we require a willing negotiating partner."

---Daly and NHL Special Counsel Steve Fehr continued to paint a bleak picture of things during separate interviews today on the FAN 590 in Toronto. (Go here for the audio of both interviews). There are no new meetings scheduled, no new offers apparently coming from either side.

Said Fehr: "We moved a couple of miles, and they moved a couple of inches. If it was Thanksgiving dinner, they gave us a relish tray but no turkey."

OK then.

Daly, meanwhile, spent a good portion of his interview talking about the potential of the union using decertification as a tactic to perhaps speed things to a solution. Daly called it "a time-consuming process that would likely lead to the end of the season."

Who was the warning clearly directed to? Sabres goaltender Ryan Miller, who e-mailed the Toronto Globe and Mail (the national newspaper of Canada) late Thursday night with his thoughts that endorsed that direction.

"I am tired of the disregard and the ego," Miller wrote in part. "Our fans and sponsors are alienated, and this is hurting the game. This process has more of the appearance of brand suicide than a negotiation."

Confirmed Daly today: "I guess I underestimated the magnitude of the gulf between us. We continue to be far apart."

---Better news department: Sabres assistant coach Teppo Numminen has been named to the 2013 class of the International Ice Hockey Federation

Hall of Fame. Others named include Paul Henderson, Mats Sundin and Peter Forsberg.

---Mike Harrington

Buffalo News LOADED: 11.24.2012

644740 Buffalo Sabres

Bitterness accompanies latest NHL cancellations

BY: Mike Harrington

Black Friday had a different meaning to the National Hockey League as more games were wiped from the schedule Friday by the lockout and the byplay between the league and the NHL Players Association took on an even darker tone.

The league canceled all games through Dec. 14 and also shelved All-Star Weekend in Columbus, scheduled for Jan. 26-27. The cancellations take the total number of games lost to the lockout up to 422, or 34.3 percent of the schedule. The Buffalo Sabres have now had 27 games wiped off the original schedule (15 at home).

In this round of cancellations, the Sabres lost home games against San Jose, Montreal, Ottawa and Chicago, as well as road games against Boston, Toronto and Montreal. Of course, if there's a season, a completely new schedule is going to have to be drawn up anyway.

"The reality of losing more regular-season games as well as the 2013 NHL All-Star Weekend in Columbus is extremely disappointing," said NHL Deputy Commissioner Bill Daly. "We feel badly for NHL fans and particularly those in Columbus, and we intend to work closely with the Blue Jackets organization to return the NHL All-Star events to Columbus and their fans as quickly as possible."

If players participate in the Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia, there will be no All-Star festivities during the 2013-14 season, meaning Columbus will have to wait until at least 2015.

NHLPA Executive Director Donald Fehr reacted angrily to the league's latest news.

"On Wednesday, the players presented a comprehensive proposal, once again moving in the owners' direction in order to get the game back on the ice," Fehr said in a statement. "The gap that remains on the core economic issues is \$182 million. On Wednesday, NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman said that the league is losing \$18-20 million per day during the lockout, therefore two more weeks of canceled games far exceeds the current economic gap."

"It makes the NHL's announcement of further game cancellations, including the 2013 All-Star Weekend, all the more unnecessary, and disappointing for all hockey fans -- especially those in Columbus. The players remain ready to negotiate but we require a willing negotiating partner."

A couple of hours earlier, Daly and NHL Special Counsel Steve Fehr appeared separately in live interviews on Sportsnet 590 The FAN, the all-sports radio station in Toronto. They said they spoke briefly Friday but that no new talks are planned after Wednesday's session did not produce any real progress on core economic issues.

Said Steve Fehr: "We moved a couple of miles, and they moved a couple of inches. If it was Thanksgiving dinner, they gave us a relish tray but no turkey."

For his part, Daly warned that the rumblings about decertification of the union would not speed the process to a solution but in fact would jeopardize any hopes of a settlement.

Daly called it "a time-consuming process that would likely lead to the end of the season."

To whom was the warning directed? It was clearly aimed at Sabres goaltender Ryan Miller, who emailed the Toronto Globe and Mail (the national newspaper of Canada) late Thursday night and became the first player to publicly endorse that direction.

"After watching the other sport leagues go through labor disputes last year, it is apparent that until decertification is filed, there will not be any real

movement or negotiation," Miller wrote, referring to lockouts in the NFL and NBA once those players threatened to decertify.

Decertification (dissolving the union) certainly comes with risks. While it would allow the players to go to court seeking an injunction to end the lockout or to file an antitrust lawsuit, it could render large sections of the current CBA moot and prompt owners to impose other conditions.

"I am tired of the disregard and the ego," Miller wrote. "Our fans and sponsors are alienated, and this is hurting the game. This process has more of the appearance of brand suicide than a negotiation."

In non-lockout news, Sabres assistant coach Teppo Numminen was named Friday to the 2013 class of inductees for the International Ice Hockey Federation Hall of Fame.

He will be inducted in May in Stockholm, Sweden, in a class that includes former NHL and international stars Peter Forsberg, Paul Henderson and Mats Sundin.

Numminen played in four Olympics (winning three medals), four IIHF World Championships, and another four Canada Cup/World Cup events for his native Finland. With the previous induction of his father, Kalevi, as a builder in 2011 for his role as a coach of the Finnish National Team, the Numminens will become the first father-son pair in the IIHF Hall of Fame.

Buffalo News LOADED: 11.24.2012

644741 Buffalo Sabres

Robert O. Swados, who helped bring the Sabres to Buffalo, is dead at 93  
Attorney held roles with team and NHL

BY: Gene Warner

Robert O. Swados, a prominent local attorney better known as a founding father who helped bring the Sabres to Buffalo and remained active with the team throughout its first 42 years, has died, team officials and friends confirmed Friday.

Mr. Swados was found dead in his Kenmore assisted-living home Friday morning, after having eaten Thanksgiving dinner with friends Thursday. He was 93.

"He was the elder statesman for the Sabres," said Seymour H. Knox IV, son and nephew of the team's first owners. "He certainly will be remembered for his hard work in helping my dad and uncle bring the Sabres to Buffalo.

"On a day-to-day basis, he was involved in all the decisions, whether it was building the arena or bringing Pat LaFontaine to Buffalo," Knox added. "And he had a lot of insight into what was going on in the league."

Mr. Swados wore a lot of hats in his 93 years. He was a Harvard University Law School graduate, a successful corporate and tax attorney, a co-founder of Buffalo's Studio Arena Theatre, an author, a former New York State probation commissioner, vice chairman and counsel of the Buffalo Sabres, secretary of the National Hockey League's board of governors and the league's special counsel from 1976 to 1993.

At the time of his death, Mr. Swados remained chairman of the Sabres Hall of Fame Committee, a post he has held since the committee's inception in the 1980s. He was inducted into that hall in the 1990s.

"Bob Swados was one of the founding members of the Buffalo Sabres ownership group 42 years ago," Buffalo Sabres owner Terry Pegula said in a statement from the team. "He was an integral part of the Knox brothers' successful acquisition of the franchise and was an important member of the front office for over 30 years. He was still involved with the organization, serving as the president of the Buffalo Sabres Hall of Fame. Our thoughts and prayers go out to the entire Swados family."

Oddly, it was Mr. Swados' work in trying to bring a Continental League baseball franchise to Buffalo in 1960 that caught the eye of the Knox brothers, Seymour H. III and Northrup, as they tried to land an NHL team in the mid-1960s. Although that effort failed, the Knoxes, with Mr. Swados as their attorney, finally were awarded a team in December 1969.

Starting with the spin of the wheel that brought Gilbert Perreault to Buffalo in 1970, Mr. Swados was a key figure in the history of the Sabres for three decades.

Mr. Swados graduated cum laude from the University of Buffalo in 1938 before earning his law degree cum laude three years later from Harvard Law School. He later served on the front lines with the U.S. Army in the European Theater during World War II.

After being admitted to the bar in 1942, Mr. Swados started his career four years later with what later would become the Cohen Swados law firm, carving out a career that focused on corporate, tax, television and professional sports cases.

His firm, which celebrated its 100th anniversary in 1997, dissolved four years later. The Phillips Lytle law firm then named Swados "of counsel" in its Buffalo office.

In 2006, Swados wrote a somewhat controversial book, "Counsel in the Crease," which offered strong opinions – largely spirited defenses – of figures including the Knox brothers, NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman, former Sabres owner John Rigas and former coach/general manager Scotty Bowman.

This was an inside look at the first 35 years of the Sabres, from a man who occupied a perch inside many of the rinks and meeting rooms where Sabres history was created.

"The author is pro-Buffalo, pro-Sabres, pro-Knox group, a man who spills his blue and gold blood all over these pages," a Buffalo News review of the book stated. "He takes the reader into the board rooms, into the locker rooms, into negotiations, everywhere but in the faceoff circles and the corners of the rink."

Swados's opinions, though, weren't popular with everyone. Some top Sabres and NHL officials grumbled about what they claimed were inaccuracies or the author's lack of inside knowledge about some incidents.

But the book included plenty of colorful anecdotes from Sabres history.

Like the one about the Sabres having "stolen" the first game of the Stanley Cup finals, skating into Dallas on June 8, 1999 and surprising the Dallas Stars in overtime. The referee had called a disproportionate number of penalties on the Sabres, at one point sending seven straight Buffalo players to the penalty box.

Swados wrote that when he reached for a congratulatory handshake from top NHL brass afterwards, all he got was stony silence.

"Well, I guess justice triumphed over adversity," Swados quipped to NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman, according to the book.

Without cracking a smile, Bettman responded like a stern judge: "Adversity justified."

Never shy about sharing his opinions or revealing some inside information, Mr. Swados wasn't popular with everyone, especially during the ownership upheaval involving the Sabres after the Knox brothers sold the team.

"He could be cantankerous, but he was the kind of guy you wanted fighting for you and your team," one longtime friend said Friday.

Among the survivors are his daughter, Elizabeth Swados – a highly successful author, musician, director and composer with multiple Tony Award nominations and Obie Awards – and a good friend, Audre Bunis.

A graveside service will be held at 3 p.m. Sunday in Forest Lawn. A memorial service will be scheduled later.

Buffalo News LOADED: 11.24.2012

644742 Calgary Flames

Fair deal? Not even close. Both sides of NHL dispute only have winning in mind

By RANDY SPORTAK , Calgary Sun

The longer the NHL lockout continues, the more you can't help but cheer for somebody to win.

But only if it becomes a Pyrrhic victory.

It would serve them right to get their way but have to deal with after-effects of an NHL consisting of half-empty arenas and miniscule TV audiences with very few corporate sponsors.

Neither side in this spat — especially those who will walk away calling themselves “winners” — deserves all the financial success they’ve enjoyed in the past and expect to continue bathing in over the future.

Let’s face it, as the 2012 shutdown reaches Day 70, the goal of both sides appears misguided.

Despite their protests about how their quest is to find a fair deal and get the NHL back on the 30 sheets of ice across North America, it seems the goal of both sides is simply to win.

The owners and NHL commissioner Gary Bettman appear to have a target of complete control over the players. It’s as if they realized they blew their chance to quash the players’ association back in 2005 and want to send an even harsher message this time around, despite the fact the teams — read GMs — ruined the near-perfect system born out of the last shutdown.

In turn, the players seem to feel this is their chance to stick it back to the league, especially Bettman. (Seriously, you almost think they’d be willing to take a worse deal if it meant Bettman was ousted permanently.)

Unfortunately, those who actually care about seeing hockey again are caught in the middle of the ridiculous game of chicken between Bettman and NHLPA executive director Don Fehr.

And they’re stuck having to listen to all the garbage rhetoric from both sides.

Do these guys hear themselves? On a day the league announced there would be no games through Dec. 14 — as well as the cancellations of NHL All-Star Game festivities scheduled for Jan. 26-27 in Columbus — the same old, same old was heard yet again.

To his credit, Fehr didn’t use the phrase “owner’s lockout” in his statement this time but once again said the players want to “negotiate, but we require a willing negotiating partner.” This is coming from a side which stalled and stalled in the days leading up to the end of the last collective bargaining agreement and has since only provided offers in which they expect all the cash without an ounce of risk.

In turn, the league trotted out the same old apology to the fans, most of whom don’t understand how a business entity which had grown by US\$1 billion in the seven seasons following the last lockout to \$3.3 billion can’t make it work or at least have the sense to gradually get to the 50-50 share it so desires.

This all comes on the heels of the mudslinging earlier in the week after the owners quickly dismissed the players’ offer.

As dumb as it sounds, both sides are more concerned about winning the meaningless public relations battle of having the majority of fans on their sides during negotiations, instead of the important PR quest: Happy fans because a deal is done. It’s high time they realize their only chance to actually have a league with any value is to find a solution immediately.

All we’ve seen are insults toward each other which have insulted the intelligence of the rest of us.

Calgary Sun: LOADED: 11.24.2012

644743 Carolina Hurricanes

NHL cancels All-Star Game

By Chip Alexander - calexander@newsobserver.com

The National Hockey League canceled another block of games Friday, not that the move had much shock value.

As expected, the NHL canceled all regular-season games through Dec. 14. The 2013 All-Star Game Weekend, which was to be held Jan. 26-27 in Columbus, Ohio, was another casualty.

For those counting, that’s 423 regular-season games that have been axed by the league, including the 2013 Winter Classic on New Year’s Day. That’s more than 34 percent of the 2012-2013 schedule.

The decision was made two days after collective bargaining talks ended in rejection and frustration. The NHL Players Association made a six-page CBA proposal to the league but the offer was dismissed.

The league is seeking a 50-50 split of annual hockey-related revenue, and the NHL has proposed a “make whole” provision to honor existing player contracts through deferred payments.

The league offered to pull \$211 million out of its HRR share to fund the deferred compensation. The union, however, proposed Wednesday that the league take \$393 million out of the NHL share.

“On Wednesday, the players presented a comprehensive proposal, once again moving in the owners’ direction in order to get the game back on the ice,” NHLPA executive director Donald Fehr said Friday in a statement. “The gap that remains on the core economic issues is \$182 million.

“On Wednesday, NHL commissioner Gary Bettman said that the league is losing \$18-20 million per day during the lockout, therefore two more weeks of cancelled games far exceeds the current economic gap. It makes the NHL’s announcement of further game cancellations, including the 2013 All-Star Weekend, all the more unnecessary, and disappointing for all hockey fans — especially those in Columbus. The players remain ready to negotiate but we require a willing negotiating partner.”

The lockout began with the expiration of the CBA on Sept. 15. The league first canceled all regular-season games from Oct. 11 to Oct. 24, then games through Nov. 1. The next cancellations wiped out all games through the end of November.

“The reality of losing more regular-season games as well as the 2013 NHL All-Star Weekend in Columbus is extremely disappointing,” NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly said Friday in a statement. “We feel badly for NHL fans and particularly those in Columbus, and we intend to work closely with the Blue Jackets organization to return the NHL All-Star events to Columbus and their fans as quickly as possible.”

There is no All-Star game set for 2014 with the Winter Olympics taking place in Sochi, Russia. It’s possible Columbus could host the 2015 All-Star Weekend.

There was no CBA meeting Friday and it’s unclear when then next CBA session will be held.

Buffalo Sabres goaltender Ryan Miller told the Canadian Press that he favors decertification of the NHLPA. If the union was dissolved, the lockout could be legally challenged and there could be an antitrust lawsuit.

Some players, on the other hand, believe the league and union are that not far apart on a CBA and that decertification will not be necessary.

Despite the canceled games, the NHL likely could play a 60-game season if a CBA was approved in the next 10 days.

News Observer LOADED: 11.24.2012

644744 Carolina Hurricanes

NHL cancels more games, All-Star Weekend

By Chip Alexander - Staff writer

The NHL, as expected, has chopped more games off the 2012-2013 schedule.

The league announced Friday that all regular-season games through Dec. 14 have been canceled. The NHL also announced the 2013 NHL All-Star Weekend in Columbus, Ohio, on Jan. 26-27 was canceled.

The cancellations bring the total games axed to 423, including the 2013 Winter Classic game that was set for New Year’s Day. That’s more than 34 percent of the schedule.

The Canes have seven December games through Dec. 14 that were scrubbed, and now have 31 games total that have been canceled.

"The reality of losing more regular-season games as well as the 2013 NHL All-Star Weekend in Columbus is extremely disappointing," NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly said in a statement. "We feel badly for NHL fans and particularly those in Columbus, and we intend to work closely with the Blue Jackets organization to return the NHL All-Star events to Columbus and their fans as quickly as possible."

The players have been locked out since Sept. 15 as the league and NHL Players Association negotiate a new collective bargaining agreement.

News Observer LOADED: 11.24.2012

644745 Chicago Blackhawks

Dave Bolland retweets Bettman comment

TRACEY MYERS

Some players have made some ugly comments about the NHL brass lately, be it in print, on radio or on Twitter.

And on Friday, Blackhawks forward Dave Bolland retweeted an ugly comment, which is just as bad.

Jonah Deschamps (@jdeschamps6) sent this tweet out, regarding NHL commissioner Gary Bettman, earlier on Friday:

@jdeschamps6: "@DaveBolland can I get a RT for wanting Bettman dead?"

It was an ugly message, for sure. But what's worse is, Bolland did retweet it. It was another case of a player speaking, tweeting – or in this case, retweeting – without thinking. There's been a lot of that lately, from former Blackhawks forward Kris Versteeg calling Bettman and NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly "cancers" to Jeff O'Neill's tweet of "Bettman, stop talking to the media. I wanna 'make whole' in your \*\*\*head."

O'Neill soon took that tweet down, blaming it on a hacker. Not surprisingly, Bolland's retweet was also deleted not long after it was posted. (Side note: as of now, the fan has not erased his ugly tweet).

Some players have realized the error of their ways once they have read and thought about what they have said – or retweeted. They'd save themselves a lot of trouble if they thought before sending out their "messages."

Comcast SportsNet.com LOADED: 11.24.2012

644746 Chicago Blackhawks

NHL cancels more games, All-Star Game

TRACEY MYERS

As the NHL and NHLPA are still far apart in negotiations, another round of games has been canceled.

The league canceled games through Dec. 14 on Friday, two days after it rejected the NHLPA's latest proposal. The 2012-13 All-Star Game, which was scheduled for late January in Columbus, had also been canceled.

A total of 422 regular-season games have now been eliminated.

"The reality of losing more regular-season games as well as the 2013 NHL All-Star Weekend in Columbus is extremely disappointing," said NHL Deputy Commissioner Bill Daly. "We feel badly for NHL fans and particularly those in Columbus, and we intend to work closely with the Blue Jackets organization to return the NHL All-Star events to Columbus and their fans as quickly as possible."

NHLPA executive director Donald Fehr also released a statement:

"On Wednesday, the players presented a comprehensive proposal, once again moving in the owners' direction in order to get the game back on the ice. The gap that remains on the core economic issues is \$182 million. On Wednesday, NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman said that the league is

losing \$18-20 million per day during the lockout, therefore two more weeks of cancelled games far exceeds the current economic gap. It makes the NHL's announcement of further game cancellations, including the 2013 All-Star Weekend, all the more unnecessary, and disappointing for all hockey fans – especially those in Columbus. The players remain ready to negotiate but we require a willing negotiating partner."

Comcast SportsNet.com LOADED: 11.24.2012

644747 Colorado Avalanche

Former Avalanche great Peter Forsberg named to Hall of Fame

The Associated Press

ZURICH —Former Avalanche great Peter Forsberg and fellow Swede Mats Sundin have been named to the International Ice Hockey Federation's Hall of Fame class for 2013.

The former Olympic and world champions will be inducted in Stockholm in May when their home country hosts the world championships. Canadians Paul Henderson and Danielle Goyette, as well as three-time Olympic medalist Teppo Numminen of Finland, also will be inducted.

In addition to winning two Stanley Cups with the Avalanche, Forsberg won four gold medals with Sweden, with titles at the 1992 and 1998 world championships and the 1994 and 2006 Winter Olympics.

Denver Post: LOADED: 11.24.2012

644748 Columbus Blue Jackets

Columbus loses out as NHL cancels All-Star Game

Event would've brought estimated \$12 million to central Ohio

By Aaron Portzline

The NHL made it official today and canceled the 2013 All-Star Game, which would have been hosted by the Blue Jackets in Nationwide Arena on Jan. 27. The midseason gala is the latest casualty of the the league's ongoing lockout.

The NHL also canceled two more weeks' worth of games today, axing the first two weeks of December – 96 more games. The league has canceled 422 games – 34 percent of the season – along with the Winter Classic and the All-Star Game.

"The reality of losing more regular-season games as well as the 2013 NHL All-Star Weekend in Columbus is extremely disappointing," NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly said. "We feel badly for NHL fans and particularly those in Columbus, and we intend to work closely with the Blue Jackets organization to return the NHL All-Star events to Columbus and their fans as quickly as possible."

The All-Star Game, and the weeklong festivities surrounding it, would have brought an estimated \$12 million into central Ohio. It would have been one of the most notable international sporting events staged in Columbus, along with golf's U.S. Open (1927) and Ryder Cup (1931 and 1987), the NCAA men's basketball tournament, and U.S.-Mexico World Cup soccer qualifying games.

"First and foremost, the Blue Jackets are very disappointed for our fans that All-Star festivities will not be coming to our great city in January," Blue Jackets president Mike Priest. "Our commitment to bringing this event to our fans is as strong as ever. The NHL believes Columbus will be a great host and will work with us to bring the All-Star Celebration here as soon as possible."

This marks the third time an NHL lockout has canceled an All-Star Game. The two previous times – 1995 in San Jose and 2005 in Atlanta – the NHL awarded games to those cities within three seasons.

The best bet for Columbus would appear to be 2015. If the NHL owners and players agree to continue taking part in the Winter Olympics – that issue is part of the current collective-bargaining negotiations – the 2014 Olympics in Sochi, Russia, would preclude an All-Star Game in the 2013-14 season.

"I'd like to thank everyone who has worked on this project and been so supportive, including our staff, the Greater Columbus Sports Commission, our public officials and the local business and hospitality communities, as it has truly been a team effort," Blue Jackets majority owner John P. McConnell said. "I assure you that all of these efforts were not in vain, but will serve as a great foundation for when we do host the All-Star Celebration in the coming years. Nationwide Arena and the Arena District combined with our outstanding fans make Columbus a truly special setting."

Columbus Dispatch LOADED: 11.24.2012

644749 Detroit Red Wings

NHL cancels games through Dec. 14; All-Star game in Columbus, Ohio also called off

By Ted Kulfan

Detroit — The NHL has canceled more games — and the All-Star Game, too.

In the midst of a lockout, in its 69th day Friday, the league canceled all regular season games through Dec. 14, along with the All-Star weekend scheduled for Jan. 26-27 in Columbus, Ohio.

The cancellations are necessary due to the absence of a new collective bargaining agreement between the NHL Players Association and the league.

A total of 422 regular season games, totaling 34.3 percent of the season, have now been cancelled. The season was scheduled to begin Oct. 11.

"The reality of losing more regular season games as well as the 2013 NHL All-Star Weekend in Columbus is extremely disappointing," said Bill Daly, NHL deputy commissioner. "We feel badly for NHL fans and particularly those in Columbus, and we intend to work closely with the Blue Jackets organization to return the NHL All-Star events to Columbus and their fans as quickly as possible."

The league earlier canceled the Winter Classic, scheduled for Jan. 1 at Michigan Stadium, to have been played between the Red Wings and Toronto Maple Leafs.

Detroit News LOADED: 11.24.2012

644750 Detroit Red Wings

NHL's Bill Daly says potential decertification by NHLPA could move sides further away from deal

Ansar Khan | akhan1@mlive.com By Ansar Khan | akhan1@mlive.com

Decertification is a procedure in which employees can seek to dissolve their union.

Various reports indicate the NHLPA might explore this option in an attempt to end the lockout. It would mean the NHLPA no longer would be the bargaining agent for players, who would be free to sue the NHL in federal court for unfair business practices that were previously protected due to anti-trust exemptions.

The NBA Players Association's decision to decertify expedited a new labor agreement in that sport one year ago. NFL players also decertified, though that move had no bearing on the settlement that was reached.

Hockey analyst Bob MacKenzie explained it in layman's terms at tsn.ca:

"Once a union or association is decertified, its legal counsel must seek a preliminary injunction in court that basically says this mass of individual players with contracts is ready, willing and able to fulfill those contracts and that any existing lockout is illegal. And if the court rules in favor of the players, they would be returning to a league with no legal CBA in place and the league would not necessarily have any anti-trust exemptions."

MacKenzie also pointed out some drawbacks for the players if they invoke this costly, lengthy and chaotic process.

"Decertification can also be a murky world. Free agency, no cap, no draft, yes. Medical benefits and pensions? Well, anything that the CBA previously spelled out would, in effect, be gone."

NHLPA officials declined comment Friday on whether they will pursue or are exploring this option.

NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly, in an email to MLive.com, said of a potential decertification move by the union: "Just another battlefield to fight on. I don't think the move would move us any closer to a settlement, and perhaps could move us further away."

Speaking to The Fan 590 in Toronto, Daly added that decertification doesn't scare him.

"I wouldn't view an anti-trust lawsuit in this case to be anything other than an unfortunate development because I think it's a time-consuming process that would likely lead to the end of the season," Daly told the station.

NHLPA special counsel Steve Fehr told The Fan 590, "suffice it to say, all things are in consideration and we'll see where it goes."

Here is a primer on decertification from a blog on sports law.

Michigan Live LOADED: 11.24.2012

644751 Detroit Red Wings

NHL cancels all games through Dec. 14, as well as All-Star weekend in Columbus

Ansar Khan | akhan1@mlive.com By Ansar Khan | akhan1@mlive.com

The NHL on Friday canceled all games through Dec. 14 as well as the Jan. 27 All-Star game in Columbus and all the festivities involved with the event.

The league now has scrapped a total of 422 games, 34.3 percent of the schedule. In all, 28 Detroit Red Wings games have been canceled.

"The reality of losing more regular-season games as well as the 2013 NHL All-Star Weekend in Columbus is extremely disappointing," NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly said in a statement. "We feel badly for NHL fans and particularly those in Columbus, and we intend to work closely with the Blue Jackets organization to return the NHL All-Star events to Columbus and their fans as quickly as possible."

Daly and NHL Players Association special counsel Steve Fehr talked by phone on Friday but no bargaining sessions have been scheduled.

The sides last met Wednesday in New York, when the league rejected what the union called a "comprehensive proposal" for a new collective bargaining agreement. Talks broke off with the parties saying they remain far apart on a deal and that no progress was made.

NHLPA executive director Donald Fehr issued the following statement on Friday:

"On Wednesday, the players presented a comprehensive proposal, once again moving in the owners' direction in order to get the game back on the ice. The gap that remains on the core economic issues is \$182 million. On Wednesday, NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman said that the league is losing \$18-20 million per day during the lockout, therefore two more weeks of cancelled games far exceeds the current economic gap. It makes the NHL's announcement of further game cancellations, including the 2013 All-Star Weekend, all the more unnecessary, and disappointing for all hockey fans — especially those in Columbus. The players remain ready to negotiate but we require a willing negotiating partner."

If a deal is reached in time to salvage the season, the regular season likely would be extended two weeks to end in late April and a new, abbreviated schedule would be drafted.

Michigan Live LOADED: 11.24.2012

644752 Detroit Red Wings

Red Wings scouting report: Ian White must find way to flourish without Nicklas Lidstrom

Ansar Khan | akhan1@mlive.com By Ansar Khan | akhan1@mlive.com

Ian White

Position: Defense

Age: 28

Height/weight: 5-10/191

How acquired: Signed as a free agent on July 2, 2011.

Contract: This is his final season, with a salary-cap hit of \$2.8 million.

2011-12 stats: 77 games, seven goals, 25 assists, 32 points, plus-23 rating, 22 penalty minutes.

Career stats: 478 games, 43 goals, 132 assists, 175 points, plus-41 rating, 250 penalty minutes.

What he's doing during the lockout: He is taking part in informal practices with several teammates at a suburban rink.

Strengths: He has good skills, moves the puck well out of his zone, makes good passes, has good mobility. His right-handed shot increases his value, especially on the power play, on a team dominated by left-handed shooters.

Weaknesses: Due to his lack of size, he sometimes has difficulty defending bigger opponents.

2011-12 in review: Equaled career high with 25 assists ... Posted career-best plus-minus rating (plus-23), tying him for team lead with Johan Franzen and Todd Bertuzzi. ... Recorded career-high 196 shots. ... Had 21 points and a plus-24 rating at home, but only 11 points and a minus-1 rating on the road. ... Had six goals, 24 points and plus-26 rating prior to All-Star break, and one goal, nine points and minus-3 rating following the break. ... Had 10 assists on the power play, but no goals. ... Missed four games with a fractured cheek bone after blocking a shot with his face in 5-2 win over Dallas Nov. 12. ... Had one goal and a minus-2 rating in five playoff games.

2012-13 outlook (season pending): He meshed well with Nicklas Lidstrom, as most players do, playing alongside the seven-time Norris Trophy winner for most of the season. Now that Lidstrom has retired, White needs a new partner, and he must show he can be steady defensively and contribute to the attack without a legend as his partner. He played several games late in the season with Kyle Quincey, but they weren't that effective. He could end with Niklas Kronwall or Jonathan Ericsson. Regardless, White must return to his pre-All Star break form, after a shaky final couple of months. He will continue to man the right point on the first power-play unit.

Who should the Red Wings pair with White? How effective will he be without Lidstrom as his partner?

Michigan Live LOADED: 11.24.2012

644753 Edmonton Oilers

Cult of Hockey: Two Taylors and one Tyler all show promising signs in OKC  
Injury has hit them all, but shouldn't hold them down

By David Staples, Cult of Hockey November 23, 2012

EDMONTON - Injury has marked the seasons of Taylor Hall, Taylor Fedun and Tyler Pitlick, three young Edmonton Oilers properties, but all three have shown good-to-excellent signs in their play with the Oklahoma City Barons.

After off-season shoulder surgery, Hall took a few games to get his timing back, but now looks like the old Hall, a scoring chance machine. He's part of a line with Ryan Nugent-Hopkins and Jordan Eberle that is so consistent and efficient in manufacturing chances and goals that they should be known as the Assembly Line.

Last year in the NHL, Hall and Eberle both chipped in on a team-leading 5.2 scoring chances per game. In his eight games in the weaker American Hockey League, Hall has averaged 6.5 chances per game. He's just behind Eberle and Nugent-Hopkins, both at 6.8 chances per game, and the slick Justin Schultz, who has chipped in on a team-leading 7.2 chances per game.

The Assembly Line is clicking so well it must be tempting for the Oklahoma City coaching staff to keep the trio together. But if Hall's injured shoulder is fully healed, it's time to give him a run of games at centre.

Former Oilers head coach Tom Renney used Hall for a handful of games at centre last season. In his first news conference last summer, new Oilers coach Ralph Krueger said Hall needs to be given another run at centre.

There's some urgency on this. There's no telling how long Hall be in Oklahoma City, but there's no better place for him to learn the centre position. He's out of the NHL spotlight and facing a somewhat lower level of competition. His mistakes — and they will be plentiful at first as he's learning to play centre — won't be so crucial to the franchise.

As for Pitlick, 20, he hasn't had much good luck this year. In 14 games, he has no goals and just two assists. Now he's out with a concussion.

But for all that, there are a few impressive things that Pitlick brings to a game. He's got plenty of tools. He's big, six-foot-two, 200-pounds, he's fast and agile on his skates and he throws hard hits.

He also has some skill. On the Barons, Pitlick ranks fifth among wingers for individual scoring chances, with 2.6 contributions to chances per game, not bad for a guy who gets limited power-play time.

How might he fit in as an NHLer? Perhaps, eventually, as a Ryan Jones-style energy player. In that regard, he could use more work on the penalty kill in Oklahoma City when he returns to the lineup.

In the case of Fedun, before he fractured his femur on an icing call during the 2011-12 exhibition season, he was marked for playing time with the Oilers. Fedun, 24, looked that good in his brief stint last September. Maybe he would not have made the Oilers out of training camp, but with his superlative skating, good decision making and adept passing, he would eventually have seen major ice time with the Oilers, especially as the season progressed and defencemen were lost through injury, an annual occurrence in Edmonton.

But not to be.

This season, he started slowly, not surprisingly given his severe injury, but he's looked stronger every game.

He could still be more physical. He could certainly be bigger. But Fedun can skate and pass at an NHL level. He's smooth, agile, not incredibly fast, but efficient. He gets to the puck fast. His passing is sharp. He's even starting to play with a bit of swagger.

At even strength if a D-man is doing his job, he will chip in on one scoring chance for every scoring chance he makes a mistake on. By this measure, Schultz is ripping up the AHL, chipping in on 66 chances at even strength and making mistakes on just 45. But Fedun is also holding his own, chipping in on 29 scoring chances for and making mistakes on 29 against. At the other end of the scale, a struggling player like Alex Plante has 14 contributions to chances and 28 mistakes at even strength.

Of course, Fedun is playing against AHL competition, so we will have to see how those numbers might translate into the NHL. But, at this point, Fedun ranks just behind Schultz when it comes to pro prospects on the OKC defence.

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644754 Edmonton Oilers

It's starting to feel like the Oilers got five first overall draft picks

David Staples

460cultofhockey blog banner3 Its starting to feel like the Oilers got five first overall draft picksGlad tidings about Schultz, Eberle, Yakupov, Nugent-Hopkins and Hall: they're all kind of the same.

With the stand-out play of Justin Schultz in Oklahoma City this year, it's starting to feel like the Edmonton franchise got five first overall draft picks in recent years, not just three.

When it comes to their skillsets and production, there's not much difference between the strong attacking play of Taylor Hall, Ryan Nugent-Hopkins and Nail Yakupov, the first overall picks of the past three NHL entry drafts, and that of Justin Schultz, who was signed as an unrestricted free agent out of college this summer, and Jordan Eberle, who was a low first-round pick in 2008, 22nd overall.

Eberle, 22, was selected just after Anton Gustafsson and just before Tyler Cuma.

Schultz, also 22, was selected 44th overall that same draft year, just after Patrick Wiercioch and just before Luke Adam.

So Eberle and Schultz were deemed to be good but not great prospects.

Yet if you were to poll Oilers fans, especially once they get a good look at Schultz in the NHL, I suspect it would be far from unanimous that any of the real first overalls are any better prospects than Eberle or Schultz.

Of course, Oilers fans have known about Eberle's talent for some time. Schultz is far more of a surprise, even with all the hype around his free agency and signing this past July.

I would have been satisfied if Schultz had 23 points in his first 30 AHL games this year. That would be a sign he had it in him to be a solid puck-moving defender at the NHL level, maybe a point every second game type.

But Schultz has that many points in just 16 games. It's not a full season of this kind of production at the AHL level, but the sample size is growing and his underlying scoring chance numbers are fantastic. He leads the Barons in scoring chances per game, with 115 contributions to chances in 16 games, 7.2 per game. Eberle and RNH are next best with 6.8 chances per game each, then Hall, 6.5 chances per game. barons chances 16games1 e1353655688220 Its starting to feel like the Oilers got five first overall draft picksWhen he's out on the ice at the top of the umbrella on the power play, Schultz looks every bit as dangerous when he gets the puck as Eberle, RNH or Hall do. He has an extra gear coming out of his own zone that allows him to evade forecheckers, his passing is almost as perfect as Eberle's, and he reads the game well enough to be constantly jumping into holes at the right moment to get off a strong wrist shot or snap shot. Most often, his shots hit the net instead of blasting wide, a la Cam Barker or Kurtis Foster, or even Sheldon Souray, previous power play pointmen on the Oilers.

Remember that Sesame Street game: One of these things is not like the other.

It turns out that Schultz and Eberle are very much like Hall, RNH and Yakupov, and that is glad tidings for all fans of the Oil.

Of course, each of these players will have their struggles on defence, in particular Schultz and RNH, who have far more defensive responsibility at their positions than the three wingers do.

But the offence is there, and there in seemingly equal amounts from the four Oklahoma City Barons in the group.

Even with the Barons' games hard to watch due to crappy camera work and dicey feeds on the Internet, their play has made the games enjoyable, as all Oilers fans will see if a settlement can be reached in the NHL lockout.

Edmonton Journal: LOADED: 11.24.2012

644755 Edmonton Oilers

Edmonton Oilers winger Ales Hemsky's shoulders, scoring touch showing signs of recovery

EDMONTON -

The Edmonton Oilers always contended a healthy Ales Hemsky could be a point-per-game player.

As it turns out, Hemsky is capable of even better, as evidenced by his play this season.

Unfortunately for the Oilers, however, Hemsky is putting up impressive numbers at home in the Czech Republic during the NHL lockout.

On Friday, Hemsky collected another assist for CSOB Pojistovna Pardubice in a 3-2 win over Kometa Brno in the Czech Republic Extraliga.

Hemsky continues to lead his team in scoring with 12 goals and 11 assists for 23 points in 19 games so far this season.

Pardubice currently sits eighth in the 14-team league. Pardubice faces Sparta Prague on Sunday.

Ladislav Smid is also having a good campaign back home in the Czech Republic, but the same can't be said for his team.

Smid is currently playing with Bili Tygri Liberec who are last in the league standings with only seven wins in 21 games on the year.

Bili Tygri Liberec defeated HC Energie Karlovy Vary 3-1 on Friday, with Smid picking up an assist in the contest.

Smid has two goals and nine assists with 22 penalty minutes in 16 games this season

Over in Russia, Nail Yakupov has rejoined his KHL team after taking part in the Subway Super Series.

Yakupov missed Neftekhimik Nizhnekamsk's first two games back from their international break, but was in the lineup last Sunday in a 2-1 loss to Spartak Moscow. Yakupov was kept off the scoreboard in the contest and failed to collect a point in a 4-3 shootout win over Donbass Donetsk on Wednesday, although he did score in the shootout.

Friday, Neftekhimik was shutout 1-0 by Dinamo Riga.

Yakupov has 10 goals and four assists in 16 games so far this season.

Neftekhimik is currently eighth in the KHL East Division, having earned 40 points in 27 games.

Over in Austria, Sam Gagner was joined by former wingman, Andrew Cogliano, in Klagenfurter AC's lineup.

Cogliano, who is now a member of the Anaheim Ducks, recently joined the Austrian team and has suited up in a pair of games for them.

On Friday, Gagner scored in a 2-1 shootout win over the EHC Liwest Black wings.

Gagner has six goals and six assists in 12 games so far this season. Klagenfurter is currently eighth in the 12-team Austrian league.

Oilers defenceman Corey Potter is also spending the lockout in Austria, patrolling the Vienna Capitals' blue line.

The Capitals lost to the Moser Medical Graz 99ers 4-3 in overtime on Friday.

Potter has a goal and three assists in 15 games with the Capitals this season. The Vienna Capitals are currently second in the Austrian Erste Bank Ice Hockey League.

Moving on to Finland, Lennart Petrell has cooled off after getting off to a hot start.

The Oilers forward had seven goals in his first 11 games with Helsinki, but has just one in his last four games.

Petrell has eight goals and no assists in 15 games for his hometown club this season. He'll get a chance to add to that tally when Helsinki faces KalPa Kuopio on Saturday.

OILERS IN EUROPE

Nail Yakupov

Neftekhimik Nizhnekamsk, KHL, Russia: Has 10 goals and four assists in 16 games.

Ales Hemsky

CSOB Pojistovna Pardubice, Czech Republic Extraliga: Has 12 goals and 11 assists in 19 games so far this season.

Ladislav Smid

Bili Tygri Liberec, Czech Republic Extraliga: Two goals and 10 assists in 16 games.

Lennart Petrell

HIFK Helsinki, Finnish Elite League: Eight goals and no assists in 15 games.

Corey Potter

UPC Vienna Capitals, Erste Bank Ice Hockey League, Austria: A goal and three assists in 15 games.

Sam Gagner

Klagenfurter AC, Erste Bank Ice Hockey League, Austria: Six goals and six assists in 12 games.

#### OILERS IN OKLAHOMA CITY

Jordan Eberle

Seven goals and 14 assists in 16 games.

Ryan Nugent-Hopkins

Seven goals and 12 assists in 15 games.

Magnus Paajarvi

Two goals and eight assists in 16 games.

Justin Schultz

Leads the team in scoring with nine goals and 14 assists in 16 games.

Teemu Hartikainen

Five goals and nine assists in 16 games.

Taylor Hall

Four goals and five assists in eight games.

Edmonton Sun: LOADED: 11.24.2012

644756 Florida Panthers

Frustrated hockey fan confronts NHL commissioner about lockout

By Matt Wilhalme

The frustration from hockey fans about the lack of an NHL season is palpable.

Proud Philadelphia Flyers fan Jaymes Hall, so frustrated by the lack of checks, hat tricks and, no doubt, icing calls spoke up for puck heads everywhere when he called out NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman during a news conference Wednesday, according to the New York Daily News.

Disguised as members of the media -- not really -- Hall and his sons, who were in town for Thanksgiving, waited patiently outside of the NHL negotiations in Manhattan.

However, that patience and the patience of hockey fans everywhere ended when he attempted to ask Bettman a question and was rejected.

Hall would not be ignored.

"That's how you talk to fans," he yelled out.

But the moment wasn't lost on Bettman who offered to speak with Hall after his media session.

"Excuse me, in one second," Bettman said. "I'm in the middle of a media scrum. I'd be happy to talk to you when I'm done, but if you're not credentialed media, I think it's unfortunate and unfair to these people. I know you're a fan, I'm happy to talk to you, but these people are trying to do their job and I'm trying to help them."

Hall's exchange with the commissioner:

HALL: "Put the money [in dispute] aside so nobody touches it and let the people get back to playing hockey. Eventually that pot's going to build. But the guy who makes money selling parking spots -- let him get back to making a living."

BETTMAN: "The impact that this is having on everybody associated with the league is not lost on us. Believe me. But the fact of the matter is, when you're dealing with a union and they're really not trying to negotiate any deal that you can live with for the long-term health of this game, there isn't much else you can do. And we're hoping that with the passage of time, the players' association will come to realize that what we have proposed is more than fair. And the fact that we're keeping this proposal on the table, when it was contingent upon an 82-game schedule, should be evidence of our desire to get this done the right way."

HALL: "The \$18 million a day you're losing. There's got to be a smarter way."

BETTMAN: "It makes no sense (meaning it makes no sense continuing to lose that money each day). But thank you for being a fan."

HALL: "I appreciate it, and I apologize for raising my voice."

BETTMAN: "No, no, no. Happy Thanksgiving."

HALL: "Thanks for your time."

Sun Sentinel LOADED: 11.24.2012

644757 Minnesota Wild

All-Star weekend scrapped (with updates)

Posted by: Chris Miller under Wild news Updated: November 23, 2012 - 2:32 PM

The NHL canceled its schedule through Dec. 14 and also scrapped the 2013 All-Star weekend, which was set for Jan. 26-27 in Columbus, Ohio.

The decisions were expected because of the continuing lockout.

Russo had an in-depth look at the latest updates this morning.

Here is the league's release:

NEW YORK (November 23, 2012) -- The National Hockey League announced today the cancellation of the 2012-13 regular-season schedule through December 14. The NHL also announced the cancellation of the 2013 NHL All-Star Weekend scheduled for Jan. 26-27 in Columbus, Ohio. The cancellations are necessary due to the absence of a new Collective Bargaining Agreement between the NHL Players' Association and the NHL.

A total of 422 regular-season games -- 34.3 percent of the season -- were scheduled for Oct. 11 through Dec. 14.

"The reality of losing more regular-season games as well as the 2013 NHL All-Star Weekend in Columbus is extremely disappointing," said NHL Deputy Commissioner Bill Daly. "We feel badly for NHL fans and particularly those in Columbus, and we intend to work closely with the Blue Jackets organization to return the NHL All-Star events to Columbus and their fans as quickly as possible."

And here is the reaction from Donald Fehr:

TORONTO (November 23, 2012) -- Don Fehr, National Hockey League Players' Association (NHLPA) Executive Director, released the following statement this afternoon regarding the NHL's cancellation of games through December 14th and the 2013 NHL All-Star Weekend:

"On Wednesday, the players presented a comprehensive proposal, once again moving in the owners' direction in order to get the game back on the ice. The gap that remains on the core economic issues is \$182 million. On Wednesday, NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman said that the league is losing \$18-20 million per day during the lockout, therefore two more weeks of cancelled games far exceeds the current economic gap. It makes the NHL's announcement of further game cancellations, including the 2013 All-Star Weekend, all the more unnecessary, and disappointing for all hockey fans — especially those in Columbus. The players remain ready to negotiate but we require a willing negotiating partner."

Star Tribune LOADED: 11.24.2012

644758 Minnesota Wild

More NHL cancellations coming today; Decertifying NHLPA next strategy?: Gophers in Burlington

Posted by: Michael Russo under On the road, Wild off-season news  
Updated: November 23, 2012 - 11:32 AM

The NHL continues to be on hiatus, but the Gophers men's hockey team is in action Friday and Saturday (6 p.m. CT) with its first trip to the University of Vermont in program history.

Here is the story I wrote on freshman goalie Adam Wilcox from Friday's paper. He's a fun interview. He's got the best goals against average in the WCHA (1.55) for the nation's fifth-best defense (1.91).

The Gophers (7-2-2 overall, 2-2-1 on the road) are coming off three points vs. Wisconsin and split last year's first-ever series with Vermont at Mariucci Arena. C Erik Haula is tied for second in the WCHA and seventh in the NCAA with 14 points. Haula and C Nick Bjugstad, who has been fighting the flu all week, are tied for fifth in the WCHA with six goals each. C Tom Serratore snapped an eight-game point drought with the winning goal Saturday vs. the Badgers. The Gophers are 7-0 when LW Kyle Rau has a point. The Gophers rank first in the WCHA in power play (.250) and penalty kill (.882) percentages and have outshot their opponents in 10 of 11 games. They are the fourth-least penalized team in the nation (10.1 minutes a game). LW Sam Warring (upper body) will miss his eighth and ninth games and G Mike Shibrowski is hurt.

As you know, talks exploded yet again between the NHL and NHLPA on Wednesday when the union made a comprehensive proposal that wasn't accepted by the league. The two sides are expected to at least touch base Friday, but there are no bargaining sessions planned.

This afternoon, the NHL will cancel the slate of games between Nov. 30 and Dec. 14 and the All-Star Game in Columbus, says sources. That'll be 423 regular-season games plus the Winter Classic axed. This was supposed to happen earlier in the week, but that was pushed back due to the union coming to the bargaining table, and then of course, Thanksgiving.

Gary Bettman says the league is losing \$18-\$20 million a day in revenue.

Whether it's a bluff or a scare tactic or a strategy the NHLPA actually plans to go through with, the union has begun investigating the realities of decertification because the players are starting to feel this is their only option.

It was discussed at length during Wednesday's conference call after the league rejected the players' most recent proposal.

Essentially that means disbanding the union, meaning the league (i.e.) owners no longer have a partner to negotiate with. Means the collective bargaining agreement is gone, players file lawsuit in an effort to have the lockout deemed illegal, and a train that is already off the tracks could potentially get even further buckled as this thing hits the uncertainty of the court system.

Means no salary cap, means no minimum or maximum salaries (which may be reason enough to frighten off the fringe players; what's to keep the Crosby's from getting \$20 million a year and the sixth or seventh defenseman from \$50,000 a year?), no guaranteed contracts, no entry draft, no pension, no medical benefits.

The hope is the threat alone of this chaos enough gets the owners to the table willing to make a number of concessions and a deal complete. This occurred during last year's NBA lockout, and a week later, deal complete.

If it gets into the courts, season over, I promise.

To get this ball rolling, a petition would need to be signed by one-third of the 725 or so union members. That process has not begun.

I failed decertification class in school, so let some experts educate you:

Star Tribune LOADED: 11.24.2012

644759 Montreal Canadiens

Sports labour law expert explains decertification

James Mirtle

It's time for a little of what I'll call Decertification for Dummies.

Although you don't have to be a dummy to have a hard time wrapping your head around this stuff.

Decertification is about to become a pivotal part of the NHL lockout, as the NHLPA is threatening to dissolve the union and begin filing antitrust lawsuits in response to what players feel is an unwillingness to fairly negotiate by the league.

To better understand what that process entails and what the NHL could look like without a union or collective bargaining agreement, I spoke with sports labour law expert Nathaniel Grow on Thursday.

Grow is a professor at the University of Georgia who specializes in antitrust and sports law.

For an even more in-depth understanding of some of his work in this area, I encourage people to read his article, Decertifying Players' Unions: Lessons From the NFL and NBA Lockouts of 2011.

Let's start with the basics. Why might decertification make sense for NHL players here?

A. There's kind of a benefit and a drawback. There are some protections you get under labour law when you're in a bargaining situation like this. By having a union, the players under U.S. labour law get protection against the owners committing certain unfair labour practices.

So they get some benefits out of the unionization, but the downside is you can't then file an antitrust lawsuit against the ownership while you're still engaged in that collective bargaining relationship.

The trade off is do we want to have union protections or would we rather dissolve the union and pursue antitrust remedies. You can't have your cake and eat it, too. You have to pick.

From the perspective of why is it a good thing to do now: The main benefit is probably leverage... If we file an antitrust lawsuit, it adds uncertainty for the owners. If this lockout gets declared to be a violation of U.S. antitrust law then the players' damages are going to be tripled.

I thought I saw one estimate that the players were losing something like \$10-million per day. If you use that as a ballpark, if they've missed 70 days, you're talking about \$700-million times three; that's a huge number potentially. There's leverage for the players.

The No. 1 thing they would shoot for presumably would be to end the lockout [using a preliminary injunction]. Even if they don't get that, long term, they still have that threat of the antitrust legislation and the triple damages hanging over ownership.

Is there a realistic possibility of using the law to get an injunction to end the lockout right away the way the NFL players attempted to?

A. This is where reasonable minds can differ. But I personally think that it's likely enough that it's worth doing.

To me, the downside of dissolving the union is rather limited. I don't want to say it's insignificant... But if I had to guess, I'd say it's probably on a one in

three to one in two chance that a court would issue an injunction to stop the lockout. It's not a 10 per cent or a 2 per cent chance. But I wouldn't bet my mortgage on it.

Even in the NFL case, if you look at it, there were four judges that ruled – one trial court judge and then three appellate court judges – and they were split on it.

Along the same lines: Would they have a good chance of winning damages or would it be something that would take years and years and probably isn't going to happen?

A. I would be surprised if it actually went that far. It would take years and years. They would look at it as a more short term bargaining leverage issue. That's kind of what the NBA did.

If it actually went the distance and you're talking two or three years down the road, they're still in litigation, it's an uncertain case. Reasonable minds can differ, but I think there's a pretty good chance the players could prevail... There's different issues and technicalities, but from the 50,000-foot level, there's a fairly clear antitrust violation.

Their odds of winning an antitrust lawsuit for damages are much higher than getting an injunction. But these things you never know. Anything can happen with a jury of 12 people.

Here's a more theoretical question: What does all of this happening with unions in pro sports mean long term? Will they die out eventually?

A. The whole idea of a players' union is odd. In U.S. history, usually it's lower paid workers who are easily replaced, like line workers at the auto factory, wanting to work together and negotiate collectively so they have more bargaining leverage.

Here you've got highly skilled millionaire athletes working together. There's always been kind of an odd fit there and weird issues where the Alex Ovechkins of the world are making millions and millions and then entry level players are making much lower salaries. There's always these tensions between the stars and the journeyman type players...

Without a union, there's also a lot of rules that are potentially challengeable. Entry drafts are potentially challengeable, salary caps, free agency restrictions – all these things they're negotiating over – basically all of these issues would be subject to antitrust lawsuits.

Do I think it's likely they'll give up unionism permanently? I can see some reasons why they might want to. But I think the league might really push them to stay in a union as much as they possibly could.

It's like this bizarre world where if you talk to most industries, management doesn't want their employees to be unionized, but it's the exact flip situation in pro sports.

Can you paint a picture of what a league would look like without a union involved?

A. It's a pretty interesting thought experiment. Ultimately what would end up happening, the teams would be forced to negotiate with their players on an individual level. You wouldn't have the standard player contract like you do now. Everything would be subject to individual negotiations.

What would happen with the lawsuit is that some player would get upset over the draft. They would say why are my rights being allocated to Nashville? I don't want to play in Nashville; I want to be able to bargain with all 30 teams. If the Rangers or the Leafs are all bidding for my services, I'll get a heckuva lot more money than if I was forced to only negotiate with the Predators?

Now, the league would say this is necessary for competitive balance, that we have to allocate talent efficiently across the whole league... we're just going to have the richest teams constantly dominating and this is the best way to allocate talent. Then a court would have to decide which one of those arguments is more compelling. Different courts could differ on that.

I wouldn't say all these things would automatically be thrown out, but it would create a lot more chaos and a lot more uncertainty until the system finally processed all these issues.

Is there anything else that stands out to you about the NHLPA's situation right now that is interesting from a legal perspective?

A. I think it's interesting that you've got Donald Fehr here, in general... It's interesting to see someone who's an iconic figure in the baseball labour side, how that translates to the NHL side.

My sense of how he operates is he is pretty driven by the players. That makes sense for any union manager. Ultimately your power comes from the players and you can't dictate to them what they're going to do. They're not going to put their whole career in your hands. I suspect that he's informing the players what their best options are, but the players are the ones that have to pull the trigger.

I think he advises them heavily, but it's ultimately the players' call.

I'm still a little surprised the players haven't decertified yet. They already lost that season, and I always wondered why they didn't pursue it in 2005. Part of the issue with decertification is if you wait too long, it just takes time for this to play out... If you wait until mid-January and then decide to decertify, the season is pretty much going to be gone before the court even has a chance to address the legality of the lockout.

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644760 Montreal Canadiens

Duhatschek: Bettman and Fehr should put their jobs on the line

ERIC DUHATSCHEK

Unlike life, which is full of blurry moments and grey areas, the world of professional sports is delightful in its simplicity. Every night, one team wins and the other loses. Every season, one team wins a championship and the rest go back to the drawing board, to evaluate why they fell short.

The rewards for success tend to be great, and the price of failure is usually high. It's an industry that culls the weak from the strong in a coolly mercenary way. Players, coaches, and managers – they are all only as good as their last season, last week, last game.

By the time they get to the NHL or NBA or NFL, they've had to deal with hard-edged, cutthroat competition for all their lives. The ones who survive and rise to the top generally do so because they've fended off challenges from all comers for a lot of years.

So a question: Why do these same high, hard standards not apply to the lead players in NHL's collective bargaining drama, which took another U-turn this week, with hints that the players might go the decertification route?

Right now, with the NHL season on ice, the only game in town is the pitched boardroom battle being fought by two aging veterans of the labour wars – NHL commissioner Gary Bettman and NHLPA executive director Donald Fehr, who thus far have been unable to divide the spoils of a \$3.3-billion business.

Here are two executives, who – when they're not busy blaming each other for the stalemate – would have you believe they are as interested in the sport of hockey as they are in the business of hockey.

Well, okay, prove it.

If Bettman and Fehr legitimately understand anything about the ethic of the game, then they know about the aforementioned price of failure too.

Fail too often, and especially fail too often in the big moment, and soon enough, somebody else will get their turn.

It's a ruthless, but fair system, when the stakes are so high. Real hockey people would know the rules going in, and accept them for what they are.

So a modest proposal that echoes comments made by the Florida Panthers' Kris Versteeg about Bettman and the Washington Capitals' Roman Hamrlik about Fehr and their respective job futures this past week:

If the two leaders are ultimately unable to come to terms on a new CBA in time to save the 2012-13 season, then both should immediately resign from their respective positions when the cancellation becomes official.

And more importantly, they should pledge their willingness to do so, publicly, now, in the third week of November, before all hope is lost.

Right now, the players say they're doing all the compromising, while the owners insist they're the only ones who've moved significantly off their starting positions.

Isn't that rhetoric sickening to anyone who isn't narrowly and blindly grinding one side's agenda or the other's?

It's all just white noise, designed to distract from the fact that the NHL started out by asking for too much, and the players association spent four months, moving pieces around, without offering up a written and fully fleshed-out counter-proposal until just this past week.

If Bettman and Fehr knew the clock was ticking on their respective careers and still couldn't come up with a new agreement - in good conscience and because of their respective belief systems - then so be it. No one is asking them to sacrifice their personal integrity to make a deal they cannot live with.

But then surely, it would signal that it's time for a line change, so that a fresh set of players could take over.

New voices would provide new ideas and maybe find answers where the current negotiating teams can see only roadblocks, and the need to cancel more games (as the NHL saw fit to do Friday).

Sadly, it is unlikely that either Bettman or Fehr would have the guts to publicly put their careers on the line here. That's another unfortunate truth about the sport - sometimes tired old has-beens hang around far past their best-before-dates.

Instead, we now hear the usual veiled threats about union decertification, a complex legal option which would permit players to individually sue teams for unfair labour practices. Well, if they're thinking about decertification, then they should do it - and never mind just using it as a means of jump-starting the talks the way the NFL and the NBA did either.

Let's see what a world without any sort of restrictions on player movement - or a world without an entry draft - would look like. It'd be a brave new radically altered NHL, free of salary caps, floors, spending restrictions, arbitration hearings, all the complicated rules that clutter up the landscape - and permit the money-losing, small-market teams to drive the industry over the cliff every seven years or so.

It might be the best thing that ever happened to the NHL, even if the casualty count would be high. Contraction might be a real alternative, instead of my semi-annual flight of fantasy. Mid-to-lower end players might see their salaries driven way down, so that the stars - the players that fans actually pay to see play - could earn even more of the top dollars. Year-to-year contracts would greatly enhance the competitive level, with every player motivated to perform because he's in a contract year every year.

You gotta love the free market, right?

So far, in the NHL lockout, most of the casualties have been the little people, the ones who rely on part-time jobs at arenas to supplement income. It'd be nice to see some of the bigger fish, players and owners, endure real pain too. Maybe a leaner, tighter, decertified, reinvented NHL can return to the ice two years from now, improved and perhaps even humbled and chagrined by the nitpickiness of the men who ran the earlier version right into the ground.

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644761 Montreal Canadiens

NHL cancels all-star game as talk of decertification grows

JAMES MIRTLE

Two more weeks of the regular-season schedule have been cancelled.

And so, too, has the all-star game that was scheduled for January in Columbus.

The NHL lockout claimed more casualties on Friday, bringing to 422 the number of games wiped out even as the two sides declined to meet and talk of the union decertifying dominates the headlines.

Instead, deputy commissioner Bill Daly and NHLPA special counsel Steve Fehr took to the airwaves in Toronto to answer questions about where they are as of Day 70 of the work stoppage.

"I'll be the first to admit this process has played out not as we would have hoped," Daly told The Fan 590. "We hate where we are and wish we were in a better place."

"Of course we want to get a deal done," Fehr said. "That's why we've been at it, why we've been working hard trying to do it. We have our doubts [the league wants to]."

Daly and Fehr had spoken earlier in the day, but no meetings between the groups have been scheduled.

On the heels of players making an offer on Wednesday, Fehr indicated it was unlikely they would have another one any time soon.

"They've given the owners concessions that really are fairly valued at \$1-billion or more," Fehr said. "But they're not prepared to go any further right now."

As for decertification, neither side was saying much.

A day after Buffalo Sabres netminder Ryan Miller told The Globe and Mail he was a supporter of the move - which would essentially dissolve the union and leave the league open to antitrust lawsuits - Daly said he believed the law was on the NHL's side.

"I wouldn't view an antitrust lawsuit in this case to be anything other than unfortunate development," Daly said, "because I think it's a time consuming process and would likely lead to the end of the season."

"We do not talk about what is discussed in private conversations with players," Fehr said. "We haven't decertified, we haven't talked publicly about decertification and we're at the bargaining table trying to make a deal."

That hasn't been how decertification has played out in other leagues. Both NFL and NBA players dissolved their unions in 2011 only to eventually negotiate a deal without missing many games, an outcome that the NHLPA could be hoping for by following suit.

At this point, however, the absolute most games the NHL could likely play in a season is likely 65, with it becoming more likely any shortened season would be between 45 and 60 games by the week.

The cancellation of yet another full season isn't expected until at least mid-January.

"Our general position is we're available to meet anytime," Fehr said. "I don't know what we have to say right now."

An hour after the cancellations were officially announced Wednesday, NHLPA executive director Donald Fehr released a statement condemning the league as unwilling to negotiate.

"On Wednesday, the players presented a comprehensive proposal, once again moving in the owners' direction in order to get the game back on the ice," the statement read.

"The gap that remains on the core economic issues is \$182-million. On Wednesday, NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman said that the league is losing \$18-20 million per day during the lockout, therefore two more weeks of cancelled games far exceeds the current economic gap. It makes the NHL's announcement of further game cancellations, including the 2013 All-Star Weekend, all the more unnecessary, and disappointing for all hockey fans - especially those in Columbus. The players remain ready to negotiate but we require a willing negotiating partner."

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644762 Nashville Predators

Nashville Predators' Paul Gaustad honored by hometown Portland, Oregon team

Written by

Josh Cooper

Predators forward Paul Gaustad couldn't go to his senior prom. The then-Portland Winterhawks forward had various hockey duties at the time.

"That was OK. That was fine with me," said Gaustad, who also was raised in Portland. "It was a busy schedule that senior year, and I kept a pretty good academic schedule, and I was able to get all the classes I needed to get."

Gaustad had the unique experience of playing major junior hockey in his hometown, and being able to blend the ultra-competitive atmosphere of the Western Hockey League with high-school work.

The Winterhawks honored Gaustad last Wednesday for his career there from 1999-2000 through 2001-02. He dropped a ceremonial puck before Portland's game against Vancouver. The Winterhawks also showed a Gaustad video montage to the crowd.

"It was pretty special playing for the Winterhawks and a big reason why I'm in the NHL," Gaustad said.

The fact that Gaustad played in Portland made it even more unique. Only five players born in Oregon have made the NHL, according to hockey-reference.com.

Gaustad was born in Fargo, N.D., but moved to Portland when he was 5.

"I find a lot of parallels between Portland and Nashville with their youth hockey, because it's not a huge hockey town. There was only one rink in the entire state when I moved there and (now) there's two in Portland," Gaustad said. "It has grown and we had a good, small core group of hockey players, and I'm still really tight with all those guys I grew up playing with."

Most young hockey players move away from home to play junior, but Gaustad never needed to leave.

"It was more Friday night lights football thing. It kind of snuck under the radar," Gaustad said. "But it was a cool four years being able to go to the high school I grew up with and the friends I knew. It was pretty special."

Charity shuffle: When you're a locked-out NHL player, you get lots of requests to play in charity games, and sometimes it's hard to crisscross North America to play in all of them.

Defenseman Shea Weber was in Winnipeg last weekend to take part in the NHL Players' Association Goals for Dreams Hockey Challenge.

He was also invited to play in a charity game in Atlantic City this weekend to benefit victims of Hurricane Sandy, but he could not make it.

"I was gone for four days," Weber said. "It obviously would be a great event to support Sandy relief, but it just didn't work out with the schedule."

Zumba-thon: The Predators will host a night of Zumba — a Latin-inspired dance-fitness program — from 6:30-7:30 p.m. Tuesday at Bridgestone Arena.

A minimum \$5 donation is requested in support of Hurricane Sandy victims.

Reach Josh Cooper at 615-726-8917

Tennessean LOADED: 11.24.2012

644763 Nashville Predators

More NHL games cut

League also axes All-Star weekend

Written by

Josh Cooper

The NHL's canceled games list increased on Friday and so did uncertainty about whether the lockout will end this year.

The league announced games from Dec. 1-14 were canceled, as was the All-Star Game scheduled for Jan. 27 in Columbus, Ohio.

The Predators now have had 29 games axed, including 14 scheduled for Bridgestone Arena. The league has canceled 422 games overall since the lockout began Sept. 15, when the previous collective-bargaining agreement expired.

On Wednesday, the NHL rejected the latest proposal from the NHL Players' Association, and no new negotiating sessions have been scheduled.

"It seems to be their only tactic right now, canceling games. It's frustrating as a player and I'm sure it is as a fan," Predators defenseman Shea Weber said. "On numerous occasions, we've come down on our proposals, and yet they haven't moved. It's frustrating and you only hope that they can come to a realization that we have to negotiate and not just sit here and hope that something magically happens."

At issue is how the league and union will split hockey-related revenue. It's believed that the league would like it at 50-50 while the players would allow their share to decrease over time. Players received 57 percent in the final year of the recently expired CBA.

Player-contracting rights also have turned into an issue in recent negotiations.

"The reality of losing more regular-season games as well as the 2013 NHL All-Star Weekend in Columbus is extremely disappointing," NHL Deputy Commissioner Bill Daly said in a statement. "We feel badly for NHL fans and particularly those in Columbus, and we intend to work closely with the Blue Jackets organization to return the NHL All-Star events to Columbus and their fans as quickly as possible."

In their proposal Wednesday, the players showed significant concessions toward the league in regards to hockey-related revenue as a percentage — the players previously wanted a fixed dollar amount — and moved closer to the league on a "make-whole" provision.

The make-whole is a mechanism for the NHL to soften the blow of money lost for the players as they move from 57 percent to 50 percent of hockey-related revenue.

The NHL soundly rejected the proposal.

"On Wednesday, NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman said that the league is losing \$18-20 million per day during the lockout, therefore two more weeks of cancelled games far exceeds the current economic gap," NHLPA executive director Don Fehr said in a statement. "It makes the NHL's announcement of further game cancellations, including the 2013 All-Star Weekend, all the more unnecessary, and disappointing for all hockey fans — especially those in Columbus. The players remain ready to negotiate but we require a willing negotiating partner."

As for how the Predators replace the additional lost games at Bridgestone Arena, it will be difficult. On Monday, Predators chief operating officer Sean Henry said most shows are booked six months to a year in advance.

"There's not a whole lot you can book in that window," he said. "With that said, we never turn something away."

Reach Josh Cooper at 615-726-8917

Tennessean LOADED: 11.24.2012

644764 Nashville Predators

Another round of NHL games canceled as CBA talks yield little

By David Bocclair

The countdown to Christmas officially is on, and the number of National Hockey League games canceled continues to add up.

Black Friday took on a different meaning for hockey fans this year as the National Hockey League announced that another two weeks of contests, as well as the 2013 All-Star Game, have been lost to the ongoing labor dispute between owners and players.

The latest announcement wiped out the games through Dec. 14. Three previous announcements had eliminated all games through the end of November. Also off the schedule now is the All-Star Game and all activities connected to that event, which was scheduled for Jan. 26-27 in Columbus, Ohio.

"The reality of losing more regular-season games as well as the 2013 NHL All-Star Weekend in Columbus is extremely disappointing," NHL Deputy Commissioner Bill Daly said in a statement released by the league. "We feel badly for NHL fans and particularly those in Columbus, and we intend

to work closely with the Blue Jackets organization to return the NHL All-Star events to Columbus and their fans as quickly as possible."

Since owners locked out players following the Sept. 15 expiration of the previous collective bargaining agreement, 422 regular-season games (34.3 percent of the season) have been lost, including the Winter Classic, the outdoor game scheduled this season for Jan. 1 at Ann Arbor, Mich.

The sides met several times during the week but no substantial progress toward a new CBA was reported.

"On Wednesday, the players presented a comprehensive proposal, once again moving in the owners' direction in order to get the game back on the ice," NHLPA executive director Donald Fehr said in a statement. "The gap that remains on the core economic issues is \$182 million.

"On Wednesday, NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman said that the league is losing \$18-20 million per day during the lockout, therefore two more weeks of cancelled games far exceeds the current economic gap. It makes the NHL's announcement of further game cancellations, including the 2013 All-Star Weekend, all the more unnecessary, and disappointing for all hockey fans — especially those in Columbus.

"The players remain ready to negotiate but we require a willing negotiating partner."

Nashville City Paper LOADED: 11.24.2012

644765 New Jersey Devils

N.H.L. Scratches More Games and Its All-Star Weekend

By JEFF Z. KLEIN

Published: November 23, 2012

The N.H.L. announced on Friday the cancellation of another two weeks' worth of games, along with the All-Star Game set for Jan. 27 in Columbus, Ohio. With this latest batch of games and events called off because of the 69-day lockout, the N.H.L. drew nearer to the brink of canceling the season.

The cancellation of games through Dec. 14 brings the total of regular-season games scratched during the lockout to 422, amounting to 34.3 percent of the season.

The league had already canceled the Jan. 1 Winter Classic in Ann Arbor, Mich., the only N.H.L. regular-season event bigger than its All-Star Game.

The announcement of the canceled games followed the league's rejection of a union offer on Wednesday, as talks between the sides lurched into a 10th week.

The sides did not negotiate Friday, but there was public discussion about the possibility of decertifying the union, a tactic used by the players' unions in the N.F.L. and the N.B.A. during lockouts last year, and advocated Thursday by Buffalo Sabres goalie Ryan Miller.

Decertifying the players' association could allow players to bring an antitrust case against the N.H.L., with the threat that courts may rule the salary cap unlawful in the absence of a union.

On Friday morning on Sportsnet radio in Toronto, Bill Daly, the league's deputy commissioner, called decertification "a time-consuming process that would likely lead to the end of the season."

Asked about decertification later on the same station, Steve Fehr, the union's special counsel, said that "all things are under consideration."

"The gap that remains on the core economic issues is \$182 million," Donald Fehr, the executive director of the N.H.L. Players' Association, said in a statement Friday, using the union's estimate of how far apart the sides are in negotiations.

"On Wednesday, N.H.L. Commissioner Gary Bettman said that the league is losing \$18 million to \$20 million per day during the lockout, therefore two more weeks of canceled games far exceeds the current economic gap," Fehr said in the statement. "It makes the N.H.L.'s announcement of further game cancellations, including the 2013 All-Star weekend, all the more unnecessary, and disappointing for all hockey fans — especially those in

Columbus. The players remain ready to negotiate, but we require a willing negotiating partner."

The N.H.L. characterizes the gap between the sides' proposals as being as much as \$900 million.

Bettman's main reason for imposing the lockout, the third of his two-decade tenure as commissioner, is to reduce the players' portion of overall revenue to 50 percent. Under the collective bargaining agreement that expired Sept. 15, the players received 57 percent of revenue.

If the lockout continues and two more weeks of games are canceled, the season will be in jeopardy.

In the first lockout of Bettman's tenure, during the 1994-95 season, the league and the players reached fundamental agreement at the Jan. 10 deadline for cancellation of the season. In the 2004-5 lockout, Bettman announced on Feb. 16 that the season was canceled — the first, and still the only, major league season in North America to be wiped out by a labor dispute.

The loss of the All-Star Game and its associated events is especially costly to the Blue Jackets, who are estimated to have lost more than \$10 million last season and were counting on the All-Star weekend for a financial boost.

The Blue Jackets are one of the money-losing franchises helping to drive the lockout, as teams seek ways to pay less in player salaries.

"The reality of losing more regular-season games as well as the 2013 N.H.L. All-Star Weekend in Columbus is extremely disappointing," Daly said in a statement. "We feel badly for N.H.L. fans and particularly those in Columbus, and we intend to work closely with the Blue Jackets' organization to return the N.H.L. All-Star events to Columbus and their fans as quickly as possible."

New York Times LOADED: 11.24.2012

644766 New Jersey Devils

Devils' Andy Greene: 'We've put a lot of great proposals out there'

Rich Chere/The Star-Ledger By Rich Chere/The Star-Ledger

Devils defenseman Andy Greene weighed his words carefully.

He did not want to suggest that NHL owners aren't willing to negotiate a new collective bargaining agreement or that they had planned ahead to cancel two months of the season unless the players completely gave in to their demands.

But...

"We've put a lot of great proposals out there," Greene said. "We're trying to get back on the ice. You hear both sides say, 'We need a negotiating partner,' but there are different tactics being used. You have to stay optimistic about it and hope it gets settled."

Greene, along with Devils teammates Martin Brodeur and David Clarkson, will be among those taking part Operation Hat Trick, a charity game in Atlantic City's Boardwalk Hall to be played Saturday at 7 p.m.

The game will benefit the Hurricane Sandy New Jersey Relief Fund, the American Red Cross and the Empire State Relief Fund.

Greene doesn't think the most recent cancellation of NHL games will put a damper on the event.

"I hope not. This game isn't about that," he said. "Hopefully people are responsive to what we are doing this for. This isn't about the NHL vs. the NHLPA. This is about Hurricane Sandy and helping people out. It's such a great cause. I hope it's a successful event."

Among those scheduled to play for Team Philadelphia are Greene, Brodeur, Clarkson, Steven Stamkos, James van Riemsdyk, Simon Gagne, Kimmo Timonen, John Carlson, Braydon Coburn, Wayne Simmonds, Daniel Carcillo, Scott Hartnell, Justin Williams, Jody Shelley and Steve Downie.

Scheduled to play for Team New York are Rangers goalie Henrik Lundqvist, Brad Richards, Dan Girardi, Steve Eminger, Brian Boyle, Marc Staal, Bobby Ryan, Corey Perry, Ville Leino, Jeff Halpern, James Neal, Matt Martin and Taylor Pyatt.

In the meantime, after today's cancellation of games, there will be no NHL action before Dec. 14.

"Discouraged? I don't know. I want to be playing hockey," Greene said.

"Obviously we didn't want to lose any games at all. We wanted training camp to open in September and have the first games in October. But in the back of your mind you knew that things could keep going on here."

Star Ledger LOADED: 11.24.2012

644767 New Jersey Devils

NHL lockout links: NHLPA could think about decertification as next step; Sabres goaltender Ryan Miller approves

Charles Curtis, NJ.com By Charles Curtis, NJ.com

After Wednesday's roller coaster ride of negotiations, the bad news is it could have repercussions today: The Record's Tom Gulitti reported on Twitter to "expect [the] cancellation of more (another 2 weeks) of NHL regular season schedule today -- and probably [the] All-Star game too."

The worse news is the lockout is still on and will continue to be a battle as the two sides try to salvage a short season. So the next step could be one to get the courts to turn the tide.

The Globe and Mail's James Mirtle wrote that the players' union could think about decertifying the union and bring an antitrust suit that would hopefully help force the two sides to negotiate quicker.

The move has some recent historical precedence: "In the spring of 2011, NFL players ... dissolved their union and pursued an antitrust lawsuit before their lockout had even begun. That fall, after a lockout that lasted more than four months, the National Basketball Players' Association followed suit," Mirtle wrote. "Both leagues eventually came to an agreement through negotiations, with the decertification and legal action (or potential legal action) believed to have helped force the two sides into a deal."

Buffalo Sabres goalie Ryan Miller liked the idea and told Mirtle in another piece why. "After watching the other sport leagues go through labour disputes last year, it is apparent that until decertification is filed, there will not be any real movement or negotiation," he said. "Many things in our negotiation are very consistent with the NFL and NBA negotiations, and both of those leagues filed papers necessary to decertify."

Miller, like other players, is exhausted by what he's seen go on in the past few months.

"I am tired of the disregard and the ego. Our fans and sponsors are alienated, and this is hurting the game. This process has more of the appearance of brand suicide than a negotiation," he said.

In other lockout news:

- All hope is not lost after what happened on Wednesday, according to the Philadelphia Daily News' Frank Seravalli. He saw the fact that Gary Bettman and the NHL didn't leave the bargaining table immediately as a positive sign. "Bettman improved his awful bedside manner, which has served as more of a rallying cry for the players than anything Fehr has done or said, by not immediately rejecting the deal - and the NHLPA's offer actually gave the league something to think about during the lunch break," he wrote. Seravalli also mentioned decertification and did say there's "just about a month left to save the season."

- ESPN's Pierre LeBrun also thought the NHL and players' union were closer to a deal than it appeared.

"Truth is, at least from my vantage point, the players' latest offer had a true impact Wednesday," LeBrun wrote. "I know it doesn't feel that way right now for the players, who believe they put their best foot forward only to have the league stomp on it. But in fact, the NHLPA's willingness for the first time to base a framework on the percentage of hockey-related revenue and not a guaranteed dollar amount was a monumental shift."

Star Ledger LOADED: 11.24.2012

644768 New Jersey Devils

NHL: Players unite for charity

By ANDREW GROSS

An All-Star list of locked out NHL players will convene tonight at Atlantic City's Boardwalk Hall at 7 p.m. for the Operation Hat Trick charity game to benefit superstorm Sandy relief.

But given that the current labor impasse has denied the players NHL-level competition, tonight's game may resemble something more than a half-speed exhibition.

"I think it will get intense," Rangers defenseman Steve Eminger said. "I think it's a different feeling than an All-Star type game. There's not going to be hitting or fighting. But I think because we've been away from the game so long, a natural kind of fight in guys is going to get intense."

Senators captain Daniel Alfredsson and Canadiens defenseman P.K. Subban were late additions to the rosters as was Maple Leafs defenseman Mike Komisarek, who grew up on Long Island, which, like New Jersey, was devastated by Sandy.

The Rangers' Brad Richards, Henrik Lundqvist, Marc Staal, Dan Girardi, Brian Boyle, Jeff Halpern and Taylor Pyatt; the Devils' Martin Brodeur, David Clarkson and Andy Greene; New Jersey natives Bobby Ryan and James van Riemsdyk as well as 60-goal scorer Steven Stamkos are among others participating.

The players have been divided into a Team New York, captained by Richards, and a Team Philadelphia/New Jersey, captained by the Flyers' Scott Hartnell.

"We're all very excited that there's interest in this and there's an opportunity, a vehicle to raise some money," Boyle said. "As players, as guys itching to get that competition back, it's a great opportunity for us to get out there and have a spirited game."

Tickets are sold out, according to Ticketmaster. All proceeds will benefit the Empire State Relief Fund, the New Jersey Hurricane Relief Fund and the American Red Cross.

Bergen Record LOADED: 11.24.2012

644769 New Jersey Devils

NHL loses 2 more weeks, Star Game

By LARRY BROOKS

Though merely a formality, Friday's proclamation by NHL Canceled-in-Chief Gary Bettman wiping another two-week round of games off the schedule ensures that Saturday night's "Operation Hat Trick" benefit in Atlantic City will be the only time until at least Dec. 15 that fans in the area will have the opportunity to watch Henrik Lundqvist, Martin Brodeur, Brad Richards and a host of other marquee athletes compete on the ice.

Saturday night's match, at sold-out Boardwalk Hall, is being played for the benefit of victims of Hurricane Sandy.

Meanwhile, the "No Game Today" sign will not only be hung outside NHL arenas across the continent until at least the middle of next month, but also the owners' lockout will claim the 2013 All-Star Game, originally scheduled for Columbus on Jan. 27.

No progress was made Friday toward ending the dispute, with leaders from both sides issuing familiar platitudes through various media platforms.

There are no negotiating sessions scheduled in the wake of the league's rejection of the NHL Players' Association's proposal on Wednesday that was not met by a counter.

No games are on the schedule in the foreseeable future, either, except for tonight's.

Blueshirts winger Rick Nash, who earlier sustained a bruised shoulder playing for HC Davos of the Swiss League, sat out last night's game against the ZSC Lions with a sore groin. The Rangers have been told the move was made for precautionary reasons and the injury is not serious.

New York Post LOADED: 11.24.2012

644770 New York Islanders

NHL cancels All-Star Game and more December games

By STEVE ZIPAY [steve.zipay@newsday.com](mailto:steve.zipay@newsday.com)

The NHL season continues to slip away. With no formal negotiations to end the lockout scheduled, the league on Friday canceled another chunk of its schedule, all games from Dec. 1 through Dec. 14, as well as the All-Star Game, which was to be staged in Columbus on Jan. 27.

For the Rangers and Islanders, it means 29 games each have been scrapped. The overall number of games axed since Oct. 11 is now 422, or 34.3 percent of the season.

If an agreement is reached soon and games can commence on Dec. 15, a 60-game season -- with a revamped conference-only schedule -- remains possible, because some games could be played during the All-Star break and in April.

On the other hand, tension is mounting and a petition by the union to decertify remains an option. Both the NFLPA and the NBPA opted for the move in 2011, which was followed by antitrust suits against the league. Settlements eventually were reached and the unions re-certified.

"On Wednesday, NHL commissioner Gary Bettman said that the league is losing \$18 million to \$20 million per day during the lockout; therefore two more weeks of canceled games far exceeds the current economic gap," said NHLPA executive director Donald Fehr, who has discussed the complex decertification option with the players. "It makes the NHL's announcement of further game cancellations, including the 2013 All-Star Weekend, all the more unnecessary, and disappointing for all hockey fans - especially those in Columbus."

Union leaders have not made public any plans to collect signatures for a petition to the National Labor Relations Board to decertify. In an interview on SiriusXM's hockey channel Friday, deputy commissioner Bill Daly said decertification "would be a death knell for the season."

A new six-page proposal from the union on Wednesday, outlining its economic positions for a five-year deal, including a request for \$393 million to honor existing contracts above a 50-50 share in revenues, was not received well by the NHL, which has proposed \$211 million for "make-whole" on the contracts, wants a seven-year term and is holding firm on proposed changes to free agency and contract limits.

In a statement, Daly also said the league intends "to work closely with the Blue Jackets organization to return the NHL All-Star events to Columbus and their fans as quickly as possible."

With the Winter Olympics scheduled for Sochi, Russia, in 2014, the earliest the game could be played appears to be 2015.

Newsday LOADED: LOADED: 11.24.2012

644771 New York Rangers

Rangers' Henrik Lundqvist and Devils' Martin Brodeur will be in goal

By Pat Leonard / NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

Flyers' Scott Hartnell, is helping organize Operation Hat Trick.

Hockey is back , for one night at least.

Players from the Rangers, Devils, Islanders and Flyers are teaming for an exhibition game Saturday night at Atlantic City's Boardwalk Hall to benefit those affected by Hurricane Sandy.

The Blueshirts' Brad Richards and the Flyers' Scott Hartnell, who helped organize Operation Hat Trick (sponsored by Caesars Atlantic City) will captain the teams in the 7 p.m. start, with the Rangers' Henrik Lundqvist and the Devils' Martin Brodeur in goal.

At least six other Rangers will participate: All-Star defensemen Dan Girardi and Marc Staal, forwards Brian Boyle, Taylor Pyatt and Jeff Halpern and defenseman Steve Eminger. David Clarkson and Andy Greene will represent the Devils along with Brodeur, while the Isles' Matt Martin also will suit up.

Proceeds will go to the Empire State Relief Fund, New Jersey Hurricane Relief Fund and American Red Cross. Tickets range from \$20 to \$100 and are on sale at the Boardwalk Hall box office, [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com), all Ticketmaster locations, or by calling 1-800-736-1420.

New York Daily News LOADED: 11.24.2012

644772 New York Rangers

NHL cancels games through Dec. 14 and Jan. 27 All-Star Game in Columbus, Ohio as lockout drags on

By Pat Leonard

Black Friday, indeed.

The NHL rang in the Christmas season by cancelling the first two weeks of its December regular-season schedule, or all games through Dec. 14, and the Jan. 27 All-Star Game in Columbus, Ohio. The lockout now has cost the league 422 regular season games -- including the New Year's Day Winter Classic -- and its annual All-Star showcase, of which the Rangers' Marian Gaborik was named MVP last winter.

"Bah! Humbug!"

If the owners and players cannot agree on a new collective bargaining agreement, a maximum of two cancellations remain: the second of December and then -- gulp -- the full season. That would be the second time hockey lost a full season due to a lockout with Gary Bettman as commissioner, including the lost 2004-05 campaign.

"The reality of losing more regular-season games as well as the 2013 NHL All-Star Weekend in Columbus is extremely disappointing," NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly said in a statement. "We feel badly for NHL fans and particularly those in Columbus, and we intend to work closely with the Blue Jackets organization to return the NHL All-Star events to Columbus and their fans as quickly as possible."

Columbus then issued its own statement announcing all fans who bought tickets either to the skills competition or All-Star Game would receive full refunds.

December's first round of cancellations meant players will miss their third and fourth round of paychecks, and it reduced the Rangers' regular-season schedule from 60 games to 53. A deal struck soon could restructure the schedule and fit more games, but an agreement is not imminent despite the players' association making a comprehensive proposal on Wednesday in New York.

The two sides cannot agree on how to split revenue among owners and players, and whether to alter or keep player contract rights that govern issues such as free agency, arbitration and terms.

All hope is not lost yet: In 1994-95, the NHL and union reached an agreement on Jan. 11 and played a 48-game season. The 2004-05 season was not cancelled until Feb. 16. But after Bettman said on Wednesday that the sides were still "far apart," there were rumblings that the union could consider decertification as a negotiating alternative.

Decertifying would disband the union as a bargaining agent for players and clear the way for potential litigation against the NHL, an unlikely tactic considering it almost certainly would mean the cancellation of the full 2012-13 season and possibly the 2013-14 season as well.

"All things are under consideration and we'll see where it goes," NHL players' union special counsel Steve Fehr said cryptically in an interview with Toronto's Sportsnet 590 radio.

The Canadian Press tallied Friday that after this latest announcement, the total number of NHL cancellations due to a lockout since 1994 equals 2,120 regular-season games, three All-star Games and one Winter Classic.

New York Daily News LOADED: 11.24.2012

644773 Ottawa Senators

Hope for hockey under Northern Lights

by Ken Warren

Stand on Little Lake, just outside Deline, N.W.T. and a slap shot away from Great Bear Lake, and you can't help but think about infamous Arctic explorer Sir John Franklin.

Or, more specifically, about what Franklin might have thought of a simple game evolving into such a complicated, nasty mess. In 1825, he wrote that his fellow travellers "played hockey with sticks" on a patch of ice here, a birthplace of the game claim that has naturally become a source of pride in the traditional native, fly-in community of 600 people.

When Ottawa Senators defenceman Marc Methot laced up his skates and passed a puck to Winnipeg Jets defenceman Grant Clitsome and a few DeLine teenagers here last Monday as part of the Northern Lights Dream tour, he described the feeling as "surreal." Indeed, it was. At the very moment he was playing legitimate pond hockey in a village that lives off the land, National Hockey League owners and players' association representatives were in New York, bickering over how to settle their seemingly never-ending dispute in an industry that produced \$3.3 billion in revenues last season.

If nothing else, the trip produced an escape from some of that and put a positive spin on the sport.

The NHL players who made the 13,000-kilometre round trip trek to the Northwest Territories and Yukon for their whirlwind four-day, three-game charity tour were given a first-hand snapshot of how the other half — the northern half — lives. They embraced and participated in every moment, from the drum dances to the demonstrations of hand games and Arctic Games, eating caribou, reindeer, Arctic char and beluga whale along the way. Senators defenceman Chris Phillips says the locals made them feel like "one of their own." Senators winger Chris Neil marvelled at the "passion" involved in the traditional celebrations.

Everywhere the players went, from Yellowknife to Whitehorse to the isolated communities of DeLine, Norman Wells and Inuvik, they signed autographs and provided a spark for children and adults who had never before felt so close to the big leagues.

Most significantly, the tour raised \$30,000-\$35,000 for the First Assist charity, a cause long championed by tour organizer John Chabot, the former NHL player and coach. Minor hockey associations in each town were also able to piggyback off the games, raising additional cash through in-game raffles and souvenir sales.

First Assist is a program allowing First Nations youth in fly-in communities to receive a taste of life in southern Canadian cities, providing they stay in school. The more a child is exposed to bigger city life, Chabot says, the more comfortable they are in pursuing opportunities that don't always exist in the North.

"When you grow up in a small town, this is all you know, sometimes it's all you want to know," said Detroit Red Wings winger Jordin Tootoo. Tootoo is bigger than Sidney Crosby or Wayne Gretzky in these parts, beating ridiculous odds by making it all the way from Rankin Inlet, Nunavut, to the NHL. He has also experienced a northern tragedy. His brother, Terence, committed suicide when he was 22.

The isolation of the north is one reason why alcohol and drug problems are more prevalent here.

According to a study in the Northwest Territories News/North newspaper this week, 64 per cent of 15-24 year-olds in the NWT are classified as

heavy drinkers, consuming more than five drinks per sitting. The Canadian average for that age group is 12 per cent.

Chabot has been travelling here regularly for the past 25 years and is passionate about trying to make a difference. Situations and opportunities that most Canadian children take for granted aren't readily available. He says children as young as eight or nine are sometimes exposed to drugs and alcohol.

"The more I went up, the more I realized that education is one of the only ways, and the dominant way, of getting out of the situation we're in," he said. "And to get them back to school, they needed a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. So, if they choose to go to work, if they choose to go to (university), if they choose to do whatever and it's out of the community, it won't be like it is now, a deer in the headlights thing where they come home with their tail between their legs. This whole thing is based on the hope that we don't necessarily have all the time."

All that said, Chabot recognizes that it will take time to make significant change, but he believes the appearance of the current NHL players made a difference. "It adds to the cache so much. They see these guys on TV. They know Jordin Tootoo and Chris Phillips and Chris Neil and Jim Slater."

Louie Goose, a northern singing legend who performed his version of 'O Canada' before Tuesday's game in Inuvik, said, "when some famous hockey players take the time to tour a sparsely populated community of 3,000, it's absolutely significant."

The proof of that has been everywhere in the past week. The lasting impressions and images are endless. Laughing, screaming, cheering children wearing a kaleidoscope of different-coloured hockey sweaters filled the rinks, hundreds of them directly involved in the on-ice festivities with the players.

Sunday in Yellowknife, where the 1,500-seat multiplex was sold out seven hours after tickets went on sale, the Wolfpack bantam and midget girls teams were fundraising so that, in the words of 16-year-old Melanie Mailman, "we can go for out of town tournaments, because right now we basically play anyone who can spare a game."

Self-described hockey mom Toni Bens was beaming with pride because her 10-year-old son Dawson was chosen to escort an NHL player onto the ice. "He's very, very thrilled, with his hockey stick in the kitchen and in the living room and in the bedroom and in the bathroom and in the shower," she said.

Mirsad Mujcin, a 39-year-old recreational hockey player, was re-living his glory years when asked to skate with the big leaguers. The added bonus came when his two-year-old son, Kadric, joined him in the dressing room, seeking autographs.

Patrick Osmond, an apprentice carpenter who has never played a game of his hockey in his life, won a \$30,000 car for shooting a puck from centre ice into a tiny hole in the middle of a board placed across the net. Osmond may have been less excited that Senators winger Guillaume Latendresse, who lifted Osmond off the ice, showing him off to the crowd.

En route to Inuvik on Tuesday, the players made a two-hour pit stop at Mackenzie Mountain High School in Norman Wells, a gas and oil depot. The city's hockey association consists of 30 players, ranging in age from six to 15. "The whole thing was a surprise," said Tanya McCauley, who organized a last-minute bus from airport terminal to the school. "It's not something that happens every day, like in a major city where you have the opportunity to see the NHL live. Everything they see here is on TV."

At the Midnight Sun Recreational Complex in Inuvik, players joined in with the Inuvik Drummers and Dancers as they performed songs dating back thousands of years. Come game time at the 400-seat Ray "Sugloo" Ipana Memorial Arena, they shared the ice with Jaymes Ares, who was celebrating his 16th birthday. The night ended with the crowd singing 'Happy Birthday' to him.

On Wednesday, a stream of young fans from Teslin, a town of 500 two hours south of Whitehorse on the Alaska Highway, poured into the lobby of a hotel to have shirts and hats signed. "They grow up in a small town in Yukon, but you never get a chance to see (NHL players), so it's a really big deal for them," said Chad Thomas, a proud hockey dad. "The kids are so happy. They're growing up with big dreams."

Hundreds of fans were lined up outside the Takhini Arena for hours, in -20 C temperatures, waiting to catch a glimpse of the action. Between periods of that game, 14-year-old Caleb March was enjoying his time in the

spotlight, signing an autograph for a young fan who watched him play with the NHL stars.

For most, though, the highlight of the trip was Deline. The players arrived on a DC 3 used in the Second World War — “we’re the road in the air and if you want to get there, you’ve got to fly,” said colourful Buffalo Air general manager Mikey McBryan — and the entire town was waiting, their trucks and snowmobiles running to bring them to the village.

For one full day, the players experienced skating, snowmobiling, dogsledding, ice fishing, drum dancing and ‘hand games,’ while also feasting on caribou and trout freshly plucked from Great Bear Lake. They heard about small village northern life from people like Johnny Yukon, a proud father who is concerned that his children are no longer completely fluent in North Slavey, the traditional language in the Sahtu Dene Indian community. Their arrival also served as an inspiration for Kenny Kenny, a 17-year-old who plans to travel back to Weyburn, Saskatchewan, next year for a second attempt at playing junior hockey.

“I know how much it means to the First Nations people,” said Tootoo. “I think we kind of take it for granted what this means for the kids. It’s special for me, because a lot of these people are great fans of mine and it’s great to come back and show how much I appreciate their support.”

For Senators winger Peter Reggin, a native of Denmark, the learning never stopped.

“We travel so much, but all the cities are pretty much the same when we go to play (in the NHL),” he said. “This was a unique experience. We went fishing and they said that all the fish was for the elders. They take care of everybody. It’s like a big family. In some ways, I guess, we can learn from that, how they help each other out.”

The vastness of the north also hit home for him. “It seems,” said Reggin, “like we’ve travelled the world.”

A world that seems so much simpler than the current state of the NHL.

Ottawa Citizen LOADED: 11.24.2012

644774 Ottawa Senators

Richardson finds early success as AHL coach

Modern players respect experience, communication skills

By Allen Panzeri, Ottawa Citizen November 23, 2012

BINGHAMTON, N.Y. — Ask any member of the Binghamton Senators about their rookie head coach and the most common adjective you’ll hear is “awesome.”

Of course, it would be a lot more interesting if a player were to say the exact opposite, say, “The guy doesn’t know what he’s doing.”

But you’re not going to hear anyone say that about Luke Richardson. The players can read the record book: A 21-year NHL career, with never even one game in the minors, gets your attention. Richardson knows what he’s talking about.

But it’s not just that.

When Richardson started his career in 1987, just after being picked seventh overall by the Toronto Maple Leafs, his first coach was the fiery John Brophy, who had a knack for filling his sentences with four-letter words.

Four years later, when Richardson was traded to the Edmonton Oilers, his coach was Teddy Green, another tough defenceman who never took a step backwards.

These were the days when coaches ruled through fear and intimidation. That approach, however, doesn’t get you anywhere today, except eventually fired.

The modern player doesn’t like to get yelled at. He wants a coach who understands, but, most important, listens to him. That what the baby Senators they have in Richardson.

“The player-coach relationship has shifted a lot from what it was in the past,” said defenceman Patrick Wiercioch.

“A lot of the coaches who have had success in the NHL have had good relationships with their players, and I think that’s why we’re having success right now. A lot of the time, when you think you’re the only one going through something, and you talk to (Richardson) about it, he can relate to it and tell you stuff he did to get through certain weeks, certain months.

“You take it to heart more when you see what he did, because to have the career he did is something we all want.”

As he sat in his office this week and talked about his first few months as a head coach, Richardson, 43, said he often thought about the type of coach he’d be if he ever got the chance, but he eventually realized that you can’t turn on a switch and be someone else.

“I like to create relationships and have fun with the guys and have them feel comfortable that they can joke with me and talk to me about everyday stuff,” he said.

“But when I’m on the ice and I blow the whistle and I’m a little huffy, I have to have their respect and they have to listen to me. And even if they’re a little upset with me, that’s normal, that’s fine. But the next day I’m going to be over it, and hopefully they’re over it. And if they’re not over it, then it’s not my problem, it’s their problem.

“They can come and talk about a situation that we disagree about, and we still may disagree even after we’ve talked, but at least we’ve talked about it,” he said. “And I think that relationship has been good, so far.”

This opportunity to coach the Senators has come at just the right time of his life, personally and professionally.

It is just over two years since his daughter Daron committed suicide at the family home in Ottawa. Being here in Binghamton allows Richardson and his wife Stephanie to be close to daughter Morgan, who is just up the road playing hockey at Cornell University.

Stephanie attends all of Morgan’s games and this weekend is missing Binghamton’s games so she can watch Morgan and Cornell play at Harvard and Dartmouth.

Professionally, it gives Richardson a chance to start a new chapter in his hockey life while it’s still fresh in his mind what it’s like to be a player.

Plus, his four years as an assistant coach with the Senators have already given him a relationship with most of the players here. They knew him as a teaching coach before he arrived.

“As a guy who plays a physical, defensive game, he’s taught me a ton,” said Mark Borowiecki. “It’s pretty easy to respect a guy like him. He sort of commands authority.”

Richardson said the job of being a head coach is pretty much what he thought would be, but he considers himself very lucky to have assistant coach Steve Stirling, who has vast college, AHL and NHL coaching experience, and video coach Matt Meacham, who is in his fifth season with the team.

They help him with all the finer points of coaching in the AHL, from getting players to the bus on time to telling him which refs he can’t yell at.

“In the NHL, there are a lot of people around to look after the players and get them where they need to be,” said Richardson. Down here, you have to do all that.

“And the players are younger, too, so you have to remind them more. They’re almost like teenagers. It’s not just coaching.

“Steve and Matt have been unbelievable.”

Richardson knows he’s made mistakes in his early days here and knows he’ll make many more.

But he’s not in a rush. He’s at a good point in his life, being close to his family and enjoying early success as a head coach.

“I joked with my players at the beginning of the year, ‘I think I’m the only one here that doesn’t want to get out of here,’” he said.

“Everyone wants to get to the NHL at some point, but I’m not even thinking about that. I’m in no rush.

“I’m trying to help these players reach their goals and dreams as fast as they possibly can, and if they’re willing to put the work in, I’m willing to help them get there.”

Ottawa Citizen LOADED: 11.24.2012

644775 Ottawa Senators

NHL lockout's not ending anytime soon, so send in replacement players

By Don Brennan ,Ottawa Sun

Stop already.

Enough of all the bull.

This lockout is never going to end.

Can we not just jump to that conclusion and move on with life?

I mean, it would be fantastic to have the game back, of course, but it's not going to happen, not anytime soon.

So just stop playing with our emotions Gary, Donald, Bill, Steve and every other guilty Tom, Dick and Harry.

Go away.

All us regular folk — us hundred-aires and thousand-aires — have now even grown tired of laughing at you.

The NHLPA says the NHL doesn't want to negotiate? The NHL says the NHLPA doesn't want to negotiate?

Excuse me?

Decertification of the union is the way to go? No, wait. The process is too lengthy? It's not a good idea? Maybe? What?

Google and read all about it, folks, but have a bottle of Tylenol nearby.

Mediation? Nobody's agreeing to that. Makes far too much sense.

The "gap" is now just \$182 million?

That's over the course of a new CBA that would be half a decade long, which means approximately \$35 million a year, correct?

That's about \$1.17 million a team, or near what the Senators would be paying Mike Lundin.

Their sixth defenceman.

There's got to be so much more to it than that, right? Not a little more. A lot more.

There sure as hell better be.

But maybe not. Maybe these are just kids who can't get along. And what do we tell kids who can't get along? Just stop playing with each other. Go play with somebody else. It's that simple.

Many of the players have done so already, but now it's time for the rest to go get other jobs. Not because they need to, in a lot of cases, but just to keep themselves busy.

Must be nice, eh?

A veteran told me a few days ago: "Put yourself in our shoes. What if your bosses at the Sun said you had to take a 25% pay cut. How would you like that?"

My reply? I wouldn't. But if I made 70 grand, and they told me I was suddenly going to get half that, I'd sign the deal. I'd have to. I'd like to dig my heels in, but us people in the other working world don't have the comfort of doing that.

Pretty sure I can't just go and get a job writing for a paper in Europe, either. Nor can the best in my business.

So you players, go work for somebody else.

And you owners, get somebody else to wear your sweaters.

That's right, replacement players.

Why not?

Open the doors to people who will truly appreciate the job, guys who won't mind fixing the problems your mismanagement will inevitably create.

They'll work for less, so you can charge a lot less for tickets.

The truth about fans is most cheer for the logo. I'm sorry, but many of them wouldn't know good hockey from a notch or two below. That's not a terrible thing. They go to games to support the local team and have some fun. That won't change.

Charge less for beer, too. That will make the new on-ice product more enjoyable.

Allow us in the media to tell the stories that will endear you to your new Ottawa Senators. As hockey players, they're sure to be good guys, deep down.

Just keep them away from Don Fehr.

Say goodbye to future deals with major sponsors and U.S. networks, but Hockey Night in Canada will always be there for you. What else does CBC have?

Say farewell to a number of American franchises, too, but at least that means fewer of those pesky players to worry about.

Now, I'm sure the suggestion of replacements or "scabs" will be met with a lot of opposition. Especially from all the unionists out there. Oh well.

And there will also be a number of kinks to iron out in the new system.

But we'll get to all that later.

Right now is about pleading with the current cast of clowns to move on and leave us alone.

Their greed, and the nerve they have to keep holding fans hostage as they fight with each other over the billions the fans give them ... it's well beyond frustrating and sickening.

Come out Monday morning and do the right thing, Gary Bettman.

Cancel one more chunk of the season. A big one. The rest of the schedule.

Then go away.

Ottawa Sun LOADED: 11.24.2012

644776 Philadelphia Flyers

NHL cancels two more weeks of games plus All-Star Game

On Black Friday, the NHL took another step toward being dark this season. As in "fade to black."

The NHL canceled two more weeks of games, which means the league has erased its schedule through Dec. 14. If you're scoring at home, 34 percent of this season has been canceled because of the labor war between the league and the players' union.

The league also canceled the All-Star Game in Columbus.

Bill Daly, the NHL's deputy commissioner, said the league intends to return the all-star festivities to Columbus "as quickly as possible."

No new meetings have been scheduled since the league rejected the NHL Players' Association's latest proposal on Wednesday.

The sides are \$182 million apart in the "make whole" portion of negotiations, which would go toward guaranteeing players' salaries. Salaries were not guaranteed in full during the previous seven-year CBA.

The \$182 million difference comes to just \$1.2 million annually for each of the 30 teams over the course of the proposed five-year deal. That doesn't seem like much when the NHL claims it is losing \$18 million to \$20 million per day.

An NHLPA leader said he was not concerned that two Washington players, Roman Hamrlik and Michal Neuvirth, voiced their displeasure with union boss Donald Fehr.

Steve Fehr, Donald's brother and the NHLPA's special counsel, downplayed the statements and said the union had been getting "amazing support" from the players.

Hockey in A.C. Several NHL players will participate Saturday in Operation Hat Trick, a benefit game to aid the victims of Sandy. The 7 p.m. contest at Boardwalk Hall is nearly sold out, according to organizers.

Scott Hartnell, Braydon Coburn, Kimmo Timonen, Wayne Simmonds and Jody Shelley are the Flyers who are participating. The game is composed of players from mostly the Flyers, New Jersey Devils and New York Rangers. Some exceptions: Tampa Bay's Steven Stamkos, Anaheim's Bobby Ryan and Corey Perry, Ottawa's Daniel Alfredsson and Montreal's P.K. Subban.

Simon Gagne, James van Riemsdyk, Justin Williams, Steve Downie, Ville Leino, Arron Asham, Dan Carcillo and Steve Eminger are among the former Flyers who are playing.

Penalty shots will be awarded for all penalties, making things challenging for the goalies: the Devils' Martin Brodeur for Team New Jersey/Philadelphia, and the Rangers' Henrik Lundqvist for Team New York.

Philadelphia Inquirer / Daily News LOADED: 11.24.2012

644777 Philadelphia Flyers

Disharmony in players' union?

Are there cracks in support of Donald Fehr, head of the NHL Players' Association?

Most players say no.

Still, it's interesting that a couple players have gone public with complaints.

Washington defenseman Roman Hamrik told a Czech newspaper he was "disgusted."

In a translated version, Hamrik said: "We have to push Fehr to the wall to get the deal. Time is against us. We lost a quarter of the season, it is \$425-million. Who will give it back to us, Mr. Fehr?"

"There should be voting between players. Four questions \_ yes or no \_ then count it. If half of players say let's play, then they should sign new CBA. If there is no season, he should leave and we will find someone new. Time is our enemy."

Michal Neuvirth, one of Hamrik's teammates in Washington, backed Hamrik in an interview on TV Nova Sport in the Czech Republic, the Ottawa Sun reported.

"I agree 100% with (Hamrik)," he reportedly said. "This lockout is not about (a) majority of players. It is about several superstars with big contracts."

Friday is the 69th day of the owner-imposed lockout. Games have been canceled through Nov. 30, and there is a chance that more cancellations will be announced Friday, including the All-Star Game in Columbus.

The sides are \$182 million apart in the "make whole" portion of negotiations, which would go toward guaranteeing players' salaries. Salaries were not guaranteed in the previous seven-year CBA.

The \$182 difference comes to just \$1.2 million annually for each of the 30 teams over the course of the proposed five-year deal.

There are many other major issues that have to be negotiated, including length of contracts and free agency.

Both sides say they have made their best offers, which means the NHL could have its second season canceled in nine years.

Follow Sam Carchidi on Twitter @BroadStBull.

Philadelphia Inquirer / Daily News LOADED: 11.24.2012

644778 Philadelphia Flyers

NHL cancels All-Star Game, schedule through Dec. 14

It was indeed a Black Friday in Manhattan for the National Hockey League.

NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman announced the cancellation of the 2013 All-Star Game in Columbus along with the first two weeks of December's schedule through Dec. 14.

The All-Star Game would have been Jan. 27.

"The reality of losing more regular-season games as well as the 2013 NHL All-Star Weekend in Columbus is extremely disappointing," NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly said in a statement. "We feel badly for NHL fans and particularly those in Columbus, and we intend to work closely with the Blue Jackets organization to return the NHL All-Star events to Columbus and their fans as quickly as possible."

This is the second marquee event that the 69-day NHL lockout has claimed.

On Nov. 2, the league canceled its signature event, the Winter Classic, which would have been held in Michigan.

The main attraction between the Red Wings and Toronto Maple Leafs was scheduled for Ann Arbor, with an alumni game in downtown Detroit.

The All-Star Game cancellation comes just two days after the NHLPA made a new proposal to the league in New York City that was soundly rejected by the owners.

This is also the fourth set of games the league has tabled. On Oct. 26, the NHL canceled games through the month of November.

So far, that brings the total number of league games canceled to 422, or 34.3 percent of the season.

For the Flyers, they lose seven games, three at home: Dec. 6 against San Jose; Dec. 9 against the Islanders; and Dec. 11 against New Jersey.

E-mail Tim Panaccio at tpanotch@comcast.net

Comcast SportsNet.com LOADED: 11.24.2012

644779 Philadelphia Flyers

JVR plays for those at home

Written by

Randy Miller

Thanksgiving morning for James van Riemsdyk began with a trip from one of his offseason training homes in Minneapolis to the airport, then a flight to Newark that was followed by a drive to his parents' home in Middletown.

The 23-year-old Flyer-turned-Toronto Maple Leaf sure had a lot to be thankful for this year when eating a turkey dinner with family. He was away training and safe the week of Halloween, but hearing and seeing what kind of damage Hurricane Sandy unleashed on his North Jersey region was, and still is, painful.

Other than a few trees coming down in his parents' backyard, no power for almost a week and 10 days of worrying about the family boat, his family survived with its health and belongings.

Some of his childhood friends weren't so fortunate.

"We got off relatively lucky, but a couple of guys that I played hockey with live in beach towns and their houses were ruined," van Riemsdyk said. "All their stuff is basically gone, so this hurricane hit close to home."

That's why van Riemsdyk, who was traded last June after spending his first three NHL seasons in Philadelphia, didn't need to be talked into taking part in tonight's charity hockey game in Atlantic City that will benefit hurricane victims.

Some of hockey's biggest names will play in Operation Hat Trick, an event expected to draw a sellout crowd of more than 10,000 to Boardwalk Hall for a night of fun for players and fans frustrated by an NHL lockout that began Sept. 16 and still has no end in sight.

Just like old times, JVR will play for Team Philly, which includes several former Flyers teammates – Scott Hartnell, Wayne Simmonds, Kimmo Timonen, Braydon Coburn and Jody Shelley, as well as Tampa Bay superstar Steven Stamkos and legendary New Jersey Devils goalie Martin Brodeur.

Team New York's roster includes Rangers goalie Henrik Lundqvist, the reigning Vezina Trophy winner, and Anaheim star forward Bobby Ryan, a Cherry Hill native.

"You'll see guys trying to make a fancy play, and that's the fun part of these games, especially with some of the names we have in there," van Riemsdyk said. "It'll be fun to get on the ice with Stamkos and not having to dig at Brodeur's feet. These are the kinds of things that you can look back on when you're done playing and say, 'Wow, this was a pretty special group we had here to support a great cause.'"

JVR still is holding out hope there will a 2012-13 NHL season, although his spirits were dampened a little more Wednesday when the players made another proposal on a new CBA that immediately was rejected by owners.

"The players have shown time and time again how we want to make a deal and how much we care about the game," van Riemsdyk said. "It's very unfortunate. You have a league that's made record revenues year after year, and they've decided to shut the game down."

Van Riemsdyk has toyed with joining a team in Finland, but so far opted to stay in shape by working out in Connecticut this summer, then for the last few months in Minnesota with about 40 NHL players. Next week, he plans to skate with Flyers players at Skate Zone in Voorhees, and after that he'll head to the University of New Hampshire to work out with his old college team, which includes little brother Trevor, a sophomore defenseman. If by then the lockout is ongoing, he plans "to look a little bit closer at going over there to Finland."

Competitive game action during the lockout probably would be good for JVR, who is being switched from left wing to center by Leafs coach Randy Carlyle. If this experiment works, van Riemsdyk could end up centering a Leafs' top line that includes star winger Phil Kessel and former Flyer Joffrey Lupul.

Armed with size, strength and speed, JVR was the second overall pick in the 2007 Draft, but his production over his first three NHL seasons was just 47 goals and 99 points over 196 games.

His best of times with the Flyers came when he scored 15 goals and went to the Stanley Cup Final as a rookie in 2009-10, the next season when he scored 20 goals and 40 points in the regular season and seven goals in 11 playoff games, then two summers ago when he landed a six-year, \$25.5 million contract extension.

Everyone expected an even better 2011-12, but a hip injury, broken foot, concussion and sore knee led to just 11 goals and 24 points over 43 games, plus constant trade rumors. On June 23, just a few hours after the NHL Draft concluded, the Flyers and Leafs pulled the trigger on a 1-for-1 deal involving young players with star potential - van Riemsdyk for defenseman Luke Schenn.

Courier-Post LOADED: 11.24.2012

644780 Phoenix Coyotes

Another batch of games, All-Star weekend canceled by the NHL

By SARAH MCLELLAN

Fri, Nov 23 2012 6:05 PM

Well, Black Friday took on a different meaning this year.

The league canceled games through Dec.14 and also wiped out the All-Star Weekend, which was scheduled for Jan.26-27 in Columbus.

In total, 26 Coyotes games have been canceled. So far, 422 games league-wide -- 34.3 percent of the season -- have been lost.

Read USA Today's take on Friday's news here.

This is the statement released by the league on the heels of the announcement:

"The reality of losing more regular-season games as well as the 2013 NHL All-Star Weekend in Columbus is extremely disappointing," said NHL Deputy Commissioner Bill Daly. "We feel badly for NHL fans and particularly those in Columbus, and we intend to work closely with the Blue Jackets organization to return the NHL All-Star events to Columbus and their fans as quickly as possible."

The NHL Players' Association also released a statement from executive director Don Fehr:

"On Wednesday, the players presented a comprehensive proposal, once again moving in the owners' direction in order to get the game back on the ice. The gap that remains on the core economic issues is \$182 million. On Wednesday, NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman said that the league is losing \$18-20 million per day during the lockout, therefore two more weeks of canceled games far exceeds the current economic gap. It makes the NHL's announcement of further game cancellations, including the 2013 All-Star Weekend, all the more unnecessary, and disappointing for all hockey fans -- especially those in Columbus. The players remain ready to negotiate but we require a willing negotiating partner."

Arizona Republic LOADED: 11.24.2012

644781 Pittsburgh Penguins

Lockout keeps Baby Pens 'D' from maturing

By Jonathan Bombulie

Updated 3 hours ago

The NHL lockout has had an adverse effect on many people in the hockey world, and somewhere in the middle of that list — way below the vendors and business owners who have seen their livelihoods threatened — are the defensemen on the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Penguins roster.

The lockout has forced as many as three defensemen who would have started the season in the NHL — Brian Strait, Robert Bortuzzo and Simon Despres, perhaps — to the AHL.

That has led to a serious ice-time crunch.

Even top prospects such as Brian Dumoulin and Joe Morrow are not immune. Dumoulin, a key piece of the Jordan Staal trade, was a healthy scratch once. Morrow, a first-round pick in the 2011 draft, has watched three games from the press box.

The crunch is felt even harder among less-heralded prospects.

Alex Grant, a 2007 fourth-round pick who led Baby Pens defensemen in scoring last season, has been scratched 11 times. Philip Samuelsson, a 2009 second-rounder, has missed seven games.

It gets worse. Carl Sneed hasn't had the most distinguished two-year pro career, but he has an NHL body at 6-foot-4, 225 pounds, and he played a game for the Penguins last season as an injury fill-in. Reid McNeill is a 6-6 rookie with the kind of frame general managers dream of. They're both playing for the ECHL's Wheeling Nailers.

"It's been tough," Dumoulin said. "You gotta bring your 'A' game, whether it's in practice or in games, to make sure you stay in the lineup."

The team is increasing the individual instruction young defensemen are receiving in practice.

Last week, Penguins assistant Todd Reirden spent a half-hour working with Dumoulin to improve his wall play.

Sessions like that would occur in a non-lockout season, too, but with Reirden, Dan Bylsma, Tony Granato, Tom Fitzgerald, Bill Guerin and others making frequent trips to Wilkes-Barre, there are more hands on deck.

"We've put an emphasis on trying to acquire a number of NHL-caliber defensemen that need to play and need to be in situations where they can develop," Reirden said.

Jonathan Bombulie has covered the Baby Pens for the Citizens' Voice in Wilkes-Barre since the team's inception in 1999. He can be reached via email at

Tribune Review LOADED: 11.24.2012

644782 Pittsburgh Penguins

NHL cancels more games, All-Star weekend

By Rob Rossi

Black Friday was another dark day on the NHL labor front.

The NHL canceled games through Dec. 14 as well as the 2013 All-Star Game in Columbus, Ohio.

The Penguins were to play seven games — three at Consol Energy Center — from Dec. 1-14. With this round of NHL cancellations, the Penguins are out 14 home dates that tourism agency VisitPittsburgh says each are worth about \$2.1 million to the region.

The NHL has not announced a drop-dead date to play games this season, but a redrafted schedule for a shortened season — if a deal is struck — is now a certainty for fans with tickets to Penguins games after Dec. 14.

No negotiations are scheduled between the league and players' association, though deputy commissioner Bill Daly and union special counsel Steve Fehr talked by phone Friday.

The NHL rejected the latest union proposal on Wednesday, and the sides broke for Thanksgiving.

A move by the union to decertify would not scare the NHL, Daly said. The NHLPA has not publicly declared if it intends to disband the union for tactical reasons.

NFL and NBA players decertified during the 2011 labor disputes.

The Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in favor of the NFL in July 2011, three months after a federal judge determined the lockout was illegal. No exhibition or regular-season games were missed before the league and union settled.

An NBA lockout wiped out 16 games per team, but a new labor deal was reached 12 days after the basketball Players' Association dissolved Nov. 14, 2011.

In conjunction with decertification moves by their unions, several NFL and NBA players each filed antitrust lawsuits against their respective leagues. Those suits were settled, and the unions recertified, when respective 10-year labor contracts were reached.

Larry Silverman, who spent 10 years as the Pirates' general counsel, said a decertification move by the NHLPA might not hold up in court, but it could spark a resolution to the labor dispute. However, the NHLPA should only use the tactic if the sides are at a dead end, he said.

There are mixed signals about where negotiations stand.

The NHLPA believes it has closed an economic gap on how to share revenue that was a record \$3.3 billion last season. Owners seek an immediate 50/50 split of future revenue, and the union has agreed on the condition the league pays \$393 million to honor players' current contracts.

The NHL will not pay more than its previously proposed \$211 million to honor contracts, NHL commissioner Gary Bettman said Wednesday.

The league is losing about \$20 million a day during the lockout, Bettman said.

Players are to receive a paycheck Dec. 15.

The All-Star Game is the second significant NHL event lost to the labor dispute. It was scheduled for Jan. 27 in Columbus, one of the two expansion cities in 2000. The Blue Jackets, who over the summer traded

high-priced captain Rick Nash to the New York Rangers, has never hosted an All-Star Game.

The Winter Classic outdoor game, scheduled for New Year's Day on Jan. 1 at Michigan Stadium, already was canceled.

Future sites for All-Star games are not set, though the NHL may not stage one in 2014 because of the Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia.

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

Tribune Review LOADED: 11.24.2012

644783 Pittsburgh Penguins

NHL lockout: Games canceled through Dec. 14

By Shelly Anderson / Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

News Friday regarding the NHL lockout evolved around what is not scheduled.

There are no negotiating sessions between the league and the NHL Players' Association set up, and there was another round of cancellations.

The NHL canceled an additional two weeks of games, through Dec. 14, as well as the All-Star weekend, scheduled for January in Columbus.

The lockout this weekend turns 10 weeks old.

NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly and NHLPA special counsel Steve Fehr -- the regular points of contact -- spoke Friday, but it did not lead to new meetings toward trying to reach accord on a new collective bargaining agreement. That was shortly before each took a turn doing a rare interview.

They spoke to 590 The Fan, a radio station in Toronto.

Fehr said the sides have maintained frequent contact, but neither sounded optimistic that a deal is close -- and each took a bit of a shot at the other side.

Daly said he wasn't sure the union leadership wants to get a deal done. League officials previously have questioned NHLPA executive director Donald Fehr's tactics and whether he was fully informing players and representing their wishes.

Of the NHLPA, Steve Fehr said "of course we want to get a deal done," but of the NHL's desire to, "we have our doubts," he said.

Daly said he "underestimated the magnitude of the gulf between us. ... I don't really understand how we got where we are."

The sides last met Wednesday, when the league turned down a proposal the players made that day.

Steve Fehr noted that the NHL at least took some time to analyze that proposal. In October when the players offered three alternatives to a portion of a proposal by the league, the NHL quickly rejected them.

"They didn't dismiss it in 10 minutes [this time]," Steve Fehr said. "They did move on some things."

He added that the NHL did not make concessions on issues that "they are trying to take a meat axe to" and said if anyone wants to make a Thanksgiving analogy, "They gave us the relish tray, not the turkey."

In case that didn't paint the picture well enough, Steve Fehr added that, "We moved a couple of miles, and they moved a couple of inches, it's fair to say."

One of the latest questions beyond the CBA issues such as core economics and contract rights is whether the players might vote to decertify as a union, a tactic the NBA and NFL players used during lockouts last year.

Steve Fehr declined to address the topic, saying only that "all options are being considered."

Daly said such a move would "likely lead to the end of the season."

After the latest cancellations, Donald Fehr released a statement:

"On Wednesday, the players presented a comprehensive proposal, once again moving in the owners' direction in order to get the game back on the ice. The gap that remains on the core economic issues is \$182 million. On Wednesday, NHL commissioner Gary Bettman said that the league is losing [\$18 million to \$20 million] per day during the lockout, therefore two more weeks of canceled games far exceeds the current economic gap. It makes the NHL's announcement of further game cancellations, including the 2013 All-Star weekend, all the more unnecessary, and disappointing for all hockey fans -- especially those in Columbus. The players remain ready to negotiate but we require a willing negotiating partner."

It's believed that if a deal could be struck in time to start the season Dec. 15, it would be shortened to no more than 60 games and modified, perhaps to include only intraconference games.

The 2012-13 season was scheduled to begin Oct. 11. The league previously canceled its schedule through the end of this month.

The Penguins had been scheduled to play 30 games before Dec. 14. In all, 422 regular-season NHL games -- 34.3 percent of the season -- are now off the table.

"The reality of losing more regular-season games as well as the 2013 NHL All-Star weekend in Columbus is extremely disappointing," Daly said in a statement. "We feel badly for NHL fans and particularly those in Columbus, and we intend to work closely with the Blue Jackets organization to return the NHL All-Star events to Columbus and their fans as quickly as possible."

The Blue Jackets announced that fans who hold tickets for the All-Star events will receive refunds.

NOTES -- Penguins center Evgeni Malkin had a power-play assist in Metallurg Magnitogorsk's 5-1 win against Barys in the Kontinental Hockey League. ... Penguins forward Dustin Jeffrey had a power-play goal and an assist in Medvescak Zagreb's 6-2 win against Salzburg in the Austrian league. ... The Penguins who are skating locally did not have a usual Friday practice because of the holiday weekend.

Post Gazette LOADED: 11.24.2012

644784 Pittsburgh Penguins

NHL cancels games through Dec. 14 in lockout

By Shelly Anderson / Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

The NHL today canceled games through Dec. 14 as well as the All-Star weekend, which has been scheduled for January in Columbus, as the lockout imposed by league owners is about to hit 10 weeks in length.

The season was originally set to begin Oct. 11. The league previously had canceled its schedule through the end of this month.

The Penguins had been scheduled to play 30 games before Dec. 14.

In all, 422 regular-season NHL games -- 34.3 percent of the season -- are now off the table.

NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly and Steve Fehr, special counsel for the NHL Players' Association, spoke today, but no formal negotiating sessions are scheduled.

The sides last met Wednesday, when the league turned down a proposal from the players.

Post Gazette LOADED: 11.24.2012

644785 San Jose Sharks

NHL cancels more games, including All Star game

By David Pollak

Another two weeks of the NHL schedule fell victim Friday to the failure of owners and players to reach a new labor agreement.

The NHL announced that all games through Dec. 14 have now been canceled as well as the 2013 All-Star Game that was to be played Jan. 27 in Columbus, Ohio. For the Sharks, that means 28 of 82 regular season games have now been lost -- half of them home contests at HP Pavilion that normally bring thousands of people into downtown restaurants and bars.

Deputy commissioner Bill Daly said in a prepared statement that was "extremely disappointing" to extend the cancellations.

"We feel badly for NHL fans and particularly those in Columbus," Daly said, "and we intend to work closely with the Blue Jackets organization to return the NHL All-Star events to Columbus and their fans as quickly as possible."

The league, which lost the entire 2004-05 season to a lockout, has now axed a total of 422 regular-season games, or 34.3 percent of the current season.

San Jose Mercury News: LOADED: 11.24.2012

644786 Tampa Bay Lightning

NHL cancels All-Star Weekend, games through Dec. 14

By ERIK ERLÉNSSON | The Tampa Tribune

Black Friday for the National Hockey League meant two more weeks were removed from the schedule two months into the lockout.

All games through Dec. 14 were canceled by the league in addition to the 2013 All-Star weekend scheduled for Jan. 26-27 in Columbus, Ohio.

For the Tampa Bay Lightning, that meant six more games were canceled, bringing the total to 26 games so far. The latest round included home games on Dec. 4 against Philadelphia, Dec. 8 against Colorado and Dec. 14 against New Jersey. Also lost were three road games: Dec. 1 at Winnipeg, Dec. 10 at New York Rangers and Dec. 11 at Boston.

The league previously canceled all games through the end of November as well as the Winter Classic between Toronto and Detroit at University of Michigan stadium on Jan. 1.

A total of 422 regular-season games -- 34.3 percent of the season -- were scheduled for Oct. 11 through Dec. 14.

"The reality of losing more regular-season games as well as the 2013 NHL All-Star Weekend in Columbus is extremely disappointing," NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly said in a statement.

"We feel badly for NHL fans and particularly those in Columbus, and we intend to work closely with the Blue Jackets organization to return the NHL All-Star events to Columbus and their fans as quickly as possible."

Talks to resolve the labor dispute seemed to this week when the league rejected a union proposal that appeared to be a move in the owners' direction. Though no talks are currently scheduled, Daly and NHLPA special counsel Steve Fehr were on separate segments on Sports Net Radio in Canada on Friday and said they had been in contact during the morning.

The latest rejection from the league doesn't appear to be sitting well with the NHLPA.

"The gap that remains on the core economic issues is \$182 million," NHLPA executive director Donald Fehr said in a statement. "On Wednesday, NHL commissioner Gary Bettman said that the league is losing \$18-20 million per day during the lockout, therefore two more weeks of cancelled games far exceeds the current economic gap.

"It makes the NHL's announcement of further game cancellations, including the 2013 All-Star Weekend, all the more unnecessary, and disappointing for all hockey fans -- especially those in Columbus. The players remain ready to negotiate but we require a willing negotiating partner."

Tampa Tribune LOADED: 11.24.2012

644787 Tampa Bay Lightning

Richards, Stamkos to play hockey to help Sandy relief efforts

By ERIK ERLÉNSSON | The Tampa Tribune

The night the lights went out in Manhattan, Brad Richards figured he would wake up in the morning with the power restored and normalcy returned.

But on the morning of October 30, as the devastation caused by Hurricane Sandy came to light, it proved to be anything but just another day.

"For the most part, you didn't have a clue really what was going on out on the outer parts of the shorelines, the coastlines all up and down there until you got out and see how crazy it was," said Richards, the former Tampa Bay Lightning star who joined the New York Rangers last season. "Homes are gone and burned down, bays turned into oceans."

On Saturday, Richards and several other NHL players, including Tampa Bay's Steven Stamkos, will take part in Operation Hat Trick in Atlantic City, N.J., a charity game to raise money to benefit the American Red Cross, Empire Relief Fund and New Jersey Hurricane Relief Fund.

It's just one of the many ways Richards has reached out – often with his own hands and sweat – to help after seeing and hearing about the devastation in the New York and New Jersey regions.

"The stories you've heard through people ...they say they tied themselves to their families and tried to just survive with stuff like extension cords," Richards said. "It got really bad. And not everybody had a place to go, for one, and then maybe they didn't take it serious, but that's beside the point now. Some of the ones that did go don't have homes to come back to, now, so it's pretty sad."

For a few days after the storm, Richards returned to Tampa and skated with former Lightning teammates Vinny Lecavalier and Marty St. Louis. Richards, however, made his way back to New York earlier than expected.

That's when Richards, the 2004 Conn Smythe Trophy winner while with the Lightning, pitched in with workers in Breezy Point, a coastal neighborhood that lost dozens of homes to fire during the storm, cleaning up one of the hardest hit areas. Richards also pitched to help other areas that were affected, but didn't want to speak about those contributions.

Matthew Long, a retired firefighter who lost his home in Breezy Point, told the New York Times that Richards was not looking for any fanfare or publicity for his efforts.

"Brad told me, 'I just want to come down there and work,'" Long told the Times. "He said, 'I don't want any Rangers paraphernalia, I'm not going to have any media follow me. If someone knows who I am and I bring a smile to their face, great. If not, I'd rather make them smile just helping people.'"

Richards did lend his name to fundraising activities. On Nov. 13, he and several Rangers teammates took part in a youth clinic in Staten Island before heading to Yellow Hook Grille in Brooklyn to serve as celebrity bartenders. The two events combined raised nearly \$30,000.

Much more is expected to be added to that total with Operation Hat Trick, which also includes NHL stars Martin Brodeur, Scott Hartnell, Bobby Ryan and Henrik Lundqvist, plus former Tampa Bay head coach Rick Tocchet.

While former Lightning forward Todd Fedoruk did most of the ground work putting the event together, Richards came on board and proved to be a key recruiter to bring in other players. Richards also used his Twitter account, which has more than 132,000 followers, to promote the event, which is expected to attract a sold-out crowd of up to 10,000.

Richards and Hartnell will captain the opposing teams.

"Obviously, with what has going on in the area, it's just a no-brainer," Richards said. "Everybody is on board. It's three great charities and the players – not just me – players coming from different areas, it's really great to see."

Tampa Tribune LOADED: 11.24.2012

644788 Toronto Maple Leafs

NHL lockout: League cancels games up to Dec. 14 as well as all-star weekend

Kevin McGran

Sports Reporter

With the players and the owners seeming increasingly polarized in their positions during the lockout, the NHL cancelled more games Friday.

The hatchet came down on games to Dec. 14 as well as the Jan. 26-27 all-star weekend in Columbus. Now, a total of 422 regular-season games — 34.3 per cent of the season — have been taken off the schedule.

"We feel badly for NHL fans and particularly those in Columbus, and we intend to work closely with the Blue Jackets organization to return the NHL all-star events to Columbus and their fans as quickly as possible," NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly said in a statement.

Hopes for even a shortened season seem to be dwindling as Daly and NHLPA legal counsel Steve Fehr spoke briefly with each other Friday before launching public-relations type appearances with various hockey-centric media.

Daly said he has "always" been open to the idea of mediation as means to solve the dispute, but just isn't sure that it is the best path to resolution.

Meanwhile, Fehr refused to be pinned down on the notion of the union decertifying so the players could launch a class-action anti-trust suit aimed at ending the lockout. Players in the NBA and NFL pursued such a strategy during recent labour disputes, resulting in relatively quick collective bargaining agreement.

On the record, Sabres goalie Ryan Miller has called for decertification, believed by many to be a nuclear option that could ultimately give the players what they want but not before the season is cancelled.

No new negotiations are planned but Daly hinted there might be some next week after the NHL considers where things stand.

Fehr said a new offer will not be coming from the players, who believe the two sides are \$182 million apart over five years with some contract restraint issues outstanding.

"We moved a couple of miles, they moved a couple of inches," Fehr said on the FAN 590.

A source within the union told the Star that moderate players have moved to the hawk side, venting their anger after the NHL commissioner Gary Bettman rejected the NHLPA's latest offer.

"Players are in the room and then they're talking to other," said the source. "The venom about what Bettman is like in these meetings isn't doing the NHL any good."

Toronto Star LOADED: 11.24.2012

644789 Toronto Maple Leafs

Paul Henderson, Mats Sundin to enter International Hockey Hall of Fame

Kevin McGran

The good news is Paul Henderson is getting inducted into at least one Hall of Fame — hockey's European-based International hall.

The better news is Henderson's cancer treatment seem to be going well.

"I'm be-bopping along," said Henderson, the man who scored Canada's most famous international goal — in the 1972 Summit Series vs. the Soviet Union.

Henderson will be inducted in the spring to the International Hockey Hall of Fame, joined by another famous Maple Leaf — Mats Sundin as well as Peter Forsberg, Teppo Numminen and Team Canada women's alum Danielle Goyette. TSN broadcaster Gord Miller is also being inducted for his career work at the world junior tournament.

The induction ceremony will be part of the world hockey championships in Stockholm.

"As long as my cancer doesn't act up and I'm on the right side of the sod, I'm going (to the induction ceremony)," said Henderson. "I wouldn't miss this for anything. They called me the other day, and I was blown away. It's a real honour."

Henderson was diagnosed with cancer — chronic lymphocytic leukemia — in 2009 and was told he'd have to undergo chemotherapy for a year and a half.

Instead, he enrolled in a clinical study at the National Institute of Health in Bethesda, Md.

"So far, it's working incredibly well," said Henderson, 69. "It's experimental, so we don't know the long-term results, but everyone in the trial is doing really well."

He said his face — especially behind his neck and ears — was starting to get distorted with huge growths as a result of his lymphoma, but the growths have started to dissipate thanks to the treatment.

"A growth in my stomach was the size of a grapefruit. After two months it was down to a third that size. My spleen is now almost normal."

He said his cancer type has no known cure. "This might be the silver bullet, but if not it will keep us alive until they find the silver bullet," said Henderson.

Despite calls by many, the ailing Henderson hasn't been inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame in Toronto because his career numbers don't measure up.

"To be truthful, I don't think about it," Henderson said of the snub from the Canadian-based Hall. "It irks Canadians more than it irks me."

"The worst thing they can do is put me in because everybody will forget about me."

An idea floating around some media members that cover hockey is that a unique way to honour Henderson would be to have Hockey Canada retire No. 19.

"As long as it says Joe Sakic and Steve Yzerman wore that number," said Henderson. "Some 19s were a lot better hockey players than I was."

Toronto Star LOADED: 11.24.2012

644790 Toronto Maple Leafs

NHL lockout: Don Cherry to players: Smarten up!

Lucas Oleniuk/Toronto Star Hockey Night in Canada commentator Don Cherry takes a run at NHL players and their union in a special column for the Star.

I see where my buddy ex-Leaf Jeff O'Neil is bein' criticized for taking a run at the commish, Gary Bettman. I agree with Jeff when he said the words he used were inappropriate. But, in a way, I can understand him. Jeff took a very big hit the last lockout. Millions. And never made it back to the Show. So, I know how he feels.

I can understand the frustration of the players not gettin' a paycheque because I'm not gettin' a paycheque. But if the players think they're helping themselves by calling Bettman an idiot and sayin' Bettman is a cancer. . . . First, you unfeelin' jerks. How do you think the people with cancer feel? What is the point of stickin' Bettman and the NHL? All you do is make them more determined. Because now, and I agree with Cory Schneider, it's almost gettin' personal. Because I don't care who you are, nobody likes to be called a cancer or an idiot.

And, how 'bout the players now gettin' caps that say on the front "Puck Gary?" Can't you see you're hurtin' your own cause? And, by the way, you're hurtin' a lot more people, too, than yourselves. The lower-echelon people in the standings. The ushers. The concession guy. The cleaners. Me, I'm in that lower echelon, and the list goes on. We want it settled as much as you. Can't Donald Fehr (pronounced Fuhr) tell these dummies to shut up?

Let's face it, Bettman is an easy target. He's front and centre. Let's blame him. Don't you realize that he's doin' what the owners want? The vote was 30-to-nothin' for the lockout. That's what the owners wanted.

Do you not think if 20 owners went to Bettman now and said "the lockout ends now" it would end? It would end for sure. No, it's the owners that call the tune. Why don't these players with their big mouths call out their owners? Call them idiots and cancers? No, they won't because they don't have the guts.

I know I'm not Bettman's cup of tea. I don't think he's ever forgiven me since my tirade against him for that 20-game suspension for my buddy Dale Hunter for the hit on Pierre Turgeon (1993). But fair is fair. When I think he's wrong, he gets it. And, when I think the players are wrong, they get it.

They're wrong here. Smarten up. Use your head. Keep your mouth shut and let's end this nightmare.

P.S.: By the way, Nazem Kadri was player of the week in the American Hockey League. Eleven points in five games. Thank you.

Toronto Star LOADED: 11.24.2012

644791 Vancouver Canucks

A frustrated fan makes a tough decision and says so long to the Canucks

By BRAD ZIEMER, VANCOUVER SUN November 23, 2012

Meredith Stevenson wanted a voice in the National Hockey League lockout and to get it the lifelong fan made what she described as a gut-wrenching decision.

She and her husband Dean cancelled the pair of Vancouver Canucks season-tickets they had held for 14 years.

"The last lockout (in 2004-05) didn't seem to bother me as much," the North Vancouver resident said Thursday. "Now that this is kind of the second time around and we are faced with the same old argument, I just found myself feeling increasingly frustrated."

"My husband and I have been evaluating how we can be heard in all this because we are just a little bit fed up with it. Even though we are huge fans — we never miss a game — it just got to be the only way we felt we could have a voice."

So late last week, Stevenson called her account representative with the Canucks and told him they were giving up their cherished lower-bowl seats at Rogers Arena. And as difficult a decision as that was, Stevenson said she found it almost liberating.

"I felt like I've done all I can to make my point," she said. "As a consumer there's nothing we can do other than not consume the product. So I just thought if that's the only way, that's what I'll do. It's going to be painful. What if the Canucks next year win the Stanley Cup and I am not going to have tickets. It's going to be devastating for me, but it feels really good to do it. It feels good to have a voice and be able to say, you know what, I'm not going to consume it, I don't agree with this any more."

Hockey has always been a big part of Stevenson's life. She plays twice a week and was the first and only female producer at EA Sports on its NHL team. The 38-year-old mother of two young children now owns and operates an event planning company.

Stevenson said she and her husband really don't have sides in the NHL dispute, which began Sept. 15 when the league locked out its players.

"I am too angry to sympathize with either side right now," she said. "I'm really tired of the bickering back and forth. I know the players probably got a little bit screwed in the last contract and they want to come back and make sure the same thing doesn't happen again. But to be honest, as everyone says, it's the millionaires bickering with the multimillionaires. It just doesn't sit well with the majority of people."

When she cancelled her tickets, Stevenson's account rep with the Canucks asked her to send an email that he could pass on to Canucks management. She did that, outlining her reasons in very passionate terms.

"This is not the sport I fell in love with at the age of 4 and have been so dedicated to my entire life," Stevenson said in her letter to the Canucks.

"I'm not a season-ticket holder who makes 250K a year. Having these tickets is not merely a drop in our financial bucket — it is a significant investment and expenditure for our family. I've watched the Canucks grow into an amazing team and I love them with every ounce of my being. BUT, I really feel like I need to make a stand here. The incessant greed of players and owners alike has left a very bad taste in my mouth."

Stevenson has not yet received a response from anyone in Canuck management, but general manager Mike Gillis said late Thursday he understands the passion of the team's fans.

"I think people are frustrated, not unlike us, we're also frustrated," Gillis said. "I think everyone around the game is frustrated to a certain measure. It gets played out in a variety of different ways."

"Our season-ticket holders are extremely important and we value their opinions at a very high level. It's an unfortunate set of circumstances, but we have passionate fans and passionate people will display their emotion in a variety of ways."

Gillis said Canucks, who have a lengthy season-ticket waiting list, have had "a limited number of season-ticket cancellations."

Stevenson said the tickets were costing her family nearly \$11,000 a year, plus as much as \$8,000 for playoff tickets. They had put down roughly \$3,700 towards this season's tickets, which will now be refunded.

"Our season-tickets are a big investment for us," Stevenson said. "It always hurt a little bit when those payments came due. I think that's also why it feels a little bit liberating to be honest."

She's not sure what her family will do with that extra money.

"I don't know," she said. "It will probably all be going on our line of credit."

Stevenson knows she and her husband have lots of company in being frustrated fans. One of her friends, West Vancouver video game producer Steve Rechtschaffner, on Wednesday started a petition that asks fans to boycott the NHL and all of its products for three years unless hockey is being played by Christmas.

Like Stevenson, Rechtschaffner feels like fans just don't have a voice.

"I guess the word would be frustration," Rechtschaffner, himself a former Canuck season-ticket holder, said when asked why he started the petition. "I think a lot of people feel like they are frustrated by the whole situation and have no leverage, don't have a dog in the fight."

"And I thought I am willing to commit to the idea that if these people really don't make an effort to get it solved and get it going by Christmas I want to let them know that I am willing to commit to not spending any money on their product for three years."

His petition only had a handful of signatures on Thursday, but Rechtschaffner thinks numbers will swell with some media exposure and word of mouth.

"If you're a fan of NHL hockey and are feeling disrespected and taken for granted, this is a way to let the owners and players know that there will be long-range damage to them, that they should take into account before blowing this entire season up," Rechtschaffner's petition says.

A link to it can be found at [www.change.org/petitions/n-h-l-and-n-h-l-p-a-end-the-lockout-by-xmas-or-you-won-t-see-my-money-for-the-next-3-years](http://www.change.org/petitions/n-h-l-and-n-h-l-p-a-end-the-lockout-by-xmas-or-you-won-t-see-my-money-for-the-next-3-years).

Vancouver Sun: LOADED: 11.24.2012

644792 Vancouver Canucks

Steve Pinizzotto doesn't waste time while waiting

By Brad Ziemer, Vancouver Sun November 19, 2012

VANCOUVER - Steve Pinizzotto is playing the waiting game, which is nothing new.

At times, Pinizzotto feels like he has been waiting forever for his chance to prove to the doubters -- and there have been more than a few of those -- that he has what it takes to play in the NHL.

The current lockout just means he has to wait a little longer. And while he waits, Pinizzotto has been continuing to make a favourable impression with the Vancouver Canucks.

Heading into Tuesday night's game against the Milwaukee Admirals, Pinizzotto has a share of the scoring lead with the AHL's Chicago Wolves. He has nine points in 14 games and has scored four goals in his last five games.

"I feel like it's getting there," Pinizzotto said Monday. "I still feel like my timing is not 100 per cent."

That's understandable. Pinizzotto missed all of last season after injuring his shoulder in a Canuck pre-season game when it looked like he was going to crack the team out of training camp.

"I have been put on a line with some offensive guys in Andrew Ebbett and Darren Haydar and I feel like I'm a guy who can make some pretty good plays, not just stir things up," he said. "I feel like I've got more to give. We are only 14 games into it, but I think I'm a pretty reliable offensive guy who when put in a good spot can make plays."

That's part of the reason the Canucks like him. The other part is Pinizzotto's physical presence. He finishes every check, which endears him to head coach Alain Vigneault, who loves his grit and willingness to drop the gloves. The Canucks figure to give Pinizzotto, a right winger, a chance to crack their fourth line at what would be a short post-lockout training camp.

"He has been a force lately," Canuck assistant general manager Lorne Henning said Monday. "He is doing the things we saw last year in training camp. He's skating well, he's finishing his checks, going hard to the net, just creating space all over the ice. The one thing he's got is a real heavy shot. . . He has good offensive instincts and he's a big part of the penalty-killing unit down there. He's a gritty, hard-nosed player."

Pinizzotto's next NHL game will be his first. The waiting has not been easy. If a player is going to get his NHL shot, it usually happens before age 28.

"It usually happens quicker for most guys, but I consider myself a late, late bloomer given my age," he said. "But again, it's opportunity. It happens differently for everybody. I think the route I have taken and the adversity I have faced has made me a better player."

Before signing with the Canucks last season, Pinizzotto languished in the minor league system of the Washington Capitals. Despite two solid seasons with the Hershey Bears, during which time he registered 83 points and 302 penalty minutes, Pinizzotto never got a sniff with the Capitals.

"We had some unbelievable teams in Hershey and I felt like I did everything I could over there. I felt like I turned some heads, but I guess sometimes things just don't work out. I don't think (former Caps' coach) Bruce Boudreau really liked my game enough to bring me up. It was just time for me to move on."

"Coming to Vancouver I feel like I am a guy that can give them what they need. They showed the most interest in me and I feel like they still have a lot of faith in me, so I am looking forward to having an opportunity to join the big club."

When, or if, Canuck training camp does happen, Pinizzotto likes to think he'll have an edge because he has been playing regularly.

"It's a lot better than sitting at home on the couch, that's for sure, and it's especially important for me because I missed a full year last year. It's kind of a blessing in disguise coming down here to play, getting back into game shape and learning the system down here. The level of this league right now is pretty high and the fact that so many guys aren't playing hockey, it's a huge advantage to be playing."

ICE CHIPS: The Wolves, after opening the season with four straight wins, have lost four of their last five games. "They are playing hard, but they are just having trouble scoring goals," Henning said. . . The Wolves are currently second in the AHL's Midwest Division with a record of 7-5-2.

Vancouver Sun: LOADED: 11.24.2012

644793 Vancouver Canucks

Ten issues facing the post-lockout Canucks

Posted by:

## The Province

If and when the NHL returns to action, the Vancouver 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 10 days, Jason Botchford and Ben Kuzma are examining 10 issues that might concern the Canucks and their fans. Follow the series here, where we'll add a new installment each day.

### 8. The coaching staff

Alain Vigneault is the Canucks' most successful coach of all time, but can he bring them their first Stanley Cup? Several teams, including the Chicago Blackhawks, San Jose Sharks and Washington Capitals, made significant changes to their coaching staffs after disappointing ends to the 2011-12 season, but the Canucks kept theirs in place. Will their faith in one of the NHL's longest-serving coaches be rewarded, or will players be looking for a change? Read more from Ben Kuzma.

### 9. The salary cap

The way CBA negotiations are shaping up, the Canucks could find themselves needing to sign 10 players with only \$4 million of cap space. One of them would be star defenceman Alex Edler, who will be looking for a raise. That puts a huge onus on youngsters Chris Tanev and Zack Kassian to perform while they are still among the club's lowest paid players. Read more from Jason Botchford.

### 10. The window is closing

Last season, just seven teams were younger than the Canucks. Soon Dan Hamhuis will become the ninth Canucks over 30 years old. The Sedin twins may have a few good years left, but there's nobody of their quality in the system poised to take over when they're gone. Look no further than the 2007 Ottawa Senators to see how quickly a Stanley Cup contender can fall. Read Jason Back when the NHL still played games, the Ottawa Senators were saturated in confidence to start the 2007-08 campaign. Read more from Jason Botchford.

Vancouver Province: LOADED: 11.24.2012

644794 Washington Capitals

NHL cancels games through Dec. 14 and 2013 All-Star Game

By Katie Carrera , Updated: November 23, 2012

With no end in sight to the lockout, the NHL canceled games through Dec. 14 on Friday, bringing the total number of contests lost to 422, 34.3 percent of the 2012-13 season.

This round of cuts also included the elimination of the All-Star Weekend, which was scheduled for Jan. 26 and 27 in Columbus, Ohio. Even if the two sides would reach an agreement that allows for a shortened season, the game would likely be canceled as a compressed schedule is sorted out.

"The reality of losing more regular-season games as well as the 2013 NHL All-Star Weekend in Columbus is extremely disappointing," NHL Deputy Commissioner Bill Daly said in a statement. "We feel badly for NHL fans and particularly those in Columbus, and we intend to work closely with the Blue Jackets organization to return the NHL All-Star events to Columbus and their fans as quickly as possible."

Six more Capitals games were erased this time, bringing the total canceled thus far to 29.

Dec. 1 vs. Carolina

Dec. 4 at NY Islanders

Dec. 5 vs. NY Rangers

Dec. 7 at Detroit

Dec. 11 vs. Pittsburgh

Dec. 13 vs. Philadelphia

The cancellations came on the 69th day of the lockout, days after the two sides appeared to reach another stalemate in negotiations. On Wednesday the NHL rejected the latest proposal from the NHLPA, which based the players' share of hockey-related revenue off a percentage rather than a guaranteed amount for the first time in this process. Under the offer, HRR would be split 50-50 in the first year of a five-year agreement but requested that owners contribute \$393 million for the "make whole" provision that ensures the value of existing contracts, up from the league's original offer of \$211 million.

"On Wednesday, the players presented a comprehensive proposal, once again moving in the owners' direction in order to get the game back on the ice. The gap that remains on the core economic issues is \$182 million," NHLPA Executive Director Donald Fehr said in a statement. "On Wednesday, NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman said that the league is losing \$18-20 million per day during the lockout, therefore two more weeks of cancelled games far exceeds the current economic gap. It makes the NHL's announcement of further game cancellations, including the 2013 All-Star Weekend, all the more unnecessary, and disappointing for all hockey fans — especially those in Columbus. The players remain ready to negotiate but we require a willing negotiating partner."

While the two sides remain in contact, there are no plans to continue negotiations at this point although they remain far apart in player contracting rights, how to account for a lockout-shortened season and other key issues. During interviews with a Toronto radio station on Friday, both Daly and NHLPA special counsel Steve Fehr provided updates on their side's stance at this stage and suffice to say not much has changed.

"I'll be the first to admit this process has played out not as we would have hoped. We hate where we are and wish we were in a better place," Daly said in his interview. "I guess I underestimated the magnitude of the gulf between us on the important issues."

Both men questioned the other side's willingness to make a deal on a new collective bargaining agreement and expressed their displeasure in a lack of movement by the other side.

"We moved a couple of miles, and they moved a couple of inches," Fehr said. "If it was Thanksgiving dinner, they gave us a relish tray but no turkey."

Since the league dismissed the union's latest proposal, speculation of whether the NHLPA would consider decertification as a next step has surfaced. The move would dissolve the union and leave the league open to anti-trust lawsuits. (Good reads and explanations on it all here, here and here.)

Fehr declined to comment on the possibility or whether the NHLPA has taken steps in that direction. "We do not talk about what is discussed in private conversations with players," Fehr said. "We haven't decertified, we haven't talked publicly about decertification."

Meanwhile, Daly said he wasn't scared of the possibility of the union decertifying, and added that it's "a time-consuming process that would likely lead to the end of the season".

Washington Post LOADED: 11.24.2012

644795 Washington Capitals

Mathieu Perreault to play in Finland

By Katie Carrera , Updated: November 23, 2012

Add another name to the list of Capitals who have sought work overseas during the NHL lockout.

Mathieu Perreault is close to finalizing a deal to play with HIFK Helsinki in Finland's SM-liiga, his agent Paul Corbeil confirmed Friday. The 24-year-old Quebec native will travel to Finland next week, Corbeil wrote in an e-mail.

Perreault is the eighth Capital to leave for Europe since the lockout began on Sept. 16. The others are Alex Ovechkin and Nicklas Backstrom, both with Dynamo Moscow in the KHL; Jason Chimera with HK Chomutov in the

Czech Extraliga; Michal Neuvirth with Sparta Praha in the Czech Extraliga; Wojtek Wolski with KH Sanok in Poland; Marcus Johansson with BIK Karlskoga in Sweden; and Brooks Laich with the Kloten Flyers in Switzerland's National League A.

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"I'll be the first to admit this process has played out not as we would have hoped. We hate where we are and wish we were in a better place," Daly said in his interview. "I guess I underestimated the magnitude of the gulf between us on the important issues."

Both men questioned the other side's willingness to make a deal on a new collective bargaining agreement and expressed their displeasure in a lack of movement by the other side.

"We moved a couple of miles, and they moved a couple of inches," Fehr said. "If it was Thanksgiving dinner, they gave us a relish tray but no turkey."

Since the league dismissed the union's latest proposal, speculation of whether the NHLPA would consider decertification as a next step has surfaced. The move would dissolve the union and leave the league open to anti-trust lawsuits. (Good reads and explanations on it all here, here and here.)

Fehr declined to comment on the possibility or whether the NHLPA has taken steps in that direction. "We do not talk about what is discussed in private conversations with players," Fehr said. "We haven't decertified, we haven't talked publicly about decertification."

Meanwhile, Daly said he wasn't scared of the possibility of the union decertifying, and added that it's "a time-consuming process that would likely lead to the end of the season".

Washington Post LOADED: 11.24.2012

644797 Washington Capitals

Troy Brouwer frustrated by comments from Roman Hamrlik and Michal Neuvirth

By Katie Carrera , Updated: November 23, 2012

Washington Capitals forward Troy Brouwer was frustrated Thursday to read comments made by two of his teammates that questioned the direction of the NHLPA during the lockout.

In the previous 48 hours, veteran defenseman Roman Hamrlik said that he was "disgusted" and spoke out against NHLPA Executive Director Donald Fehr while goaltender Michal Neuvirth voiced support for the blueliner's view, adding that he believed the lockout was about "several superstars with big contracts."

Those comments didn't sit well with Brouwer, who along with Jason Chimera serves as the Capitals' representatives to the NHLPA and has spent much of the past few months learning the details of the union's proposals and helping relay the information to others.

"Those are two guys that have never been on a conference call, never been to a meeting, never paid attention," Brouwer told The Post in a telephone interview Thursday. "People are going to have their own opinions but when you're fighting for something with 700 other guys, all you're doing is just making it harder to make a deal and making it harder to accomplish the things we're fighting for."

"For me, I think those guys selling us out, being selfish like that and making those comments ... " Brouwer said, trailing off. "Me being on their team, how am I going to trust them as a teammate from now on? Because you know they're not going to support players in the big scheme of things when you go and you play on the team with them; it's going to be tough to want to back those guys from now on."

Hamrlik made his comments to Daily Sport in his native Czech Republic on Wednesday, and they were translated by TV Nova's Roman Jedlicka on Twitter.

"I am disgusted. We have to push Fehr to the wall to get the deal," Hamrlik said. "Time is against us. We lost 1/4 season, it is \$425 million. Who will give it back to us? Mr. Fehr? There should be voting between player. Four questions – YES or NO – then count it. If half of players say lets play, then they should sign new CBA. If there is no season he should leave and we will find someone new. Time is our enemy."

On Thursday, Hamrlik expanded on his views to TSN and the Globe and Mail, backing off some of his criticisms of Fehr slightly while reiterating his view that the players need to push for a speedy resolution.

This marks the third lockout during Hamrlik's 19-year career. The 38-year-old defenseman is in the last year of his current contract, during which he was slated to earn \$3.5 million, and at this stage in his career a prolonged

lockout could impact how much longer he plays. Brouwer can empathize with Hamrlik, but he believes negotiating the right collective bargaining agreement for the entire NHLPA membership is the most important goal.

"Hamr's getting older. He knows he's got limited years to play and I understand that he wants to get a deal done as quickly as possible," Brouwer said. "But if the circumstances aren't there, they're not there."

Neuvirth, 24, who falls on the other end of the spectrum having played in just three NHL seasons, shared his support for Hamrlik in an interview to TV Nova Sport. The following quote was translated by Jedlicka on Twitter.

"I agree 100 percent with Hammer," Neuvirth said. "This lockout is not about majority of players, I think. It is about several superstars with big contracts."

Brouwer didn't understand Neuvirth's stance given that whatever agreement is eventually settled upon will impact his livelihood directly for the next several years.

"It's the superstars that are fighting for the other guys, for the younger guys and the guys coming to the league in the future," Brouwer said. "You have to continue fighting for those rights for every player. That Neuvy says only a few super stars are the ones that are making the decisions here is completely off. We were just on a conference call and there were hundreds of players on it, sharing responsibility and we all had the same attitude."

Given the reaction he's heard from fellow locked-out players about Hamrlik and Neuvirth's comments, Brouwer is confident that the NHLPA remains steady in its pursuit of a new collective bargaining agreement.

"It's frustrating as players having other players come out and say this but we still as a core are very strong," Brouwer said. "We still believe the same things. We stand by the proposal that we made [Wednesday] and nothing's going to change."

"We still have the views that we can't give into a few of these contracting rights and that we can't continue to give unless we get something back," he continued. "Until there's some sort of movement on the owners' side, some willingness to give us some concessions — like we are to them — it's in the owners hands. We've given a very good proposal. We'd love to play hockey if the conditions are right and we're trying to still work toward reaching an agreement that's good for both sides."

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644798 Winnipeg Jets

Jets' Enstrom might be suiting up in Sweden soon

By: Staff Writer

RUMOURS are hot in Sweden that Winnipeg Jets defenceman Toby Enstrom may be returning to his home country to play.

Enstrom, who left the Salzburg Red Bull in Austria a few weeks ago, is either practising with Orebro Vipers, or is about to start, according to the Swedish website mrmadhawk.se.

The site's proprietor said that Enstrom had already been practising with the team, which includes his brother, forward Thomas Enstrom.

But a later post said the team has denied it, but said he will start practising soon.

Enstrom signed a five-year contract extension with the Jets over the summer, which will take him through the 2017-18 season. His new cap hit, which kicks in after the current season, will be \$5.75 million.

It's unlikely he'll be making that if he does join Orebro, which is a Swedish second-division club.

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644799 Winnipeg Jets

NHL cancels all-star match and more games through Dec. 14

By: Tim Campbell

WINNIPEG — The NHL pushed the potential start of any regular season back two more weeks today, officially wiping more games off the schedule.

All games through Dec. 14 are now cancelled, bringing to 422 the number of contests out the window.

Another casualty of the labour dispute, which began officially on Sept. 15 with the expiration of the old Collective Bargaining Agreement, is the 2013 all-star game in Columbus, slated for Jan. 26-27.

"The reality of losing more regular-season games as well as the 2013 NHL All-Star Weekend in Columbus is extremely disappointing," NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly said in the league's announcement. "We feel badly for NHL fans and particularly those in Columbus, and we intend to work closely with the Blue Jackets organization to return the NHL All-Star events to Columbus and their fans as quickly as possible."

The announcement today lops six more Jets games off the schedule, including home games against Tampa Bay, Boston, Carolina and the Islanders.

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644800 Winnipeg Jets

Jets defenceman Toby Enstrom signs with Swedish team

Winnipeg Sun

Toby Enstrom is heading back to his homeland for another chance to play during the NHL lockout.

Enstrom, the smooth-skating Winnipeg Jets defenceman who had six goals and 33 points in 62 games last season, cut short his stint with Salzburg EC Red Bull in Austria but is poised to sign to play with the Orebro Vipers, a team in Sweden's second division.

Enstrom's new teammates will include his younger brother Thomas, a 23-year-old right-winger who has two goals in 16 games this season.

Toronto Maple Leafs blue-liner Carl Gunnarsson, who was born in Orebro, signed with the Vipers earlier this month.

Winnipeg Sun LOADED 11.24.2012

644801 Winnipeg Jets

Jets captain Ladd faces off with Hamrlik over lockout

By Ken Wiebe ,Winnipeg Sun

Andrew Ladd has no problem with a friendly debate or a dissenting view from another NHLPA member.

However, when it comes to the recent firestorm created by comments from Roman Hamrlik about the NHL lockout, the captain of the Winnipeg Jets believes it would be best for the veteran defenceman to do a little more research before weighing in.

"I disagree with his opinion, for sure," said Ladd, after a group of six skaters and two goalies hit the ice at MTS Iceplex for Friday's session. "Everyone is allowed to state their own opinion, but if you're going to do that, I would make sure that your facts are straight too."

"(Hamrlik said the deal (in 2005) didn't get better after that (lockout ended) and it did. It was a hard cap when they cancelled the year and it ended up being tied to revenue, which bumped it up to where it is right now. It's inaccurate in that sense."

Washington Capitals goalie Michal Neuvirth threw his support behind Hamrlik and said the lockout was only about the superstars, not about what was best for all members of the NHLPA.

"That's completely false," said Ladd. "Your superstars are always going to make their money, regardless. There's so much more into it, (the NHL) wants to add another year before guys get salary arbitration and a lot of (contract rights) and stuff like that, it affects everybody.

"I would encourage them to check into it a little more, be on some calls and get a little more information."

This is not to suggest that there are only two of the 700-plus members of the NHLPA who are not fully on board with where things currently stand.

Plenty are frustrated and several might actually be willing to sacrifice a better deal for a guarantee of a paycheck in the near future.

That said, it would be ridiculous to suggest the NHLPA is beginning to fracture.

It's simply not the case.

In fact, there is a growing sentiment the NHLPA might move to decertify in an effort to push the negotiating process along through the courts and put some additional heat on the NHL.

However, this is more than just a scare tactic for the NHLPA.

"We've (exhausted) all options and it kind of pushes you into a corner — we realize (moving to decertify) is one of our options," said Ladd. "To be honest with you, I think it would be a good one for us. At some point, you have to start fighting back. We don't have much leverage and we know they're just trying to wait us out. We might as well try to do something.

"We're well aware that if we do it, it's not something that you think is going to be a two-week thing. When you do it, you have to be ready and willing to go the whole way."

Friday also brought the latest round of cuts and subsequent press releases from NHL and NHLPA offices, expressing disappointment.

Along with the cancellation of games through Dec. 14 — which brought the total to date up to 422 games (or more than 34% of the entire season) — the NHL also blow-torched the All-star weekend, scheduled for the end of January in Columbus.

Despite the cancellations, St. Louis Blues winger Ryan Reaves was trying to stay positive.

"I always like to stay optimistic," said Reaves. "I don't like to think that I'm not going to be playing hockey this season. But you never know."

Winnipeg Sun LOADED 11.24.2012

644802 Websites

ESPN / Whitney: NHL behaving like 'bullies'

By Pierre LeBrun

Ray Whitney wonders where to begin.

A veteran of four NHL work stoppages -- three owners' lockouts and one players' strike -- the 40-year-old winger has seen this same old movie too many times.

"We have to stop the cycle of work stoppages," Whitney told ESPN.com on Friday. "It kills the game. And I'm not saying this to kiss up to them, but it's not fair to the fans."

As popular a teammate you'll find in the game, Whitney has spent most of his career in nontraditional hockey markets, places such as San Jose, Florida, Columbus, Carolina, Phoenix, and now, Dallas.

The damage that the lockout causes in places like that just makes his head spin.

And for what, he wonders.

"To be out this long, for a game that was thriving, to be doing this kind of damage to the league makes no sense to us as players," said Whitney. "To me, it just shows a lack of respect for the game by the people in charge. They're not really hockey people, they didn't grow up loving the game of hockey."

Fired up and yet measured in his comments, Whitney is indeed frustrated.

"They're like schoolyard bullies right now; they want everything. That's not negotiating," he said. "With us coming down to 50-50 [split of revenues], I don't see the need for this to go as long as this has."

Like me, however, Whitney sees a deal that can be made.

"I don't think it's far apart at all, in fact I think it can be done in one afternoon," said Whitney, before building up to a laugh. "I'd stuff them all in a room and tell them they can't come out until it's done. And we're not sending any food, either."

It's been a whirlwind week. The NHLPA's latest offer was for the most part rejected by the league, which caused anger among the players. Then veteran blueliner Roman Hamrlik made headlines by calling out NHLPA executive director Don Fehr.

"Obviously he's frustrated, but I don't think it's fair for him to be making those comments from the other side of the ocean," Whitney said of Hamrlik. "He should be over here in the meetings if he wants to know what's really happening.

"But I also know you'd hear comments like that from the other side too, from owners, if it wasn't for the gag order. They're equally frustrated. It's frustrating for everybody."

Fact is, Whitney said, there's no reason for any player not to have a firm grasp of the facts right now.

"Over my three lockouts, this is by far the most informed we've been as players and a union."

In the meantime, there's been increased chatter among players about the merits of union decertification, something NBA players did last year to put pressure on owners.

"It's going to have to be somewhat of a reality at some point," Whitney said of the possibility of decertification. "We have to look at all our options to increase our leverage. We'll talk about that and decide what's best for us. ...

"What has the league given us in this deal so far other than a kick in the shorts? And they want us to keep giving? At some point we'll have to do something to put a bit more pressure on them."

Whitney understands that going down from 57 percent of the revenue pie to 50 percent was a reality players would have to likely accept after what happened in the NFL and NBA labor deals last season. But like many players, he's frustrated by the league's insistence on a number of changes to player contracting rights.

"It's not fair, to be honest," said Whitney.

Agreeing with Fehr, Whitney said the league's demands on contracting rights would lead to too restrictive a system, especially with demands such as a five-year limit on contracts and a 5 percent salary variation ceiling.

"There are some incredibly smart GMs out there, guys like Ken Holland and Lou Lamoriello," said Whitney. "They're not allowed to say anything but what the league is trying to do now is say, 'We don't trust you GMs, we want to put in a system that tells you how to run your teams now. We're going to cut your legs out. Kenny, I know you've got a genius mind when it comes to contracts and maneuvering things, but we're not going to allow that anymore. We're going to make it so the worst GM in the league can compete with you because your hands are tied.'"

To be fair, the league is looking to tighten up the system because costs got out of control in the last CBA, especially on the players' second contracts, which is why the league wants to push UFA to eight years service or 28 years old and why the league is seeking changes to salary arbitration.

Whitney understands the owners need some fixes, but he just wants a fair deal, not an agreement that will crush his side.

"Otherwise, we'll just be in another work stoppage in five years, which makes no sense," said Whitney. "All of this makes no sense. We could have been playing a long time ago."

ESPN LOADED: 11.24.2012

644803 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / On Spec: Problem with Canadians & hockey

Mark Spector

Our problem, as Canadians, is that we've given ourselves too few options.

We'd all like to tell the National Hockey League to go take a flying leap, to turn the game off for a few seasons until it earns its way back on to our big screens.

As a sports writer, I would love to be able to simply go elsewhere. To tell my boss, with a straight face, that the Canadian university football playoffs should be covered, and the Vanier Cup means something to the Canadian sports fan.

I wish I could tell him that junior hockey or the Toronto Marlies would bring traffic to our site; that tonight's Victoria-Alberta CIS basketball game, or Lakehead visiting Carleton, was something Canadian sports fans were actually talking about.

But I can't tell him that, because as a country, we are fixated on hockey. Not just hockey. NHL hockey.

And don't tell me that if we covered the other stuff, people might come to like those events. It doesn't go that way.

You support something, and we -- the media -- see it as something that deserves coverage. In that order.

Here's a stat: A pertinent lockout piece on the dot-ca web site leads the way most days in clicks. A good CFL piece? Maybe half the clicks.

A set-up piece on the Vanier Cup? Well back in the line.

That's why we cover this lockout the way we do, people. Because you all care too much.

A Horse's Pass

We're not in Toronto for the Grey Cup, and we wish we were. But after the way that city has failed in dealing with the Canadian tradition that is the Calgary Stampeders' horse, it tells us all we need to know about the perils of trying to sell Canadiana in The Big Smoke.

In a country where allowing a horse to walk into a hotel lobby was once considered a quirky part of an annual coast-to-coast celebration, The Royal York Hotel held its nose for hours before finally relenting to a short photo-op on Friday, security folks cringing all the while.

"Most hotels, once we talk to them about the media coverage and everything, they let us do it," Aengus Watson, a former chairman of the Calgary Grey Cup Committee, told the National Post. "But particularly here in Ontario, because they're so afraid of this law or that law, and so on, we've had issues in Ottawa and here. Everywhere else, we've never had a problem.

"Even Quebec, where they're insane with some of their stuff, they like to party, so Montreal is good. Everywhere else is good. Out West, it's good."

Now, even the CFL has restricted the horse to standing in the corner of Rogers Centre, rather than run the sidelines as it does after a Stamps TD in every other jurisdiction. It's OK everywhere else, but not there, for some recently concocted reason.

Excuse our intrusion, Toronto. Canada will be boarding flights on Monday morning to head back home.

Owners' Fault, Players' Problem

For how many years did the players enjoy coming out on top of CBA negotiations, building a hockey economy that enabled salary escalation to the point that NHL players were taking home 75 per cent of revenues, according to the Levitt Report of 2004?

For how long did every agent, every player -- often orchestrated by the union -- drive every contract negotiation to the highest possible dollar, whether or not the team offering the contract could truly afford it?

We've always said, don't blame Shawn Horcoff for signing a six-year, \$33-million deal. Or Scott Gomez (seven years, \$51 million). Or Wade Redden (six years, \$39 million.) I would have signed it; you would have signed it.

That does not mean, however, that there are no repercussions for draining far more from the game than one's value as a player deems appropriate. As

a whole, that's what players have done: Taken more from the coffers than the game can afford to give them over the years, and now the pendulum swings back.

The players, since about 1990, have always won on the salary front. Even in 2004-05, it turns out, they made out better than anyone could have dreamed. Now, the players are losing one of these battles, and it's all about "unfair practices" and "an unwilling partner."

Look, the owners are greedy. This is their lockout, their fault. They dug this economic hole with a series of bad decisions -- almost all of which benefitted the players.

But hockey players who think they should be paid like baseball and basketball players, despite the disparity in the NHL's U.S. TV money, need a reality check. The economy does not support that, and even a sports writer can see it.

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