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643712 Anaheim Ducks

NHL dispute appears at critical juncture as talks resume Tuesday

After negotiations Saturday, both the league and the players are feeling pressure to reach a deal, according to people familiar with the talks.

By Helene Elliott

The NHL and NHL Players' Assn. will meet Tuesday in New York at what appears to be a critical juncture in the labor dispute that began when the league locked players out on Sept. 15.

People who are familiar with the talks but are not authorized to comment publicly said players and some influential owners are pressuring their respective negotiators to reach a deal. The league has canceled the schedule through Nov. 30 — 26.5% of the season — as well as the Jan. 1 Winter Classic. Losing more games could damage its prospects for future revenue and alienate more fans.

NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman and NHLPA Executive Director Donald Fehr are expected to attend the meeting Tuesday, as are about a dozen players and several owners. About 100 players discussed strategy Monday during a conference call.

The sides have agreed on a 50-50 split of hockey-related revenue but haven't agreed how to get there from the 57% paid to players last season. The NHL reportedly altered its "make whole" proposal and would pay players the full value of their contracts, instead of making deferred payments that would count against players' future earnings, but that apparently has not been put on paper.

The meeting Tuesday follows daylong talks held Saturday in an undisclosed location between NHL Deputy Commissioner Bill Daly and NHLPA special counsel Steve Fehr. Daly said they had "a good, frank discussion on the most important issues separating us," a description Fehr echoed.

However, they must also agree on issues such as the NHL's proposals to limit contracts to five years and delay free agency until age 28 or eight years' service, and on how the salary-cap floor will be calculated.

Quick mending

Kings goaltender Jonathan Quick, who underwent back surgery after his playoff-MVP performance during the team's Stanley Cup run, will be assigned to Manchester (N.H.) of the American Hockey League later this week to continue his recovery, General Manager Dean Lombardi said. Quick will rehab and work out but will not play for the Monarchs.

LA Times: LOADED: 11.06.2012

643713 Buffalo Sabres

Sabres' Enroth signs with team in Sweden

Thomas Vanek is done playing in Europe, and Jhonas Enroth is finally starting.

The Sabres' backup goaltender has signed with Almtuna in Sweden. His contract runs through Jan. 6, but likely has a termination clause should the lockout end.

"They were interested and needed a keeper," Enroth said according to a translation of a team news release. "It suited me fine."

Including Vanek, who is heading back from Austria, the Sabres have had seven players sign overseas: Christian Ehrhoff and Alexander Sulzer (Germany), Tyler Ennis and Tyler Myers (Switzerland), Andrej Sekera (Slovakia) and Enroth.

---John Vogl

Buffalo News LOADED: 11.06.2012

643714 Buffalo Sabres

Sabres' Vanek on his way back to Buffalo after time playing in Austria ends

Thomas Vanek's time is in his homeland is up.

The Sabres' forward has bid farewell to Austria and is returning to Buffalo after spending a month playing for Graz. Vanek recorded five goals and 15 points in 11 games.

"Goodbye Austria!" Vanek wrote on Twitter. "Looking forward to get back to the US and see my Wife and boys!

"Thank you/Danke to all the fans in Austria especially GRAZ 99ers Fans! You guys are great and I will never forget!! Also, thanks to the 99ers team, made many new friends!"

A new blog was also posted on Vanek's Website today, with the forward saying he made the right decision to head to Austria rather than stay in Buffalo during the lockout.

"There's good, fast hockey played here in Austria," Vanek wrote. "My decision to come to play here was the right one.

"I really don't know how things are going to unfold in the next weeks. First of all, I'm on my way back home to Buffalo and my family now. I missed Ashley and the kids a lot. I get asked if I'll return after the international break all the time. That may well be, but certainly not right after the break. I want to wait how the negotiations between league and PA are going. It seems as if things are going forward a bit.

"So, once again: thank you very much for your support. It was a once in a lifetime experience and I will never forget this month. Now it's cross your fingers so we have NHL hockey back soon!"

---John Vogl

Buffalo News LOADED: 11.06.2012

Canes help with Sandy relief

643715 Carolina Hurricanes

RALEIGH -- The Carolina Hurricanes and PNC Arena will host a Hurricane Sandy relief drive Tuesday through Friday.

Staff members will drive the items collected to Staten Island this weekend, delivering them to the Stephen Siller Tunnel to Towers Foundation for use in the recovery process.

Fans can contribute items each day from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. at PNC Arena's VIP entrance adjacent to the box office. Canes coach Kirk Muller and Ron Francis, vice president of hockey operations, will help collect items from noon to 1 p.m. Wednesday.

Items needed for the relief and clean up efforts include tools, masks, work gloves, garbage bags, flashlights and other clean-up materials.

The Stephen Tiller Tunnel to Towers Foundation was created in honor of FDNY firefighter Stephen Tiller, who gave his life Sept. 11, 2001. Chip Alexander

News Observer LOADED: 11.06.2012

At crucial stage, NHL and players to negotiate Tuesday

By Chip Alexander - calexander@newsobserver.com

RALEIGH -- This could be a make or break week for the NHL and for players growing increasingly anxious about getting the season started.

The NHL and NHL Players Association will hold formal collective bargaining negotiations Tuesday in New York. It's expected commissioner Gary Bettman and NHLPA executive director Donald Fehr will attend the CBA talks

One of two outcomes is likely – either substantial movement toward accord on a new CBA, or a further division between the league and union over CBA issues that deepens and puts the 2012-2013 season at risk.

"At some point you can't just keep saying they're not going to be make-orbreak weeks," Carolina Hurricanes defenseman Jay Harrison said Monday. "Eventually there's going to come a tipping point.

"I think we've got to be getting close. We've bounced a lot of ideas. We've worded them differently but ultimately there's a few foundational agreements that we can move towards with each other."

Harrison said he was optimistic an agreement can be struck, and soon, to end the NHL lockout and get the players back on the ice.

"If you ever had any hope of playing this year, you've got to feel good about this week and hope that all the hard work that has gone into negotiations to this point has been worth it," he said. "We can get going and by the time the playoffs start this will all be like a bad dream."

NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly and NHLPA special counsel Steve Fehr met at length Saturday – and at a secret location. Afterward, Daly indicated a formal negotiating session would be held this week, and that Donald Fehr and Bettman would be present.

"That's what we've been waiting for, to get to the negotiating table and actually start a dialogue," said Los Angeles Kings forward Kevin Westgarth, a member of the players' negotiation committee.

It's believed the league has softened its stance on how to fund the players' existing contracts.

Under the league's latest CBA proposal, the NHL and players would split hockey-related revenue 50-50 and there would be a "make-whole" provision to fund contracts through deferred compensation paid out of the players' share of revenue. But the league now may be willing to set aside part of its share of hockey-related revenue to help pay the compensation.

That, in essence, is what the union proposed to the league on Oct. 18 – the third of three NHLPA proposals quickly rejected that day by the league.

The NHL has canceled all regular-season games through the end of November, and on Friday canceled the 2013 Winter Classic, the New Year's Day game in Ann Arbor, Mich. It is not known how much of the regular-season schedule could be rescheduled and played if a CBA were to be signed in the next week or so.

"There's no doubt a significant chunk can get done if this gets resolved relatively quickly," Harrison said.

The meetings in New York will be held with more NHL players headed to Europe to play. Canes defenseman Jamie McBain left Monday to play in Finland. Canes forward Jussi Jokinen said he has signed a six-game contract with Karpat of the a Finnish elite league and will leave within a week

But all eyes will be on New York the next few days. Hopeful eyes.

"I've reserved optimism about this week," said Westgarth, who lives in Raleigh in the offseason. "Hopefully there's the right amount of pressure on both sides to get something done."

News Observer LOADED: 11.06.2012

643717 Chicago Blackhawks

Montador: We're not holding our breath

TRACEY MYERS

Talking, discussing, working it out. The NHL and NHLPA haven't done much of that lately but that's set to change. After a lengthy meeting at a secret location on Saturday, the two sides are reportedly set to meet this week again, beginning on Tuesday.

Great news, right? Well, sort of. As good as it is the two sides are talking – and hopefully talking substantially now – Steve Montador said proceed with caution

"We'd rather be talking than not talking, so that's definitely a positive. But nobody's holding their breath unless there are new proposals or changes coming from it," said the Blackhawks defenseman and player representative. "I'm not expecting much from it because I don't know how far (the league) will come toward our side. We've come far enough with continued concessions. But our goal is to always talk. That's important."

And the two sides need to keep talking throughout the week, not just on Tuesday. They need to take whatever came out of Saturday and build off it, get into the nitty-gritty of discussions. So much has already been canceled, from regular-season games through November to the Winter Classic, which was nixed on Friday.

So right now, there's at least some hope that this week's chats could lead to progress.

"We're just hoping they're taking steps forward," said Washington Capitals forward Troy Brouwer. "Hopefully this week – and last weekend – they're making (up) some ground, be it core economics, discipline, pension, things like that. As long as things are getting worked out then we're getting closer to a deal."

Saturday's meeting was done quietly, with NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly and NHLPA special counsel Steve Fehr talking at an undisclosed location. After they talked, reportedly into the early Sunday-morning hours, each made a quick statement and that was it. No snide comments, no details, no rhetoric. And it looks like the two sides will keep it quieter to the media this week, too. A league spokesman told CSNPhilly.com's Tim Panaccio not to expect a formal media session following Tuesday's talks, that the silence may lead to better traction in talks.

Fine. Whatever works. The quicker this gets worked out, quietly or not, the better.

"Sometimes, just having meetings and not having to explain it and then have it critiqued a bunch of ways can help us," Montador said. "I don't know how much that can really happen these days; someone will see or hear something. But we'd rather keep meeting than not meeting. I don't think it's a bad thing to have some quiet meetings sometimes."

Comcast SportsNet.com LOADED: 11.06.2012

643718 Colorado Avalanche

Peyton Manning, JaVale McGee, CU Buffs football and other Monday musings

A serving of sports commentary each weekday come noontime

By Adrian Dater

Because I'm a locked-out hockey writer covering all kinds of other sports at the moment — and loving it — how about a few observations and opinions on what I've seen lately? Good?

OK then, here we go:

1. I watched the first three Nuggets games with intensity, and, um, well, I wasn't too impressed. First impressions: They don't have an on-court leader just yet. Ty Lawson figures to be that guy, but it's hard to rely on a point

guard every night. Andre Iguodala could be that guy, but he's not fully ingrained with the team yet.

Kosta Koufos was terrible in the first three games, and he's clearly not going to work as a long-term starting center. JaVale McGee looked great in the loss to Miami the other night, so why not give him the starting job? I mean, it's not like the Nuggets aren't paying him starting money (four years, \$44 million).

- 2. The University of Denver hockey team is going to be a force this year. They look much more like a team than last year's caste system outfit.
- 3. It was hard to stand there and ask tough questions to seniors on the CU Buffs football team the other day. You hate to see kids who seem like earnest young citizens get the tar kicked out of them every weekend. The team is a disaster, though, and the sooner the season ends the better.
- 4. When will the NHL lockout end? Might as well just ask the Magic 8 Ball. Nobody knows for sure. But I do think we're starting to see the process move forward a little bit. I think we'll see a deal by the end of the month at the latest
- 5. If I'm picking the new Rockies manager, I go with the new, off-the-wall choice. Jim Tracy was the safe, veteran guy, and how did that work out? Yeah, they made a nice run to the wild card a few years ago under him. Otherwise, it was a whole lotta losin' at Coors Field. Give me a Jason Giambi or Walt Weiss, and I'm good with that, and so will the fans.
- 6. Peyton Manning is awesome. Thirty-six years old and still the best player on the field. Amazing.
- 7. The Denver Cutthroats are going to face a tough road trying to put fannies in the seats at 60-year-old Denver Coliseum. But they're trying, and they've got good, local people running the show.
- 8. If the Avs return to the ice soon, I think the fact that Semyon Varlamov has been playing goal lately in Russia will be an advantage for them when play resumes. He won't have as much rust as many others, most likely.
- 9. But I think the Avs will also be hurt by the lockout, because they have a young team that still needed time to keep growing together. The lockout robbed them of that added growth period.
- 10. After covering a few Rapids games this year: Oscar Pareja doesn't seem like a motivational leader. You've got to wonder how long he'll last as coach. The team never should have let Gary Smith get

away as coach.

Denver Post: LOADED: 11.06.2012 643719 Columbus Blue Jackets

NHL lockout: Possible casualties

By Aaron Portzline

The NHL lockout already has cost the league nearly \$800 million in lost revenue and caused the cancellation of more than 25 percent of the schedule, including the annual outdoor Winter Classic.But those are only the obvious signs of destruction.

When the league emerged from the lockout that wiped out the 2004-05 season, some of its biggest stars were gone, having retired without so much as a ceremonial goodbye handshake.

Mark Messier, perhaps the greatest captain in NHL history, retired. So did Ron Francis, a sublime playmaker and superb gentleman. Al MacInnis, Vincent Damphousse, Adam Oates, Igor Larionov and Scott Stevens — al current or future members of the Hockey Hall of Fame — had played their last NHL game without anybody realizing it.

"Some of those guys — Messier, Francis (and) MacInnis, for sure — were players worthy of a farewell tour," said former Blue Jackets goaltender Ron Tugnutt, whose career also ended with the lockout. "It's pretty sad when the guys the league should be celebrating are allowed to walk off into the sunset without so much as a standing ovation across the league."

It could happen again if the current labor impasse can't be settled.

Ottawa's Daniel Alfredsson, Anaheim's Teemu Selanne and Philadelphia's Jaromir Jagr — all future Hall of Famers — might have played their last NHL games if this season gets canceled. And there could be others.

Two Blue Jackets players — forward Vinny Prospal, 37, and defenseman Adrian Aucoin, 39 — could be finished, too.

"It's a huge possibility," Aucoin said. "I'm not naive. I think we all saw what happened last time, and there's really no reason to think it would be different.

"A lot changes in a year, even if you don't notice it. Teams change, so maybe they don't feel like they need a veteran defenseman next year. And bodies change, too. For guys in the prime of their career, it might actually help to take a break from the physical beatings the game gives you. But for the older guys, it gets harder and harder to get back up to speed each year. That many months off would only make it harder."

Selanne has been toying with retirement almost since the previous lockout; this one might push him over the edge.

Jagr has said he could continue his career in Europe or in Russia, but the clock is ticking on his NHL career.

Alfredsson, who has spent his entire career in Ottawa, has put off retirement the past several seasons and was planning to play in 2012-13, perhaps as his swan song.

"I think the longer the lockout's been going on here, I don't feel as eager to get back," Alfredsson told the Ottawa Sun.

The Star-Tribune of Minneapolis reported last week that 240 players who dressed for games during the 2003-04 season never played again on the other side of the lockout. That number includes the cup-of-coffee players whom clubs recalled late in the season, but it is a staggering figure nonetheless.

Most of the players who lost their jobs after 2004-05 were fourth-line forwards or third-pair defensemen who were barely hanging on in the NHL before the lockout. During that lost season, they were passed on the depth chart by prospects who were either coming up through the American Hockey League or ready to turn pro out of juniors.

"A lot of those guys spend four or five years in the minor-leagues working to get to the NHL, and they're finally able to stick there," former Blue Jackets center Andrew Cassels said of the depth players. "But when they can't play during a lockout, they have to almost start over again — back to the minors.

"It's those guys at the bottom and the older guys who have to worry. A year off can change everything."

Cassels knows. He had hoped to end his career with the Blue Jackets, but the 2004-05 lockout erased the final year of his contract with the club. He was 36 when the 2005-06 season began, and he wanted to play until he was 38, but it didn't work out that way.

He signed with Washington, but the lost season and a training-camp injury kept Cassels from regaining his edge. He essentially retired at midseason.

"Taking a year off at that age, it takes a toll," Cassels said. "Some guys won't get it back. The league will be different when it gets back to playing again."

Columbus Dispatch LOADED: 11.06.2012

643720 Columbus Blue Jackets

Weekend meeting results in new talks

NHL lockout: Possible casualties

By Aaron Portzline

Two-and-a-half weeks after talks broke off, the NHL and the NHL Players' Association will meet today in New York amid the latest glimmer of hope that a partial season can be salvaged.

A marathon session over the weekend between NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly and union special counsel Steve Fehr sparked the optimism.

Speaking to The Canadian Press via email, Daly said the talks included "good, frank discussion on the most-important issues separating us." Fehr concurred, adding: "Hopefully we can continue the dialogue, expand the group and make steady progress."

Today's meeting will be the first since Oct. 18, when NHL officials walked out of negotiations after the union provided three proposals. The Winter Classic, the annual outdoor game, was canceled by the league on Friday.

Both sides have agreed that a 50-50 split of revenue is reasonable, but the stumbling block is how and how soon a 50-50 split should be achieved.

The owners say immediately, even though that would preclude them from honoring existing contracts, some of which were signed less than 24 hours before the lockout began.

The players, who received 57 percent of the league's \$3.3 billion in revenue last season, have offered a gradual decline over three or four seasons to reach 50 percent.

"There could definitely be something there this time," said Blue Jackets defenseman Adrian Aucoin, a member of the union's negotiating committee. "To this point, we have no details. We have a lot of maybes and some hints and suggestions, but we have nothing in writing that says anything has changed.

"We have seen this before, when everybody gets excited, and then you see the proposal, and really nothing has changed. But we're never going to get anywhere if we're not talking."(Daly and Fehr) talked this weekend and talked for a long time, so that's good. We're just happy they're willing to meet with us again."

Columbus Dispatch LOADED: 11.06.2012

643721 Detroit Red Wings

Red Wings' Danny Cleary: Next 3 weeks crucial to end NHL lockout

By Helene St. James

If there's a way to salvage any of the NHL season, Red Wings forward Danny Cleary believes it will happen between now and Thanksgiving.

The lockout that began Sept. 16 passed its 50th day this past weekend, but there's renewed hope it might not drag on much longer after talks finally resumed between the league and the NHL Players' Association.

NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly and NHLPA special counsel Steve Fehr talked over the weekend and plan to talk again today. There has been progress made on the "make whole" issue, one of the sticking points for the players, who are adamant contracts must be fully honored. The league appears willing to consent to that, though details have to be resolved.

"To take off the 'make whole' means they're going to pay it -- but they're going to pay it in later years," Cleary said Monday after a handful of Wings skated in Troy. "It's deferred with an interest-free loan, basically. They want it to count against the players' share, and that's going to be tricky, too ... but basically, if they're willing to, even if it's deferred, as long as guys get their contracts honored, that'll be most important."

Cleary called the next three weeks "huge," as far as saving as much of a truncated season as possible. "There's some light. There's a ton of time to get a deal done, and I think there's a deal to be done. We'll see."

It seems unlikely a deal will be reached this week, because if an accord was that imminent, the NHL wouldn't have gone through with Friday's announcement that canceled the Winter Classic between the Wings and Maple Leafs at Michigan Stadium. No matter what, the Winter Classic will not be rescheduled for this season.

There's much negotiating to be done, and NHL commissioner Gary Bettman and NHLPA executive director Don Fehr, who weren't part of weekend talks, have to get involved. But compared with last week, when there was not a shred of encouraging news, this week begins with promise.

BRIEFLY: Cleary said he'd been told by Darren Helm that Helm wouldn't need surgery after suffering a broken left cheekbone during Friday's practice when he was hit by a puck.

Detroit Free Press LOADED: 11.06.2012

643722 Detroit Red Wings

Red Wings' Darren Helm won't need surgery on cheekbone

By Helene St. James

Detroit Red Wings forward Darren Helm appears to have escaped another round of surgery.

Helm suffered a fractured cheekbone when he was hit above the left side of his mouth by a puck Friday, but the damage is expected to heal on its own.

"He was waiting to find out if he needed surgery today and found out he didn't need it," teammate Danny Cleary said after an informal skate today in Troy.

Helm wasn't at today's practice, though Cleary joked that he had asked Helm why not. Were there a hockey season under way, Helm probably would play while wearing a cage. As it is, the NHL is in a lockout, and Helm should be recovered by the time any games begin.

Helm suffered a deep gash to his right forearm during last April's playoffs, necessitating surgery and weeks of rehabilitation.

"The hockey gods," good friend and teammate Todd Bertuzzi said, "are smacking him in the behind this year."

Detroit Free Press LOADED: 11.06.2012

643723 Detroit Red Wings

Red Wings' Danny Cleary: 'There's a lot of optimism' about NHL labor peace

By Helene St. James

Weekend talks between NHL and NHL Players Association deputies have left Detroit Red Wings forward Danny Cleary hopeful that there will be a 2012-13 season yet.

NHL second-in-command Bill Daly and his PA counterpart, Steve Fehr, met to try to make progress on a new collective bargaining agreement. The NHL has been shut down since Sept. 16, when owners locked out players.

The chief conflict is over how to split revenue and to ensure that players already under contract get the full amount of their deals. Details haven't emerged, but the NHL supposedly is willing to "make whole" existing contracts, a change in stance from last month.

"I think, any time that Steve and Bill are both saying the exact same thing, I think it's positive," Cleary said after an informal practice today in Troy. "There's a lot of optimism, I think, for sure."

Cleary reiterated what he said last week: The next three weeks, leading up to Thanksgiving, "are huge" for negotiations. If a deal emerges in that time frame, a 60-game schedule is feasible. Cleary said he had heard that the league still wants an 82-game schedule, but commissioner Gary Bettman had set a drop-dead date of Nov. 2 for that to occur.

Optimism has to be weighed against the fact that it only has been three days since the NHL canceled the 2013 Winter Classic in Ann Arbor, and the league hardly would have absorbed all the negative publicity from that if a deal were imminent. Furthermore, until Bettman and PA executive director Don Fehr are in the same room to talk shop, no deal will be done.

Still, Cleary said players feel more hope than last week.

"If you're negative, then no one is in a good mood," Cleary said. "You have to be as positive as you can until it's official. That's the outlook you've got to have. This is a good step this week, that's what I would say. But I would hate to be too 'yeah, yeah, this looks great, I think for sure there's going to be a season,' because if we don't = — the highs and lows are just too much, for both sides."

Detroit Free Press LOADED: 11.06.2012

643724 Detroit Red Wings

Two-minute drill: Midday update on Tigers, Lions, Wings, Pistons, U-M and MSII

Posted by James Jahnke

Welcome to our two-minute drill, which will give you a snapshot of what's going on with the Lions, Tigers, Red Wings, Pistons, Spartans and Wolverines each day.

- Lions: Hey, .500 doesn't seem so bad after starting 2-4. The Lions evened their record with Sunday's 31-14 win at Jacksonville. (Photos) Jeff Seidel says the visitors made it look easy. Dave Birkett handed out grades to the team. Mikel Leshoure, the star of the game, credited rookie Riley Reiff for shoring up the run game. Meanwhile, QB Matthew Stafford became the second-quickest in NFL history to amass 10,000 passing yards. Looking ahead, the Vikings will be tough -- as will the rest of the schedule. Jim Schwartz will hold his weekly news conference at 2:30 p.m.
- Wolverines: Brady Hoke will have his weekly news conference at 12:30 p.m. (updates here). Mark Snyder reflects on how impressive Devin Gardner's performance was in Saturday's win at Minnesota. (Photos) Here are three things we learned about the team Saturday. Maize-N-Brew tempers the excitement by pointing out how much the offense still needs Denard Robinson. Meanwhile, the basketball team plays its second and final exhibition tonight, against Saginaw Valley State (7 p.m.). Freshman Mitch McGary is pumped.
- Spartans: The Spartans (and Wolverines) today learned that their Nov. 17 games will kick off at noon and MSU punter Mike Sadler was named Big Ten special teams player of the week. MSU has a bye this week, which will give it time to regroup after Saturday's gut-wrenching loss to Nebraska. For some reason, the team just can't get its offense and defense going at the same time. Here are three other things we learned about the team Saturday. The Only Colors implores fans to stop complaining about Saturday's officiating. As far as basketball, coach Tom Izzo is speaking to the media today about Friday's season opener against UConn in Germany. (Updates here) And here are the uniforms the Spartans will wear in the game.
- Pistons: Still searching for their first win after Sunday night's lackluster 108-79 loss at the Lakers. (Photos) The Pistons' backups actually looked pretty good in the game. And is coaching in Tayshaun Prince's future?
- Tigers: We have grades for the 2012 season, as well as a look back at the high points by Jeff Seidel. As for the future, prospect Nick Castellanos fared well in the Arizona Fall League all-star game.
- Red Wings: Might there be a glimmer of hope in the NHL labor talks? To pass some of the time, why don't you vote in our Detroit sports presidential primary? And if you have any lockout thoughts you'd like to share, pop by Freep Sports Happy Hour at 4 p.m.

Detroit Free Press LOADED: 11.06.2012

643725 Detroit Red Wings

Detroit sports presidential primary votes are in!

Posted by James Jahnke

Which local athlete would make the best U.S. president? We'll find out soon enough.

Our Detroit sports presidential primary polls have closed, meaning six players -- one from each local team -- have moved on to the final election Tuesday.

Each team had five candidates on the primary ballot. The winners were: Detroit Tigers ace Justin Verlander (68%), Detroit Lions kicker Jason Hanson (55%), Michigan State linebacker Max Bullough (45%), Detroit Pistons veteran Tayshaun Prince (42%), Michigan safety Jordan Kovacs (37%) and presumptive Detroit Red Wings captain Henrik Zetterberg (32%).

Zetterberg edged goalie Jimmy Howard -- an American, to boot -- by a mere six votes.

Detroit Free Press LOADED: 11.06.2012

643726 Detroit Red Wings

Wings' Danny Cleary 'cautiously optimistic' about progress in NHL talks

By Ted Kulfan

Troy — One lesson learned through the NHL lockout is never get too high — or low

But judging from the vibe at a Red Wings workout Monday, it's hard not to be a little optimistic.

The NHL and Players Association are scheduled to meet again today after a weekend of apparent progress.

"There is a lot optimism to be sure," said Danny Cleary, the Red Wings coplayer representative. "Any time Steve (Fehr, the player association general counsel) and Bill (Daly, NHL deputy commissioner) are saying the same thing, it's a positive thing.

"For sure there's some optimism, there's some light. There's a ton of time to get a deal done."

The executive committee of the union held a conference call Monday to discuss where negotiations stand.

Donald Fehr, the union's executive director, and commissioner Gary Bettman were expected to attend today's talks in New York.

What gives the players a shred of hope is owners apparently are willing to honor their contracts in whole.

Owners have yet to put the proposal on paper, and the fact some of the money would be deferred could be a sticking point.

"We said all along we've agreed to get to a 50-50 revenue split, which is important for them," Cleary said. "Honoring contracts is pretty important for us. It's still a little tricky, but even if it's deferred and as long as guys' contracts are honored, that'll be the most important thing.

"This is a good step. But I would hate to say this looks great and there is going to be a season."

After the sides reach an agreement on making contracts whole, there are still other issues: owners want to cap contract lengths at five years, and revenue sharing, arbitration and issues with entry-level contracts have to be worked out

Cleary, however, expects those sticking points to be much less challenging.

"As a player, just talking with guys ... (they're) excited about what's going to happen (today)," he said. "It was a good step (last weekend)."

Two weeks ago, league officials canceled all games through Nov. 30.

Last week, the Winter Classic, scheduled for Jan. 1 at Michigan Stadium between the Maple Leafs and Red Wings, was iced.

No surgery needed

Darren Helm (fractured cheekbone) will not need surgery.

Helm was hurt when a deflected puck caught him flush on the fact during a workout last week.

Helm, who saw a specialist Monday, wouldn't miss any playing time if games were to begin in the near future.

"I asked him why he wasn't out here," Cleary said. "Put a cage on and let's go."

Detroit News LOADED: 11.06.2012

643727 Detroit Red Wings

Latest round of CBA talks fuels players' optimism that NHL season can be salvaged

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

TROY – Just days after the NHL canceled the Winter Classic, its premier event, a renewed optimism surfaced among players that the season can be salvaged.

They based this hope on positive dialogue over the weekend in a meeting between the second-in-command for both the NHL (deputy commissioner Bill Daly) and the NHL Players Association (special counsel Steve Fehr).

"There's a lot of optimism I think, for sure; anytime Steve and Bill are saying the exact same thing I think it's positive," Detroit Red Wings forward Danny Cleary said Monday. "We'll see today, but for sure there's some light.

"As a player, just talking amongst the guys today, definitely excited about seeing what's going to happen today. There's a ton of time to get a deal done, I still think there's a deal to be made."

The players union will have a conference call later this afternoon to discuss the latest developments, the most important of which is the NHL's willingness to make concessions on the "Make Whole" provision of its latest proposal.

The union has denounced the provision, saying it amounts to "players paying players." According to tsn.ca, the league amended the proposal to shift the cost from the players share over to the owners side.

"We said all along, we've agreed to get to a 50-50 split of revenue, which was important for them," Cleary said. "We've also said that honoring contracts is pretty important for us. And if they get rid of the Make Whole, then obviously their intent is to honor contracts.

"It's still a little tricky, but even if it's deferred, as long as guys get their contracts honored, that'll be the most important thing."

Cleary said once these main issues are resolved, the other points of contention (age for free agency, contract lengths, entry-level contracts, etc.) should not take long to settle.

"They're certainly not anything that will prevent the season from taking place," Cleary said.

Cleary also couched his comments by pointing out that there was much optimism heading into the most recent meeting between NHL commissioner Gary Bettman and NHLPA executive director Donald Fehr on Oct. 18. Hopes were quickly deflated after the league rejected three counterproposals from the union in just 10 minutes.

No formal proposals have been made since. Daly and Steve Fehr will talk again Tuesday in New York.

"It was a good step this week," Cleary said. "I would hate to come out and say, 'This looks great, for sure there's going to be a season.' "

But, he added, "You got to be as positive as you can until it's official either way."

The NHL on Friday canceled the Jan. 1 Winter Classic at Michigan Stadium between the Red Wings and Toronto Maple Leafs, postponing it until next season (if there is a labor deal in place).

The regular season still can start before Jan. 1 if a collective bargaining agreement is reached in time. The league has canceled all games through Nov. 30.

Michigan Live LOADED: 11.06.2012

643728 Detroit Red Wings

Red Wings' Darren Helm won't need surgery for fractured cheekbone

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

Helm saw a specialist Monday, after being hit by a deflected puck during an informal practice Friday at the Troy Sports Center.

"He found out he didn't need (surgery)," Cleary said. "Stitches, a little swollen up, no surgery, which is great.

"I asked him why is he not here today. Put a cage on, let's go."

Helm can play at any time, with a shield.

"He's feeling better, his pain meds are making him woozy," Cleary said.

Players' medical expenses are covered by the NHLPA during the lockout, incidentally.

Michigan Live LOADED: 11.06.2012

643729 Edmonton Oilers

Weekend lockout talks give Dubnyk hope a NHL deal can be reached

Oilers players rep 'cautiously optimistic' as NHL, players resume CBA negotiations Tuesday

By Jim Matheson, Edmonton Journal November 5, 2012

EDMONTON - After the lieutenants in the NHL-NHLPA lockout battle talked in secret on day last weekend, what are we take away from Bill Daly and Steve Fehr's seemingly harmonious discussion of the issues?

Is the first move toward détente?

Or is just that Daly, the NHL's deputy commissioner, and Fehr, special counsel for the National Hockey League Players' Association, seem to like each other's company a whole lot more than NHL commissioner Gary Bettman and Steve's older brother, Donald, NHLPA executive director?

Bettman, the point-man for the owners, and Donald Fehr, who does the players' bidding, probably would fight over Perrier or tap water if they were to sit down to a meal. But they're still the labour principals in this lockout soap opera, which is now into its second month.

However, the two sides will officially resume collective bargaining agreement (CBA) talks on Tuesday afternoon in New York. Bettman and Donald Fehr will likely be in attendance, so that quiet sit-down with Daly and Steve Fehr a few days ago was one small step on an icy slope.

"I'm cautiously optimistic ... hopefully this (Daly and Steve Fehr meeting) starts the ball rolling and they're willing to bargain," said Edmonton Oilers player representative Devan Dubnyk.

"This isn't something that's going to come together in a day or two, but as long as they find things we can agree on ... the take-it or leave-it (proposal from the owners) certainly wasn't productive."

The NHL has wiped out its marketing crown jewel, the outdoor Winter Classic at the University of Michigan's football stadium that was scheduled for New Year's Day.

The league could have made \$20 million off that game. That hurts. The players will be losing four paycheques with the cancellation of games through November, about one-third of their overall salary gone out the window. That's their pain.

So maybe both sides have taken their major hit, and it's finally time to talk turkey.

"We kind of heard that early on (that an agreement might come by the American Thanksgiving, Nov. 22). Hopefully, that's the case," said Dubnyk.

Could there be games in early December after a training camp? Could there be a 60-game season in which the NHL rejigs the schedule and teams only play games against conference opponents rather than everybody in an 82-game schedule?

That would be better than nothing.

If Daly and Steve Fehr worked well, it wouldn't be the first time the labour talks' second bananas got things going.

"The last time (lockout in 2004), the two deputies, Daly and (NHLPA) Ted Saskin seemed to make progress. I don't know where they were meeting back then? Fort Erie? Niagara Falls? But, they did a lot," said agent Steve Bartlett, who was on the short list to be NHLPA executive director before Bob Goodenow got the job.

Bettman and Goodenow were barely civil to one another during their labour battles

Bartlett, who represents Erik Cole and a score of high-end NHLers, doesn't know how to characterize the situation right now. But he did say "this is a big week."

The lockout will enter Day 52 when Tuesday's negotiations begin.

"They (Daly and Steve Fehr) talked for a long time. I guess that's a positive sign," said Bartlett.

As the two sides get towards the inevitable 50-50 split of hockey-related revenue, Bartlett knows the league has now offered to guarantee payment on all existing player contracts through deferred payments, out of the owners' pockets in the "make whole" provision. Three weeks ago, the deferred payments would have come out of the players' share of the 50-50 split of revenue. That was a non-starter.

"We saw that and that's something we want to hear," said Dubnyk. "But the thought that went through my head was ... 'yeah, that's good, if it's true. I'll hold judgment on that. It's not confirmed."

Bartlett doesn't feel the players should give into the player demands for changes to free agency and term length of contracts, among other things.

"Not if the players are already giving back dollars (they get 57 per cent of revenue now)," he said.

There are two major stumbling blocks. In published reports, Bettman said owners should no longer be able to count big performance clauses, which are often unattainable, as part of the players' salary when teams are scuffling to get to the salary-cap floor, which is currently \$16 million below the ceiling. That's an end-around for financially troubled teams to get to the floor.

Of course, the method of figuring out the salary-cap floor is flawed. The floor should probably be a percentage of the ceiling (say 65 per cent, for example, of the current \$70 million) which would be \$45 million every team has to spend, not \$54 million.

The league has also said that all player salaries over \$105,000 in the minors should count against the NHL team's salary cap.

"That would set a ceiling on salaries," said Bartlett, who has several clients playing in the American Hockey League.

Dubnyk totally agrees.

"It artificially caps the American League guys' earning ability," said Dubnyk. "If that happens, you'll lose quality guys to Europe."

NHL teams routinely sign players to \$105,000, but that's because that's the figure allowed for a player to return to the NHL without clearing waivers. But take Oilers' AHL farmhand goalie Yann Danis, for example. He makes \$275,000 to play with the Oklahoma City Barons because he's a premium AHL player, He would earn \$800,000 if he plays in Edmonton.

If Bettman's \$105,000 mandate went through, would there be any players like Danis making big minor-league dough?

Edmonton Journal: LOADED: 11.06.2012

643730 Edmonton Oilers

Oilers' Peckham signs in ECHL

Locked-out blueliner heads to minor-league San Francisco to play

By Jim Matheson, Edmonton Journal November 5, 2012

EDMONTON - The ECHL has become a refuge for locked-out NHLers looking for work — not very much money but a welcome mat — and now, you can Theo Peckham to the list.

The Edmonton Oilers' defenceman has signed with the San Francisco Bulls, an affiliate of the the San Jose Sharks, joining Columbus Blue Jackets centre Brandon Dubinsky and Tampa Bay Lightning centre Nate Thompson (Alaska) and Minnesota Wild winger Devin Setoguchi (Ontario, Calif.) in the league that sits a tier below the American Hockey League. Ottawa Senators defenceman Marc Methot might also be joining the group.

"My first game on Wednesday is against Ontario. I'm sure I'll chase him (Setoguchi) around a bit," said Peckham, who will be playing out of the famous Cow Palace, the Bay Area arena the Sharks called home their first couple of NHL seasons until their building was ready in San Jose. "I might be losing money down there having to pay my insurance, but I want to make sure (to get some playing time in) if the NHL starts up. This is a huge year for me, and I want to make sure I'm ready to go when (the NHL) starts gain.

"It'll give me time to work on a different side of my game. Like moving the puck a lot faster. I'm still trying to find it," chuckled Peckham, who is going to San Francisco because he knows coach-GM Pat Curico,

"We exchanged a couple of facebook messages and when the NHL cancelled all the games in November I decided to pull the trigger on it."

He didn't consider Europe like teammates centre Sam Gagner (Klagenfurt) and defenceman Corey Potter (Vienna), who are playing in Austria.

"There are not a lot of opportunities for grinder types like me over there ... I don't think there ever will be unless there's injuries," he said.

Peckham, who went through a boot camp this summer with Norm Lacombe, the personal trainer and former Oilers' winger, was 226 pounds at last report.

"Hardest thing I've ever done. Normie pushed me pretty good. He got me to a level of fitness I'd never had before," said Peckham, who is in a dog-fight for one of the third pairing defence spots after sitting out several games down the stretch last year, in part because of a concussion but also because he wasn't measuring up to former coach Tom Renney.

ON THE BENCH — The Oilers down in Oklahoma City didn't get any preferential treatment this past weekend. Jordan Eberle played three games in three days (two at home and one in San Antonio) and Eberle, Ryan Nugent-Hopkins and Taylor Hall were all on the bus for a seven-hour ride through the night last Saturday, trying to grab some shut-eye in sleeper bunks. Hall and RNH played only two games on the weekend. Justin Schultz, who had his nine-game point streak end in San Antonio, played all three games.

Edmonton Journal: LOADED: 11.06.2012

643731 Edmonton Oilers

Jack Michaels...tour director

Jim Matheson

Edmonton Oilers' radio voice Jack Michaels used to work in Alaska, in Anchorage, as the team's play-by-play man, PR director, team services guy. You're all purpose in the minors, Michaels had to sell his own ads for the broadcasts, too.

I believe he had one for a local funeral home that sponsored the, uh, penalty kill.

But Michaels never had to be a host on a bus trip. Until now. With the lockout into its second month, Michaels will get a road trip, on the bus, not an Oilers' charter. Thirteen hours from Telus Field to Abbotsford, B.C. Thursday, watch two AHL Oklahoma City Barons' games, then pile back on the iron lung for the long trip home. There's still bus seats available (414-GOAL, \$299, transportation, tickets, hotel room) if you're interested in watching that new kid on the block, Justin Schultz, or you want a taste of RNH, Taylor Hall and Jordan Eberle in the minors against Calgary Flames' farm club, but for Michaels this is something new.

No play-by-play, but at least he'll see some games.

"I think my wife got together with (Oilers' team president) Patrick LaForge on this one," joked Michaels, who knows his better half is probably looking to get him out of her hair and out the house. "Longest bus ride I think I've

ever been on is 5 1/2 hours. In Anchorage we flew just about everywhere. Longest trip was to Fresno (Calif.)."

The Barons' booster bus leaves at 11 at night, so there might not be a lot of schmoozing time for Michaels and fans (people might want to sleep, right, even if Molsons is sponsoring the trip and there might be a few beverages on board). But Michaels is a hail-thee-well kind of guy, who likes to talk. But he'd probably rather be in a radio booth doing his NHL gig. He was working in Anchorage during the last lockout in 2004, where local boy Scott Gomez came back to play (61 games, 83 points). Now, NHLers Brandon Dubinsky (nine games, 11 points), Joey Crabb (eight games, seven points) and Nate Thompson (nine games, five points) are playing for the ECHL Aces while Gomez is hanging around. Michaels loved his time in Alaska, and he loves his NHL work, although he hasn't cleared his throat since last April.

"It's nice to have a job you really miss doing...not everybody can say that," said Michaels, who is still getting paid during the lockout, but has no games to call

Michaels has been following Dubinsky (Columbus), Crabb (Washington) and Thompson (Tampa) during the lockout. He has no idea what they're making, but the team weekly payroll is "11 grand." Michaels says Gomez made \$500 a week during the last lockout. "Maybe Dubinsky, Crabb and Thompson are getting \$600, \$700 a week. I know one thing, everybody from Anchorage wants to come back. I'm sure they're heroes playing there. NHLers come back to Anchorage to fish in the summers. There's 275,000 people in Anchorage but it feels like 8,000. When you're done playing, whatever line of work you want to get into there, you can do it," said Michaels.

Edmonton Journal: LOADED: 11.06.2012

643732 Edmonton Oilers

No special treatment for Oilers in OKCity

Jim Matheson

Jordan Eberle, Ryan Nugent-Hopkins and Taylor Hall were all tucked into their beds for the seven-hour bus ride from Oklahoma City to San Antonio Saturday night into the wee hours of Sunday morning. Last time I looked, there were no sleeper bunks on NHL charters when the Oilers were leaving, say, Dallas and flying to Nashville last November in a back-to-back game situation. Or when they played an October home game on a Thursday and flew from here to Denver after the game and played that night.

No special treatment for the Oiler forwards who are down in the American League. In fact, Eberle played Friday and Saturday nights in OKCity, as well as the late afternoon game in San Antonio. Three games in about 69 hours. RNH and Hall played just two of the three. Justin Schultz, who leads the AHL in scoring and had his nine-game point streak end in San Antonio, also played all three games, but then he's a rookie pro, not to mention the Barons' best defenceman. As it was, Barons' coach Todd Nelson chose to sit defenceman Alex Plante for the Texas game and play raw rook Teigan Zahn, who played last year for the U of Calgary Dinos and started the season in Stockton, the Oilers's ECHL farm club. Nelson played Zahn and Dan Ringwald in San Antonio rather than Plante, actually.

At what point is Plante's agent going to call up Oilers' GM Steve Tambellini and plead for a trade when the NHL lockout ends. Plante, in his fourth year in the AHL, has been a healthy scratch four of the Barons' 10 games. If you were to list the Oilers depth chart on defence, you would have Plante no higher than 12th. Ryan Whitney, Ladislav Smid, Jeff Petry, Nick Schultz, Justin Schultz, Andy Sutton, Theo Peckham, Corey Potter, Colten Teubert, Martin Marincin and Taylor Fedun, playing with a face-shield in the minors, because of a fractured bone, and are ahead of Plante right now. Teubert, for one, has been very good the last half-dozen games on the farm, fighting and keeping his end of the ice tidy; Peckham probably has look over his shoulder at him. And before doctors discovered testicular cancer with first-year farmhand D-man Brandon Davidson, he, too, had played more games (seven) than Plante has.

The Oilers wouldn't get much for the former first-round draft–scouts notice his footspeed issues, even if he's trimmer than he used to be, and the fact he's coming off two concussions last season–but Plante has been a good

soldier, fighting, playing physical in the minors. He deserves a chance to play in another organization, no matter what the Oilers could retrieve for him

The other burning question in the minors is Anton Lander. He missed the three weekend games when he got sick after eating something he shouldn't have, but in the six farm games he's played, he's just been another number on the ice. He doesn't have a single point on the season. Right now, it appears Nelson likes Tanner House better at centre, same with Chris VandeVelde. Lander is likely going to be a fourth-line NHL centre, if he makes it. He's still young (21), but he played three years in the Swedish Elite League, and put up numbers. In the AHL, a better league, but not way better, there is absolutely no juice to Lander's game. In 34 games in OKCity, including the playoffs last spring, he has nine points.

This must have the Oilers' management scratching their heads.

Edmonton Journal: LOADED: 11.06.2012

643733 Florida Panthers

Panthers coach Dineen to give hockey tips to local youth groups

Panthers coach Kevin Dineen, making the most of his forced time off during the NHL owner's lockout, will join Fox Sports Florida TV analyst Billy Lindsay and offer hockey instruction to local youth groups at the annual meal & skate dinner at Savology.com Iceplex on Thursday from 6-8 p.m.

Team mascot Stanley C. Panther will join the festivities along with invited children from H.A.N.D.Y., Henderson Behavioral Health and Jessica June Children's Cancer Foundation. All children and their families will receive a complimentary meal from Duffy's Sports Grill. This is not open to the public.

-Harvey Fialkov

Sun Sentinel LOADED: 11.06.2012 643734 Montreal Canadiens

Tournée des Joueurs raises \$400,000

By Pat Hickey, The Gazette November 5, 2012

MONTREAL — The news release said La Tournée des Joueurs would take "une pause indeterminée." However, organizers Max Talbot and Bruno Gervais admitted Monday that the barnstorming tour by locked-out National Hockey League players had run out of steam, but not before raising more than \$400,000 for a variety of charities.

"We have standards and we want to maintain the quality of the product on the ice and the events around it so that it would be a great experience for the fans," Talbot said at a news conference at the Resto Frango in the Plateau. "We have a small group of volunteers who followed us around who have real jobs and it was getting hard for them and it was getting hard to maintain the number of players we needed so that we have a good game."

With a core group of Canadiens and other players with Quebec roots, Talbot and Gervais had no trouble putting lineups together at the start.

"We had Hal Gill come in from Nashville and guys were driving down from Toronto," Gervais said.

But, as the lockout continued, players like Patrice Bergeron, David Desharnais and Lars Eller headed to Europe.

Talbot said it might have been possible to book a few more arenas, but "we didn't want to make a promise to go somewhere and not have enough players to have a good show. We didn't want to have a soft game."

Said Gervais: "We're extremely proud of what we did with the players' tour. It started with a small idea from Max and me and there was a snowball effect and it grew pretty fast."

By the time the tour made its final two stops last month in Saguenay, the players had visited nine cities and towns. With the exception of a game in

the cavernous Colisée Pepsi in Quebec City, the players drew a standing-room-only crowd at each stop.

I attended four of the games and enjoyed each one. There was no hitting, but there was lots of hard skating and a surprising competitiveness in a faux rivalry between teams representing Montreal and Quebec City. There were competent renditions of O Canada — my favourite was an elementary school choir in Drummondville — and bilingual public-address announcers. Minor teams skated with the pros between periods, and when they ran out of room for the opening game in Châteauguay, the players went outside and signed autographs for those who couldn't get tickets. Fans who normally wouldn't be able to afford to see an NHL game were able to get up close and personal for \$20.

Talbot said the tour had three goals, and he felt it achieved all of them.

"With the lockout, we wanted to provide the players with a chance to stay in shape and play games with some structure," he said. "We also wanted to give something back to the fans who are frustrated by the lockout and we wanted to raise money for charity."

Gervais and Talbot are old hands at that game. The long-time friends and Philadelphia Flyers teammates lend their name to a golf tournament each summer and have raised \$350,000 for the Foundation Gervais-Talbot.

On Monday, the two announced that 25 groups will share \$402,527 from La Tournée des Joueurs. The main beneficiaries are the Ronald McDonald Foundation, the Canadian Tire Head Start Foundation, the Foundation Gervais-Talbot, and Les Petits Tresors, a group that assists autistic children and their families. The tour also donated money to 21 groups in the nine cities they visited.

Gervais and Talbot said the core group of players in the Montreal area will continue skating while labour negotiations continue. They said talks between the NHL's Bill Daly and Stephen Fehr of the players' association were encouraging.

"They talked until 1 a.m. and we had an email update from Don Fehr," Talbot said. "Don Fehr warned us earlier that it's going to be a roller-coaster ride with ups and downs and we have to believe in the process."

Added Gervais: "There's a deal to be done, but it has to be fair for both sides. We don't want to sign a deal and then find ourselves in the same situation down the line ... it doesn't make sense. At least we're starting to talk the same language."

Montreal Gazette LOADED: 11.06.2012

643735 Montreal Canadiens

Labour talks to resume on Tuesday

Posted by Stu Cowan

The NHL and the players' association agreed on Monday to resume labour talks Tuesday following a weekend session with NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly and NHLPA special counsel Steve Fehr. It was the first meeting between the two sides since Oct. 18.

Monday marked Day 51 of the lockout.

The Associated Press reported Monday afternoon that it wasn't known if Tuesday's bargaining session would be conducted by just Daly and Fehr or if a larger group — perhaps including NHL commissioner Gary Bettman and NHLPA executive director Donald Fehr — would also take part.

No new formal proposals were made on the weekend, but it is believed the issue of payments of existing player contracts was a big part of the discussions.

"I'm not in a position to talk substance about agenda or expectations," Daly wrote Tuesday in an email to The Associated Press.

You can read more by clicking here.

Philadelphia Flyers teammates Max Talbot and Bruno Gervais, who organized La Tournée des Joeurs, announced Monday that the barnstorming tour across Quebec by locked-out NHLers was finished, but not before raising more than \$400,000 for a variety of charities.

"We have a small group of volunteers who followed us around who have real jobs and it was getting hard for them and it was getting hard to maintain the number of players we needed so that we have a good game," Talbot said at a news conference announcing the tour was over.

You can read Pat Hickey's column from the news conference by clicking

Meanwhile, the Florida Panthers, trying to keep their season-seat holders happy during the lockout, offered them 50 per cent off the price of tickets for The Who concert that was held on Nov. 1 at the BB&T Center.

Montreal Gazette LOADED: 11.06.2012

643736 Montreal Canadiens

Bulldogs' Gallagher helps fight prostate cancer

Posted by Stu Cowan

Hamilton Bulldogs forward Brendan Gallagher will donate \$250 for every Bulldogs win and \$20 for every Vancouver Giants victory during the month of November to the Canadian Cancer Society for prostate cancer research.

"One of my favourite memories as a kid was seeing my grandpa in the stands at my hockey games," Gallagher said. "After the game he would give me \$20 and I would run to the concession stands and buy popcorn for \$5 and bring the other \$15 home."

In addition to the \$250 being donated after every Bulldogs win, Gallagher will donate \$20 for every Vancouver Giants win in the month of November in memory of his grandfather.

"I am proud that in my last two seasons in junior with the Giants, I was able to help raise \$15,000 for prostate cancer research and I hope to continue to raise money in honour of my grandfather", Gallagher said.

In eight games with the Bulldogs this season, Gallagher has three goals and three assists. The 5-foot-9, 182-pound forward was the Canadiens' fifth-round pick (147th overall) at the 2010 NHL entry draft.

Fans who want to help Gallagher raise money for prostate cancer research can

The Bulldogs play their next game at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday at home against the Syracuse Crunch, a game that will be televised by TVA Sports and will also be available on TSN Radio 690. On Friday, the Bulldogs and Crunch will meet again at the Bell Centre in a 7:30 p.m. start.

In other Bulldogs' news, forward Louis Leblanc says he should be back on skates "pretty soon."

"The ankle is healing well," Leblanc told The Gazette on Monday. "And I'm excited to be back with the team." $\,$

Leblanc was injured on Oct. 20 in a game against the Toronto Marlies.

Meanwhile, The Gazette's Dave Stubbs has a column on Abe Hefter, the popular voice of CJAD Radio, who suffered a heart attack on Oct. 27, joining Stubbs as brothers in the Cardiac Club. Stubbs suffered a heart attack 10 years ago.

Hefter, who is now back home, jokes it is an upper-body injury that will keep him out of his station's lineup for four to six weeks.

Montreal Gazette LOADED: 11.06.2012

643737 New Jersey Devils

NHL labor negotiations to continue Tuesday with hope of building off weekend momentum

The Associated Press By The Associated Press

NEW YORK -- The NHL and the players' association are returning to the bargaining table Tuesday, hoping momentum generated over the weekend can lead to a long-awaited labor deal.

The sides held negotiations Saturday, the first since Oct. 18, in an undisclosed location and made enough progress to want to talk again just days later. They will get back together Tuesday in New York.

It wasn't determined yet today who would take part in the talks. Saturday's were conducted by just NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly and union special counsel Steve Fehr. Tuesday could involve a larger group, including Commissioner Gary Bettman and NHLPA executive director Donald Fehr.

The lockout entered its 51st day Monday. So far, 327 games -- including the outdoor Winter Classic -- have been called off, and the NHL says a full season won't be played.

Star Ledger LOADED: 11.06.2012 643738 New Jersey Devils

NHL sides continuing talks give reason for optimism

By TOM GULITTI

A feeling of reserved optimism hangs in the air as representatives from the NHL and the NHL Players' Association prepare to meet today in New York.

Following a lengthy series of discussions Saturday between NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly and NHLPA special counsel Steve Fehr at an undisclosed, neutral site, the sides will get back together today in a larger group with the possibility of it leading to continued negotiations throughout the week.

It is unclear whether NHL commissioner Gary Bettman and NHLPA executive director Don Fehr will participate in today's meeting, which will come on the 52nd day of the owners' lockout.

Few details have emerged about what was discussed during Saturday's meeting — the first face-to-face discussion since Oct. 18 — other than it focused on the core economic issues. Both Daly and Steve Fehr put out statements in which they expressed hope of it leading to further dialogue, but have said nothing otherwise.

It is believed the league has offered to guarantee payment of the players' existing contracts – a major bone of contention – through deferred payments for which the owners would be responsible. In the "make whole" provision of the NHL's Oct. 16 proposal, the deferred payments still would have counted against the players' share of a 50-50 split of hockey-related revenue.

Now, that money apparently would come from the owners' share.

The players received an update on the proceedings during a conference call with union leadership late Monday afternoon.

Devils backup goaltender Johan Hedberg admitted he's been a bit out of the loop in the past week. Like many in New Jersey, his home lost power during Hurricane Sandy and he did not get it back until Sunday night.

Still, he remains hopeful that talks eventually can lead to a deal that would salvage the season.

"I'm always optimistic something good is going to happen," said Hedberg, who sat in on two negotiating sessions last month. "It's been a pretty slow week, and that's hard. So, hopefully, it's going to pick up again, and we can get to some common ground."

The NHL already has canceled its regular season schedule through Nov. 30, wiping out roughly one quarter of the games. Devils goaltender Martin Brodeur believes because now that there is no chance of playing 82 games and the Winter Classic also has been canceled, it might allow the sides to have more honest communication.

"There's a lot of positives, but again there were a lot of positives a couple of weeks ago, and everything fell apart," said Brodeur, who still has no power in his home following Sandy.

GAME ON: Devils general manager Lou Lamoriello said the Albany Devils' Nov. 25 American Hockey League game against Wilkes-Barre/Scranton will

be played at Atlantic City's Boardwalk Hall as scheduled. Lamoriello said he was told "everything's all right" with Boardwalk Hall after Sandy caused significant flooding and damage in Atlantic City.

Bergen Record LOADED: 11.06.2012

643739 New Jersey Devils

Ice hockey: NHL talks prove positive

By TOM GULITTI

After several false starts, the NHL and its players finally might have found some traction in negotiations on a new collective bargaining agreement.

The sides still have a lot of work to do to hammer out a deal that would end the owners' lockout, which is now in its 51st day. There appeared to be some reason for hope, however, after lengthy discussions Saturday between NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly and NHL Players' Association special counsel Steve Fehr. The meetings, which were held at an undisclosed location and focused on the pivotal core economic issues, began in the afternoon and stretched beyond midnight.

It was the first time representatives from each side met face to face since talks broke down following a meeting in Toronto on Oct. 18.

Daly and Fehr put out statements Sunday that were reserved but generally positive and they plan to meet again in the next few days – likely in a larger group at the NHL's offices in New York.

"We had a series of meetings over the course of the day and had a good, frank discussion on the most important issues separating us," Daly said in his statement.

"I agree with what Bill said," Fehr's statement said. "Hopefully we can continue the dialogue, expand the group, and make steady progress."

Few details of what Daly and Fehr discussed in their meeting leaked to the media, which also could be viewed as a potential positive.

Prior to the meeting, it was reported that the NHL offered to have the owners cover the deferred payments that were the key to the "make whole" element of their Oct. 16 proposal. In that proposal, the NHL offered a 50-50 split of hockey-related revenue over a six-year term (with a mutual option for a seventh year) and full payment of the players' current contracts, but by using deferred payments that would still be counted against the players' share of the 50-50 split.

The league already has canceled the regular-season schedule through Nov. 30 and announced Friday the cancellation of the Jan. 1 Winter Classic outdoor game between Detroit and Toronto at Michigan Stadium.

Bergen Record LOADED: 11.06.2012

643740 New York Islanders

Islanders' DiPietro: Not hurt in Germany

By BRETT CYRGALIS

Maybe it was the fact that it was so believable gave a false rumor some legs.

Islanders goalie Rick DiPietro yesterday denied a report by a German newspaper that he has a groin injury and told The Post it was "not true at all "

"I'm feeling good," DiPietro wrote in a text message, "and I'm looking forward to the next game."

On Oct. 10, DiPietro signed with SC Riessersee of Germany's second division while NHL players remain locked out by the owners. On Friday, after Riessersee beat Beilbronner Falken, 4-3, it was reported in the Munchner Merkur newspaper (via Google translate) DiPietro was suffering

from a groin strain. DiPietro did not play in that game, and according to Riessersee's website, has played in one game and given up three goals.

"I'm great," DiPietro responded, "and really enjoying Garmisch!"

A groin injury started DiPietro's downward spiral last season, paving the way for the discovering of a sports hernia and a surgery that ended his season after just eight games.

In 2006, DiPietro signed a 15-year, \$67.5 million contract, and in the past four seasons has played a total of 47 games due to an assortment of injuries.

The Islanders announced two weeks ago they will move from Nassau Coliseum, their home since the inaugural season of 1972, to the \$1 billion Barclays Center in Brooklyn in 2015.

New York Post LOADED: 11.06.2012

643741 New York Rangers

NHL owners, players entering make-or-break week to end lockout and save 2012-13 season

NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

Will there be an NHL season? We should know by the end of the week.

The NHL and its players' union will decide this week whether to play or cancel the 2012-13 season.

That is my opinion, at least.

This is not to say Friday is the deadline for a completed collective bargaining agreement; just that failure to make significant progress towards a deal by then would shut down negotiations again, probably this time for good.

Representatives from the NHL and players' association will meet on Tuesday in New York City, with the hope that one meeting will become two, and two will become three. They would like to avoid a catastrophe like their last large-group negotiating session, on Oct. 18 in Toronto, which lasted only an hour, featured the NHL declining three union proposals, prompted a 15-day standoff in talks, and resulted in the cancellation of all games through Nov. 30 and the Winter Classic on New Year's Day.

Only back-channel communication between NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly and NHLPA special counsel Steve Fehr has kept the process alive, leading to a verbal exchange last Tuesday that created the first real optimism since this lockout began on Sept. 16.

In a conversation first reported by TSN, Daly made it known to Fehr that the league's 30 owners would be willing to honor all current player contracts by funding the NHL's 'Make Whole' provision with their own cash, instead of using money from the players' collective revenue share in future seasons, as the league had originally proposed on Oct. 16.

Since the NHL and union already have agreed to move from their 57-43 players' share of revenue to a 50-50 split in their new collective bargaining agreement (CBA), the issue of honoring player contracts represents the largest hurdle preventing hockey from hitting the ice.

Everyone is aware of how significant a step last Tuesday's conversation could turn out to be, so the level of sensitivity in the offices of both the NHL and NHLPA is heightened.

Players' union executive director Don Fehr wrote in a memo to players published by CBC that they "should not read too much into media reports about informal phone calls," seemingly trying to keep public player reaction to a minimum – or control their perception of the proposal, depending on whom you ask.

On Saturday, Steve Fehr and Daly met in a secret location for hours on end and only released brief statements afterwards, avoiding the public relations gamesmanship that has marked this lockout mess and proved counterproductive.

There is a strong chance that again this week, instead of updating the media daily with individual interviews as has been the protocol, both the NHL and NHLPA will make a concerted effort to limit their public comments

to prevent a war of words outside the negotiating room from affecting the dialogue within it.

Tuesday's meeting is expected to include both Fehr brothers, Daly and commissioner Gary Bettman, and perhaps owners and players, as well. If not in the same room, some owners and players still are traveling to New York to be on hand for discussion before and after Tuesday's negotiation, including Rangers player representative Marty Biron.

The union's objective on Tuesday, it would seem, will be first to assess whether the owners intend to honor player contracts in full, as Daly's informal proposal indicated. If the players find the owners' pledge to be genuine, that would not seal the deal, but it would lay the strongest foundation for compromise on any remaining issues that has existed in this lockout.

"The 'Make Whole' provision is one issue, and obviously it's core economics, and it's always going to be a big issue, but there's a lot more to talk about, like player contracting rights and a few other things," Biron told the Daily News from his home in Buffalo on Monday. "There's a lot to cover, but I think every time there are meetings after a layoff where there were no meetings, there's always optimism in the air – though I think everyone's got to be cautious again."

There is room for negotiation on other issues, too, though – the NHL is not requiring the union to accept the entire remainder of its proposal if it agrees to the new 'Make Whole' format. Certainly, for example, the NHL's proposed cap on contract lengths of five years – when they are unlimited now – will not fly. The league has to know that. It's not conducive to building and sustaining a team.

The bargaining will never reach that point, however, if the league and union are not first satisfied with the core economics. The league cannot move any further on the money than by guaranteeing player contracts. That is why this I believe this week is make-or-break.

"I do not think that is the case," one player disagreed in an interview with the Daily News on Monday. "I think that the week for that would be some time in December. I believe players are happy to see that we are back at the table, but we are still looking for a fair deal."

But by December, more games would be cancelled and the season would be nearing a repeat of the 48-game schedule played in 1994-95, if there were any season at all. The way these negotiations have progressed, if the stoppage lasted into January, neither side would seem eager to suddenly cave on principle after losing so much revenue.

"We might be at that point, but I'm not sure yet," Biron said of whether this week is make-or-break. "The way it goes in the next few days will give us a good idea of that, but I'm not sure."

This feels like the week.

New York Daily News LOADED: 11.06.2012

643742 New York Rangers

NHL season on thin ice at meeting today

By LARRY BROOKS

If the NHL comes to the table today representing its plan to assume some portion of the "make-whole" on players' existing contracts as a concession rather than an obligation, then the owners' lockout is doomed to continue and as likely as not to doom the 2012-13 season in its entirety.

The spirit in which the league's ambiguous plan regarding this essential element of any agreement is presented will be almost as important as the relevant arithmetic.

Paying full value on a contract is a responsibility, not a quid-pro-quo item to be used to hold the players and the season hostage.

If the NHL's willingness to pay 100 cents on the dollar — or the historical norm as relates to escrow — is dependent upon the NHLPA yielding on essential systemic issues, then the renewed hope of conciliation generated by Saturday's sit-down between league second Bill Daly and union second Steve Fehr will prove illusory.

There is no time for bait and switch. There is no more time for posturing. The players have yielded and are yielding in a negotiation that has been all about givebacks all of the time. The players will go to 50/50 even though the NHL never quite has presented a justification for the drop-down — beyond the famous fallback for parents, teachers, coaches and persons of authority: "Because I said so!"

There is a window here on Sixth Avenue as the parties convene for the first time since Canceler-in-Chief Gary Bettman huffed out of an Oct. 18 meeting in Toronto after no more than 10 minutes. It is a window in which a principled resolution to make-whole should serve as the foundation of peace with honor.

Is this now or never? Maybe not, but it's difficult to envision a settlement if talks this week collapse, and it is impossible to envision a settlement if talks collapse because of an absence of trust between the parties. No one requires another couple of pages flipping off the 2012 calendar. Everyone understands what is at stake.

There is work to be done beyond make-whole. Given that there will not be a full season, the parties will have to agree on a cap number for 2013-14. The NBA cap for this full season is the same as it was last year for its 66-game lockout-truncated season. There is the precedent for the NHL and Basketball Bettman.

Several individuals have told us the league will be willing to negotiate off its proposed five-year contract term limit and 5-percent variance on annual salary, though the NHL does seem committed to increasing unrestricted free agency requirements by a year in experience and/or age, to eight years and/or 28, and likely will dig in on its proposed Entry Level changes.

The AHL provision and the punitive retroactive punishment regarding front-loaded long-term contracts previously registered by the league are as much team issues as NHLPA issues, both restrictions aimed at the heart of successful big-market teams and aimed at the offices of general managers who from time to time make mistakes.

But surely differences in those areas can be bridged. Surely not even Bettman would be willing to cancel a season so he can punish the Rangers for signing Wade Redden and punish the Devils into perpetuity for Ilya Kovalchuk.

This is the time. This is the place. A season is on the brink. If the league's make-whole isn't half, well, you know, there is no reason for this lockout to continue.

But if the offer is, ah, disingenuous, then peace with honor will be out of reach and the parties might as well return to a winter of arguing over the shape of the table.

New York Post LOADED: 11.06.2012

643743 New York Rangers

NHL CBA talks to resume Tuesday

Monday November 5, 2012 11:41 AM By Steve Zipay

As the weather in New York gets colder, it seems as if there's a thaw in the CBA talks. How much warmer it gets in Gary Bettman-Steve Fehr territory has yet to be determined.

I'm hearing that some players and owners have told their negotiators to cut the best deal possible as soon as possible. We'll see how serious they can get. I'm not sure any deal is imminent; progress would be noteworthy.

If the sides forge an agreement on dividing revenues and existing contracts, the second-tier issues, as important as they may seem, should be more negotiable than the biggies in order to stop the bleeding, get the puck dropped by Dec. 1, and begin a 60-62-64 game season.

But I've misread this before, although I knew there would be a lockout. Never really expected two weeks of silence while Rome burned. That was petulant.

So cross your fingers, those of you who aren't too embittered by the business, and speaking of cross, please donate to the Red Cross or other charities to help our struggling neighbors on Long Island, in

Brooklyn/Queens, on Staten Island, and at the Jersey shore. Count your blessings.

Will be covering the talks as necessary, so please stay safe and warm and tuned in...

Newsday LOADED: LOADED: 11.06.2012

643744 NHL

NHL lockout: Players, owners still far apart: source

Kevin McGran

With optimism rising that a deal to save the NHL season could be within reach, a player on the NHLPA bargaining committee told the Star the sides were still quite far apart.

The player, who requested anonymity, said the league still hasn't put anything on paper regarding what appears to be the make-or-break issue: that owners pay players their salaries in full.

"If the league wants to take responsibility (for player contracts) in this 'make whole' thing then we have something to talk about," the player told the Star.

"We'll see. We've see a lot of b.s. in this process so far. If the owners do take responsibility, then there's movement. But the way this thing has gone so far, we (the players) wouldn't be surprised if they don't.

"Right now there's nothing on paper. Hopefully (Tuesday) we see something on paper and we go from there."

More:

Damien Cox's view

As talks to save the NHL season reach a critical stage — the sides were set to meet Tuesday in New York — the cone of silence that has descended upon them had been seen as a sign of hope.

"I think that's the first positive sign that there's some movement towards trying to find a solution, that maybe something could be done without costing the season," said Buzz Hargrove, former president of the CAW and ex-ombudsman of the NHLPA.

"I can see talks are more urgent," said George Smith, a labour lecturer at Queen's University and former management-side negotiator. "They've each fired off their cannons. Players are in Europe. The owners cancelled the Winter Classic.

"It's like: 'Wow, we've run out of ammunition. We better see if we can do this.'

Donald Fehr, executive director of the NHL Players Association, held an afternoon conference call with players on Monday, his second in two days, as he tried to temper enthusiasm and explain what was going on.

Fehr and his brother Steve, the union's special counsel, were expected in New York on Tuesday for face-to-face bargaining with representatives of the league. Whether the two Fehrs would be in the same room as commissioner Gary Bettman and his deputy, Bill Daly, remained to be seen.

Daly and Steve Fehr, the PA's chief legal counsel, may have made a breakthrough in marathon talks on the weekend. The NHL moved its position closer to that of the players, appearing ready to have owners foot more of the bill to make sure players with contracts get all their money.

The bigwigs kept a low profile. There were no shots of rhetoric aimed across each other's bow.

"It's probably a good thing that Bettman has stepped back, probably wise given all the noise around the Winter Classic," said Smith. "Instead of airing each other's dirty laundry, the conversation seemed to be around progress."

"If this round is serious and if it's not successful, then you really are looking at some version of Armageddon for them both."

Some media companies, including the Star, plan to camp outside NHL headquarters in New York to report on progress. Others are holding back. Smith and Hargrove, both veteran negotiators used to reading the tea

leaves, say resolution often comes quickly once the first peace agreement is reached.

"I think we have a chance," said Smith. "You're talking days, not weeks or months. It's not like they don't know what the issues are. It's not like they don't know where they stand. There's a lot of things that can go wrong.

"But if people of good faith decide they want to get this deal done, they'll get it done."

Hargrove had circled Nov. 15 as the most likely date for some sort of resolution.

"I would still think that's probably a good date, if these are serious discussions," said Hargrove, "and I view them as serious."

Pittsburgh Penguins star Sidney Crosby is taking a wait-and-see approach.

"I'm more confident (now) because there is dialogue and that's good," Crosby told the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review. "Nothing, I don't think, got settled (over the weekend) as far as a clear-cut issue. They've talked about it, agreed to a meeting this week and that's good. You kind of don't want to read into anything."

Toronto Star LOADED: 11.06.2012

643745 NHL

NHL lockout: If it's November, it means serious negotiations are finally under way: Cox

By Damien Cox Sports Columnist

It has just seemed too scripted. Since like, May.

There was always going to be a NHL lockout and there was never going to be hockey in October and November. Neither side in the NHL labour battled "wanted" it that way, but only if the solution was that they got a slam-dunk victory dropped in their laps in August or September. Both said repeatedly they wanted the season to start on time, but neither the owners nor the players did anything much to make that happen.

The owners offered up a shocking initial proposal that would have pushed the NHL Players' Association back 20 years. The union just basically declined to participate in the process by a peculiar form of passive aggressiveness.

Why did both sides do it the way they did it? Well, the NHL had two major factors motivating its approach. First, they had their backs up with Don Fehr. After dealing with years of union dysfunction and chaos — there were times when they literally had no idea who to contact in the NHLPA offices — they were frustrated to have to deal with Fehr, who they saw from the beginning as a person who wouldn't be able to close.

Second, labour resolutions in other sports all approximated more of a 50-50 split in revenues that the NHL had. No self-respecting NHL owner was going to leave things anywhere near the 57-43 split that was in place in the final year of the old deal.

And the players? Fehr made this about 2004. This was never about getting a deal in time not to miss any paycheques. It was about recovering the collective integrity and backbone that was "lost" in the last lockout. That simply couldn't be done by getting a deal done in the summer. The union came to believe that negotiating and compromising and getting to work in September would be interpreted only as a sign of weakness. Fehr, who was at the mutineers' beck and call when Paul Kelly was executed in the middle of the night, had convinced the union that compromise and practicality would send a message that the union was soft.

The combination of these two positions, plus years of mistrust and mutual enmity and propaganda, meant that hockey fans were always going to be shortchanged.

And as if a bell went off, the moment the calender switched over to November, the serious talks began.

Both sides have already achieved a twisted version of what they wanted, which should clear the way for a deal now. The NHL will, in some form or another, get their 50-50 split, and they'll be able to crow that they handled Fehr in a way that baseball never could.

The union, meanwhile, will have its manhood back, and they'll have used a dislike for Gary Bettman as a rallying cry, and they'll know, as they always know, that agents will make sure that loopholes and cracks are found in the new deal that will ensure they end up ahead down the road, just as they experienced enormous salary increases after "losing" the last lockout.

Hey, it could still get screwed up, and in its bloodless calculations, the NHL quite likely never anticipated losing the lucrative Winter Classic. Talks will resume tomorrow after some fruitful weekend discussions produced some intriguing new approaches, and while the nature of labour negotiations probably mandates there will be at least one more occasion when one side or the other stalks away from the talks and panic of another cancelled season erupts, playing by early December looks about right now.

The incredibly frustrating thing for hockey fans and anybody who cares about this industry is that it looked this way last spring, and nobody did much to make sure it didn't happen. The script went as logic dictated it would

Other considerations from the weekend:

As Canadians, we get to double dip when it comes to university/college football. Our poor American cousins get only NCAA football; we get that and the CIS variety, a cornucopia of riches for the gridiron-minded. They're not the same and don't receive the same attention. Indeed, even CFL fans often look down their noses at the CIS brand. But the weekend's excitement Guelph upsetting Queen's, No. 4 Montreal going down at the hands of Sherbrooke, Western giving No. 1 McMaster a scare — was rivetting stuff. Meanwhile, the NCAA produced some dramatic football as well, including a terrific comeback by No. 1 Alabama, a survival against the odds by Notre Dame and an absolutely wild shootout between Oregon and USC. If one was interested in the ongoing events on Saturday, one could watch well into the evening without even having to think about missing the NHL on a night it used to own, at least in this country . . . The 2012 tennis season is over for Canada's Milos Raonic, and it was a major success. The next step, quite clearly, is to find a way to perform better in the bigger events, particulary the four Grand Slam events and the Masters series, which includes Toronto/Montreal. With more points to "defend" next year after being much more active in 2012 than he was in an injury shortened 2011, the task of staying in the top 20 for Raonic will be tougher. As if to serve as a warning, 21-year-old Jerzy Janowicz of Poland put on a show last week in Paris, coming out of qualifying to beat five top-20 players in succession before losing in the final to David Ferrer. It was a better single result than any that Raonic had this season, although he had the better overall campaign. Moreover, it was a signal that anything but moving forward is moving backwards in tennis because there's always someone else pushing. Raonic has been the Next Big Thing for a while. He can't be forever . . . Another curious trade, another bullpen arm. Its been a while (since Shawn Marcum for Brett Lawrie?) that Alex Anthopoulos did something that made people really take notice . . . The six-game Subway CHL Super Series, now in its 10th year as a annual fall collision between a travelling Russian junior team and all-star outfits from the QMJHL, OHL and WHL, begins tonight in Blainville-Boisbriand, Quebec. The Russians will feature Nail Yakupov, which will give Edmonton Oilers fans a chance to look at the progress of their latest saviour. The series moves to Val d'Or on Wednesday, then to Ontario for two games, then out west. Leaf draft pick Stuart Percy is the only OHLer scheduled to play in both games, while 15-year-old Connor McDavid was selected to play Thursday in Guelph. Nathan McKinnon, battling for the No. 1 draft position in next summer's NHL draft with Portland's Seth Jones at the moment, will be in the "Q" lineup tonight. Teammate Jonathan Drouin won't after injuring his foot on the weekend People who benefit can pump up the Argos TV numbers all they want. But the Argos, who get a set share of league TV revenues, don't benefit directly from that. Where they would benefit is at the gate, and they can't draw anybody. At times they've announced in the neighborhood of 22,000 and less than 15,000 have actually walked through the doors. Let's see how many bodies show up Sunday for their first playoff home game in five years. Maybe they'll surprise us . . . It's always amusing those who blast the NHL for leaking bargaining proposals publish memos from Don Fehr before some of the players even see them . . . There's talk of Rafael Nadal returning for an exhibition Dec. 28. That might have him ready to come to Canada in February with the rest of the Spanish Davis Cup team . . .Little known fact. Yan Gomes was first Brazilian ever to play in majors. Now he's an ex-Jay . . . The cancellation of Winter Classic also evaporates the pending battle royale between me and my boss over coverage of the event. Sorry, but spending New Year's Day in Ann Arbour isn't on my bucket list . Rosie DiManno's book on Pat Burns will be released this week. The combination of subject matter and talented writer makes this already the most worthwhile sports book to buy for Christmas. . . My seven-year-old daughter and I are both reading Margaret Atwood these days. She's

reading "Bashful Bob and Doleful Dorinda," I'm reading "The Year of the Flood." She's enjoying herself more . . . There was no team luckier than Notre Dame on the weekend. And that's okay with me . . . Oregon is fun to watch. But its odd to see a team give up 51 points and still leapfrog another school in the national rankings. And don't you wish the new NCAA playoff system kicked in this year? ... Don't look now, but early season struggles have the Marlies at the bottom of their division . . . Justin Schultz, the prize of free agency in the summer and won by the Oilers, looks to be like the real deal . . . Dave Andrews says hybrid icing is working beautifully in AHL . . . It looks like the Brampton Battalion will finally abandon the battle and move to either North Bay or Hamilton. And how long will the Steelheads last in Mississauga before the GTA is without major junior hockey again? . . The WHL Saskatoon Blades are pulling themselves together a little bit, now 7-9 on the season. The Blades are the host of the Memorial Cup next spring and their early season problems have many worried about what quality of team they'll be able to ice for the national championship event. It has also conjured memories of the 1990 Memorial Cup in Hamilton. The Dukes of Hamilton were forced to drop out as host after winning only 11 games that season . . . You may have seen the feature I wrote on Leaf blue-chipper Morgan Rielly in the Saturday Star. The GM of the Moose Jaw team for which Rielly stars is Alan Millar, who cut his teeth in the business back in the 1989-90 season as an intern out of Durham College who was hired by Bob Stellick to work for the AHL Newmarket Saints in their final year before the team was shifted to Newfoundland. That was the season Floyd Smith hired U.S. college coach Frank Anzalone to coach the Saints and a group of older AHL veterans who wanted nothing to do with Anzalone's rah-rah ways or his obsession with having the players eat bananas. It was not a smooth operation. Millar's clearest memory is of John Kordic sitting in his office in full uniform while the rest of the team was practising . . . Interesting that RGIII is getting most of the ink, but Andrew Luck is having a more productive season . . . If Kyle Quinlan really hopes to be the next Canadian to get a shot at being a quarterback in the CFL, he better learn how to slide . . . Right now Julio Jones and Roddy White look like the best pair of wideouts for any one team in the NFL . . . Andy Fantuz wasn't a bust as a free agent for the Hamilton Tiger-Cats. But he was hardly a success. Last week in the season-ending loss to a bunch of Argo backups, Fantuz couldn't hang on to the ball and he coudn't handle the snap from centre on place kicks . . . Hamilton, in case their fan base is wondering, still doesn't know where it will play games next season. This should be in place by now.

Toronto Star LOADED: 11.06.2012

643746 NHL

Markham losing support for \$325m NHL-ready arena

By Sean Fitz-Gerald, Postmedia News November 5, 2012

TORONTO -- Two more members of Markham city council have provided voices of dissent for plans to build an NHL-ready arena in their suburb north of Toronto, bringing the total number of confirmed opponents to seven -- which is enough to form a majority on council.

Colin Campbell confirmed his opposition in a statement released Monday, after declining to offer his position last week. Fellow councillor Logan Kanapathi also confirmed he was not in favour of the proposal, which calls for the city to be involved financially.

"Although I find the idea of Markham having a 20,000-seat sports, entertainment and cultural arena enticing, I have serious concerns with the current proposal," Campbell wrote.

Under terms of the proposed financial framework, Markham would essentially take out a \$325-million loan to fund construction of the arena, known for now as GTA Centre. The city would repay half of that total using a variety of sources -- including a controversial levy placed on local developers -- while a private group would cover the remaining half, of \$162.5 million.

Councillors contacted by the National Post have offered several reasons why they oppose the project, including the fact it contains no guarantee of landing an NHL team. Graeme Roustan, the former chairman of Bauer Performance Sports Ltd. and the driving force behind the arena project, has said he is seeking an anchor tenant, but has also said the arena would remain viable on a diet of concerts and cultural festivals.

"It became clear to me several months ago that this project is not viable without an NHL team," Campbell wrote. "We should not be spending \$325-plus million to lure an NHL team here. It's not the correct way forward."

Kanapathi confirmed his opposition to the plan later Monday. He has joined Campbell, Jim Jones, Don Hamilton, Joe Li, Valerie Burke and deputy mayor Jack Heath in standing against the proposal now on the table. There are 13 members of Markham council.

"I'm not supporting," Kanapathi told the Post.

Council approved the initial financial framework earlier this year, but public pressure has been mounting as residents raise questions about the city's involvement. No final votes on the issue are immediately before council.

Markham Mayor Frank Scarpitti remains one of the project's staunch supporters. During an information session last month, Scarpitti emphasized how the arena could remain viable without an NHL team, but added "if something else falls from the sky, then it's even more viable."

In an email to the Post last week, NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly repeated the league's stance: "We have always made clear that any decision to build or not to build should be done on the assumption that there will not be an NHL franchise playing in the arena."

Roustan declined comment Monday.

"I believe Markham can support a team, but the proper way to move forward is to sit down with the NHL owners and commissioners and present a business case, which I believe we can substantiate," Campbell wrote. "Until that transpires, I will not be supporting this proposal."

Edmonton Journal: LOADED: 11.06.2012

643747 NHL

MONEY TALKS...... But NHL fans don't want to hear it

Ken Dryden

The crunch moment – a season or no season – is not many days away. The dispute between the owners and players is not about survival. Both are doing well enough. This is about one or the other getting a little more, or a little less. If there is no season, no matter when a deal comes or what that deal is, make no mistake: Gary Bettman and the NHL owners will have lost; Don Fehr and the NHL players will have lost. Nor can any of them justify their loss by arguing that they lost less than they might have, and so they won. They, all of them, will have failed. No season, no victory.

The promise of these past few days resides in the fact that Bettman and Fehr are both smart and experienced who, after weeks of harsh words and irreconcilable positions, know when to fight and when not to. The last thing needed at a moment like this is someone who can't see beyond the fight.

The fans love their game. They love their team. They love their favourite players. Their favourite players drive them crazy at times, but they do amazing things. And when they do, fans they jump up and yell and laugh, and want others around them so they can all jump up and yell and laugh together.

To the fan, nothing else matters at that moment. Not their job, not their family, not climate change or war in the Middle East. It's just them and a feeling. That doesn't make them stupid or shallow. That makes them human. They think about those other things too. Just not then.

Then the owners and players tell them they can't make a deal on how to divide the league's \$3.3-billion (U.S.) in revenues.

They make the fans think about the money. The fans don't want to think about the money.

The guys who own these teams, they've got money. Owners have money. And, the fans know, they were never going to be owners. They can almost not think about the money with the players too, unless the players don't try. Unless the players make them think about the money. When a player buys a Corvette with his signing bonus, to the fans that seems cute-rich. But when he buys a Ferrari that's I'm-better-than-you, better-than-you'll-ever-be rich. That makes the fans think about the money.

They don't want to think about the money.

Money is a big part of sports. The fans know that. Money makes sports better. These players play more hours a day, more months a year, more years in a career because they've got money. They have more better-trained coaches. They can afford personal trainers. They can afford to focus to the exclusion of all else on their sport and their bodies. Make it, the players know, and they've made it for life. The fans get that.

What money does is allow players to be more of what they really are. They want to play. They want to be better. Money lets them. They want to go through a brick wall for their team. Money gives them the freedom to do it. Money makes it seem like what they do, as players, isn't about money at all. Then the players and owners make the fans think about the money, this all seems an illusion, and the fans feel like fools.

Rich people don't bother most fans. But, fans wonder, how much money does any one person need? Fans understand about being rich for now and rich for a rainy day, for themselves and for their kids. But the owners and players, especially the owners, are rich beyond anyone's needs over their lifetime and the lifetimes of their children and their children's children matter how long they all shall live. They're rich beyond any purpose but a need-to-keep-score rich. Rich so that the money gap between them and the fans is so big it's not about the money any more. It's about them – the owners and players – and the fans. That's not nice rich.

The fans don't want to think about the money.

Collective bargaining is about the owners and the players. The fans understand that. It's their private contest; their seventh game of the Stanley Cup final. It's their world. The owners and players like to say these negotiations are about getting the game healthy and right, for the fan. But it's not about the fan. Games are about the fan. Lockouts are about the owners and players.

And the fan can live with that. They're fans. They follow everything that has to do with sports. To them, this lockout is just like another game. It's something to watch, argue about, be right about; pick out their good guys and bad guys. As fans, they made it through the last lockout in 2004. They had no season. They didn't think it was possible to have no season.

From the time they were four or five, as a player or fan they'd always had a season. Later, when they got too old to play, they still had a season. Then there wasn't one. What would they do? Even harder, how would they feel? They had a big stake in being a fan. It had taken up years of their life. Had they been wrong? Were they stupid? All those years and feelings they'd never get back.

As fans, they weren't expecting to feel what they felt. They were mad, sad, disappointed. But when the games came back, they came back. They were excited. Eight years later, the fans are still able to lose themselves in a game, but now they get more angry when things go wrong. After this lockout? They don't know. They don't know what they'll feel, and that scares them and should scare the owners and players. The owners and players have made it a game of chicken. Jam the pedal down to the metal and drive toward the headlights coming at you – and turn off just in time. The next time, for the fan, who knows.

The owners and players have the power. They decide when to play, and if they don't. The fans understand a fight can be long if something basic is at stake; a salary cap, for example. And they've found they can live with the consequences. But they don't understand this fight. The owners and players are both doing fine. They're doing a lot better than the fans. These aren't easy times. What more do these owners and players want?

The owners and players just do what they want to do. But just because they can doesn't mean they should.

The fans don't want to think about the money and the power.

There may be no season. The critical moment is approaching. Are the fans supposed to be as "mad as hell" and scream from the rooftops that they won't stand for this any longer? That they'll never watch another game? That's what they should do, they know. The owners and players, that's what they'd do. But money and power, that's their game and they know how to play it. The fans don't.

The fans don't want to occupy Maple Leaf Square. That's not them. They don't do things like that. They know that most of those involved in Occupy Wall Street or other occupy movements feel the same. They aren't activists. They're just people who see wrong and have to do something. The danger for the owners and players, for the rich and powerful, when there's great inequality in any sphere comes in what the fans or voters or citizens might discover if they do come together and share this common space. They

might find a connection. They might feel a right and a rightness. They might realize just how many of them they are. They might discover this is them too. They might feel an even greater disconnect with the owners and players. They might feel a power they never felt before: the power to care together; the power to go apathetic, to not care, one at a time. In either case, to not watch.

What if Occupy Wall Street came to Maple Leaf Square ... or stayed home. The fans don't know. The owners and players don't know. Even in not big percentages, either result is devastating.

To the owners and players, the rich and powerful, the fan is saying: don't treat me as if I don't matter. Don't make me feel like a fool. Don't make me do what I don't want to do. Don't make me think about the money. I don't want to think about the money.

Globe And Mail LOADED: 11.06.2012

643748 NHL

It's now or never for NHL

DAVID SHOALTS

Guarded optimism is the best way to describe both sides' feeling toward Tuesday's resumption of bargaining in the NHL lockout.

The leaders of the NHL owners and of the NHL Players' Association remained quiet on Monday, which many took as a good sign. One of the people who will be sitting at the table for the first negotiating sessions since Oct. 18 said in an e-mail message he would not predict the chances of reaching a new collective agreement until the end of Tuesday's session.

Pittsburgh Penguins superstar Sidney Crosby spoke for everyone when he said this round of talks will be the last chance to save a full 82-game season.

"It's definitely an important time, considering the timing of everything, knowing in the back of our minds that it's probably the last chance to get anything close to a full season," Crosby told the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette after a group of Penguins players skated Monday.

Unlike the players, the owners and managers are under orders from NHL commissioner Gary Bettman not to discuss publicly anything concerned with the owners' second lockout in seven years. But those willing to talk on background were also hopeful a full season could be saved as long as an agreement is reached quickly.

While Crosby's hope for a full season or something close is based on the assumption no games will be played past the end of June, one NHL governor says the league should consider holding the Stanley Cup final in July for one time only if it means playing an 82-game season.

His rationale is simple: The only way a deal gets done is if the players receive the full value of the contracts they signed before the Sept. 15 lockout, even after they split league revenue 50-50 with the owners. The only way to do that is play all 82 games to maximize revenue.

"Now is the time to make a deal," the governor said. "Make a deal this week and you can come close to playing 82 games. Maybe you can play 82. Why not, for just this year? If you have to play the finals in July, play it."

The governor said Bettman has said the highest number of games that can be played between Dec. 1 and the usual end of the regular season around April 10 is 70. Only one game can be picked up by the cancellation of the Winter Classic but if the all-star game and the break around it is cancelled, too, a couple more games can be picked up. And if there is an agreement quickly and the regular season can start in mid-November or a bit later, then several more games can be played.

"You have to make the players whole, that's the centrepiece of this whole deal, and the best way to do that is play 82 games," the governor said. "That's what they've got to be talking about this week."

Making the players whole is the new catch-phrase of the labour talks. Once the NHLPA admitted on Oct. 18 in its three counter-proposals to the owners' last offer it was willing to consider sharing hockey-related revenue

(HRR) 50-50, down from a 57-43 split in favour of the players in the previous agreement, the union's major issue was ensuring the players are paid in full for all existing contracts.

In its last offer, the NHL owners wanted to do this by reducing the players' share in the later years of a new agreement. But Tuesday's talks in New York were spurred when Bettman told the union the owners were willing to shoulder at least some of the responsibility for paying the contracts in full, although it may still take several years.

The union was interested enough to agree to resume bargaining but NHLPA executive director Donald Fehr cautioned the players all of the details of the NHL's proposal are not known yet.

At this point, players are telling the union leadership they would like to see a deal reached but not at any cost. The unidentified governor says the players need to keep pushing their negotiators and even though the players and owners remain far apart on many issues aside from the revenue split, such as contract length, free agency and salary arbitration, if they can agree on the two major issues and get playing, the rest can be worked out later.

"Let's not get caught up in all that," said the governor, who is a moderate. "How many guys actually go to arbitration? Practically none.

"We've got to get the players their money, we've got to get the right [revenue] split. But we've got to get back to playing and growing the game."

Globe And Mail LOADED: 11.06.2012

643749 Ottawa Senators

Cornwall crowd of 4,800 turns out for NHLers' charity hockey game

By KEN WARREN, Ottawa Citizen November 5, 2012

CORNWALL — While the NHL lockout has left many hockey fans crying in their beer, there was dancing in the stands at the presence of NHL players here Monday night.

A crowd of 4,800 showed up at the Cornwall Civic Complex, paying \$20 each for the right to see long lost locked- out big-league players from the Ottawa Senators, Montreal Canadiens, Winnipeg Jets, Columbus Blue Jackets, New Jersey Devils and Pittsburgh Penguins in a charity game.

For those keeping track, Daniel Alfredsson's Team White defeated Jesse Winchester's Team Black 13-9, but the biggest winners were the First Assist Charity and the Max Keeping Foundation, who took home all the proceeds. The charity tour will continue on to Thunder Bay next Monday, followed by a three-game tour of the Northwest Territories the following week.

Considering there were only nine skaters aside, the game wasn't played at the pace or with the intensity of a regular season NHL game — or even a pre-season tilt — but it was a hit with the fans just the same.

The seats were full of fans wearing Canadiens, Senators, Toronto Maple Leafs, Edmonton Oilers and Team Canada sweaters. The children in the crowd, a good portion wearing their own team sweaters, were into the act early, dancing in the aisles in anticipation. The game started a few minutes late because the players coming in from Montreal — the Senators' Guillaume Latendresse, along with Josh Georges and Brian Gionta of the Canadiens — were stuck in traffic on the way to the arena.

There were few complaints. Certainly none were coming from the Cornwall Peewee Bs, who took the ice for a once-in-a-lifetime experience during the first intermission, going head-to-head with the NHL players in a mini-game. Throughout that contest, Chris Neil good naturedly knocked sticks out of players' hands, lightly pushed them along the boards and patted the tops of their helmets. The highlight came when the buzzer sounded, as the peewees came in waves at Neil, dropping their gloves as they approached. One by one, Neil pushed them to the ice.

As for the main event, there was more than enough offence to go around.

Alfredsson, who was originally hesitant to sign up for the game, believing that his once-per-week practice schedule might leave him a step behind the

others, tied the game 1-1 and later added another goal and three assists. Depending on what happens with the NHL lockout, they could possibly have been the final points of Alfredsson's illustrious career.

He was the star attraction, cheered throughout and greeted with the a few "Alfie, Alfie" chants. As expected, the offence was everywhere and the defence was limited. The offensive star was Latendresse, who finished the night with two goals — one on a penalty shot — and five assists. Senators coach Paul MacLean would probably take that daily production when and if the lockout ever ends.

The good vibrations continued after the game, when NHL players hung around to sign autographs.

The fans clearly enjoyed their taste of the NHL, but it was a reciprocal feeling. Playing in front of a crowd had been a long time coming for most.

"It's a little bit more meaningful (than practice)," said defenceman Chris Phillips. "It's just the surroundings, the people coming out to watch and cheer."

Defenceman Marc Methot even acknowledged having some nerves beforehand. It was his first pseudo-competitive game since representing Canada in the world championships in May and the first time fans have seen him play since he joined the Senators in a trade for Nick Foligno.

He also laughed about his ah, fond, memories of the Cornwall Civic Complex. Methot, who once played for Kanata in the Central Junior Hockey League, was the enemy against the Cornwall Colts.

"Oh, my God, the place was a jungle," Methot said, with a laugh. "I remember having things thrown at me, everything from batteries to beer cans. It was awesome."

On Monday, though, nobody threw anything. Except, of course, for the few light hits Neil delivered to the kids along the boards.

Ottawa Citizen LOADED: 11.06.2012

643750 Ottawa Senators

Senators split on whether there's much reason for optimism

By KEN WARREN, Ottawa November 5, 2012

CORNWALL — It's funny how some people can hear exactly the same thing and come away with entirely different reactions.

Such was the case for Ottawa Senators players on Monday.

They gathered around a cellphone during the 90-minute bus trek here from the Bell Sensplex late Monday afternoon, listening as NHLPA executive director Donald Fehr provided an update from clandestine weekend meetings with the NHL, aimed at reaching a solution to the NHL lockout.

Opinions ranged from Zack Smith's hope to the cautious optimism of Chris Phillips and Marc Methot to the decidedly pessimistic attitude of Daniel Alfredsson.

"A lot of players feel we can reach a deal, it's getting closer," Smith said before taking the ice for Monday's charity game. "It's crunch time where we need to get something done to salvage the season."

Phillips and Methot were encouraged that the talking — NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly and NHLPA second-in-command Steven Fehr met into the wee hours Sunday morning — will lead to further discussions this week.

"There wasn't any formal proposal or anything, they were just bouncing ideas off each other," said Phillips. "But I'm more optimistic than not, given what has happened in the last couple of days."

Methot echoed those comments.

"Any time there's a little more dialogue, there's a lot more reason for optimism. Hopefully, they can keep this going."

When asked if it's important to get a deal completed within the next two weeks to salvage the season, Methot nodded. "I would even say maybe this next week is crucial," he said.

Alfredsson, however, disagreed.

"If nothing happens (in the next 10 days), it's not doomsday, but the sooner the better," he said. "I still think there's time to get something done (after that)."

The Senators captain was also not reading too much into the weekend discussions.

"Until we get something substantial to work on, I'm not too optimistic," Alfredsson said.

While he acknowledges that it's sometimes a good sign that the NHL and the players' association are talking in the same room together, he cautions that "if you have two sides with totally different opinions, they can also just but heads."

Ottawa Citizen LOADED: 11.06.2012

643751 Ottawa Senators

Electing the fan in chief

American presidents no strangers to the sporting world

By ian mendes, Ottawa Citizen November 5, 2012

Election night in the United States is usually one of the worst dates on the sports calendar.

Tonight, for example, there are only three NBA games on the schedule. So if you're a sports fan who is channel surfing, get ready for a steady stream of unfamiliar political lingo to be tossed around. Don't get too excited if someone utters the phrase "hard-line right winger." They're not talking about Chris Neil

But just because you're a sports fan, doesn't mean you have to be left out of the presidential conversation. In fact, American presidents have a long history of sports connections, with stories that range from the comical to the improbable.

So on election night, here are some little-known sports facts (and a handful of tall tales) about American presidents.

- 1. Richard Nixon, the offensive coordinator: Legend has it that President Nixon called Redskins head coach George Allen and suggested a trick play he should use during a game. Allen called the double-reverse play to his wide receiver during a critical series in a 1971 playoff game against San Francisco. The play lost 13 yards and ended up being a turning point as the Redskins eventually lost. In another NFL twist, Nixon briefly considered using Vince Lombardi as his vice-president for the 1968 election until he found out that the Packers head coach was a Democrat.
- 2. Bill Clinton sets records: On Apr. 5, 1993 at Camden Yards, Clinton became the first U.S. president to successfully throw a ball from the mound to the catcher during a ceremonial first pitch. Two years later, Clinton was also at the game where Cal Ripken broke Lou Gehrig's consecutive games streak in Baltimore. Also attending that night with Clinton was Al Gore marking the first time that a sitting U.S. president and his vice-president attended the same baseball game. And in 1998, Clinton became the only U.S. president to attend an NHL game, sitting next to commissioner Gary Bettman during a Capitals-Sabres playoff game in Washington.
- 3. The best Ford produced in Michigan: Though he had the reputation of being clumsy, Gerald Ford was probably the most athletic American president to ever sit in the Oval Office. He played centre and linebacker for two University of Michigan football teams that won national championships in 1932 and 1933. Later, as president, Ford would routinely have the band play the Michigan fight song "The Victors" instead of the traditional "Hail to the Chief" when he walked into state functions.
- 4. Not a Bush leaguer: George H.W. Bush was the star of the baseball team at Yale and actually played in the first two College World Series that were staged in 1947 and 1948. Yale lost both of those championship games and have not returned to the final since.
- 5. Like father, like son: Following in his father's footsteps, the George W. Bush became the first Little League player to be elected to the office of president. Later, he became the only sitting president to throw out the

ceremonial first pitch with five different teams in five different cities. Oh, and he also co-owned the Texas Rangers for most of the 1990s.

- 6. Inventor of the seventh-inning stretch: Known by many as the first president to throw out a ceremonial first pitch, William Taft has also been credited by some for inadvertently inventing the seventh-inning stretch. While attending a Washington Senators game in 1910, Taft is said to have stood up during the seventh inning because he was sore from the prolonged sitting. Upon seeing the president stand up, the rest of the spectators felt obligated to do the same, and according to legend, this is when the seventh-inning stretch was actually born.
- 7. Johnson opens the door: Andrew Johnson became the first U.S. president to invite an entire baseball team to the White House. He had the Brooklyn Atlantic club pay a visit just a few months after Abraham Lincoln was assassinated in 1865.
- 8. Another Johnson misses his chance at history: On Apr. 9, 1965, President Lyndon Johnson was supposed to throw out the first pitch at the brand new Astrodome in Houston. However, he was delayed getting to the ballpark and was unable to take part in the festivities.
- 9. Carter starts a tradition: Jimmy Carter attended only one baseball game while he was sitting as president Game 7 of the 1979 World Series between the Orioles and Pirates. But Carter did start the modern tradition of welcoming the Super Bowl champions at the White House. He invited the 1979 Pittsburgh Steelers after they won their fourth championship in six years.
- 10. The best play-by-play man: Ronald Reagan's best-known sports connection is for playing the role of The Gipper in the film Knute Rockne, All American. But prior to that, Reagan was actually a well-known play-by-play voice for the Chicago Cubs in the 1930s. Though not as colourful as Harry Caray would be years later, Reagan did have a unique gift behind the microphone, because he wasn't even at the ballpark when he was doing the announcing. Instead, he would sit inside a studio at the radio station and watch for updates on the game off the telegraph wire. He would then recreate the play-by-play over the air for the fans listening at home.

Ottawa Citizen LOADED: 11.06.2012

643752 Ottawa Senators

Alfredsson joins locked out NHLers for Cornwall charity game

By Ken Warren, The Ottawa Citizen November 5, 2012

OTTAWA — Ottawa Senators captain Daniel Alfredsson will be the headliner on Monday at Cornwall in a charity hockey game that will also feature other locked-out NHL players, including several Senators.

"It's for a great cause," Alfredsson said in a text message Sunday night.

The game, at the Cornwall Civic Complex (7:30 p.m.), is the first of five scheduled games in the First Assist Charity Classic Tour, being organized by former NHL player and NHL coach John Chabot. The players will travel to Thunder Bay on Nov. 12, followed by three games in the Northwest Territories the following week.

First Assist is a mentorship program allowing First Nations youth the opportunity to experience big-city life, with the aim of pursuing positive opportunities after graduating high school.

Senators Chris Phillips, Chris Neil, Zack Smith and Marc Methot are also on board for the game, along with Brian Gionta and Josh Gorges of the Montreal Canadiens. Gionta's brother, Steven, is also on board, along with Tyler Kennedy of the Pittsburgh Penguins.

Ottawa Citizen LOADED: 11.06.2012

643753 Ottawa Senators

Charity hockey game featuring Senators and other locked-out NHLers draws big crowd in Cornwall

By Don Brennan ,Ottawa Sun

CORNWALL — By all accounts, the first charity game played by the local, locked out NHLers was a booming success.

With any luck, it will also be the last.

Attendance at the Cornwall Civic Complex was announced at 4,800, which would mean a healthy \$96,000 was raised for First Assist and the Max Keeping Foundation. No one could complain about not getting their 20 bucks worth of entertainment, either. Despite only nine players on each side, the pace was decent in a 13-9 final.

The group is tentatively scheduled to play in Thunder Bay next Monday and head out on a three-game tour of the Northwest Territories on Nov. 18.

That is, if they are still locked out from their employers.

Daniel Alfredsson, for one, refused to get too excited about the fact representatives of the NHLPA and the NHL are finally talking again.

"I just feel that where we are at this stage, there's still a feeling out process," the Senators captain said Monday night.

Zack Smith, meanwhile, said there "definitely is" optimism from players that the end to the dispute is near.

Asked if he thinks the NHL will be back in business by December, the Senators centre nodded.

"Yeah, I think so," he said. "I mean, I think a lot of the players feel we can reach a deal. It's definitely getting the crunch time, where something has to be done in the next little while to be able to salvage the season. I think players, owners and fans are still optimistic."

Former NHL tough guy Rick Tocchet tweeted earlier in the day that he has a "hunch" the lockout will be over within 14 days.

Mine is that it will take half that long to settle the dispute, which would probably squash plans for Thunder Bay, but make everybody else happy.

AROUND THE BOARDS: The leading scorer of the night was new Senators winger Guillaume Latendresse, who had two goals and five assists. People have wondered about Latendresse's off-season conditioning, as it was reported to be a problem in the past. He sure looked good in a charity game, for what that's worth ... Ah, the Cornwall Civic Complex just ain't what it used to be. At least not on this night. "Oh my God, the place was a jungle," said Marc Methot, when asked about his visits here as a junior from Ottawa. "I remember having things thrown at me, when I was skating around on the ice playing for Kanata. Anything from batteries to beer cans ... it was awesome. I loved it. Even playing in the playoffs here. It was a good experience. I miss it." ... Speaking about memories of Cornwall (not the next-to-be-released President's Choice sauce, right Ian Mendes?), Alfredsson also has one. "Last time I was in Cornwall was seven years ago when I bought my dog," Alfredsson said of 'Bono,' the family member rarely (if ever) mentioned in our stories. "I like Cornwall a lot, because we've got a great dog." Just thought I'd Cher that little tidbit ... Brian Gionta, Stephen Gionta, Josh Gorges and Travis Moen were stuck in a stand-still traffic iam for 80 minutes, while trying to get to the rink from Montreal. When they arrived, they ran from the parking lot to their dressing room. Their travel troubles pushed the start time back about a half hour.

STOPS AND STARTS: Naturally, Chris Neil tried to get into a fight — with one of the peewees, in a seven-minute scrimmage during the first intermission. About 12 of them jumped him just before the buzzer ended the game within the game ... Alfredsson likely won't be part of the contingent headed to Thunder Bay for next Monday's charity game, if the trip does indeed go off. His participation in the journey to Northwest Territories would also be up in the air. "Might go away with the family for a week, so I'll probably miss next week," he said. "Then we'll see what happens after that, if I'm back before they go up north. If I'm home and the timing is good I'll play." ... Obviously not to blame were the goalies - starters Jody O'Neil (former Smiths Falls Bear) and Mark Cavallin (who played in England) and the relievers, Jordan Piccolino and James Edwardson of the Cornwall Colts - for the all the scoring. As you would expect, this one had all the defence and tight checking of an all-star game. As he himself noted beforehand, Marc Methot was one of only four defencemen taking part. "I don't know if I'm going to have to play 60 minutes," he said. "I might keel over halfway through the first." Instead, he scored his first goal as a Senator, just before the first ended. Pretty sure Methot didn't keep the puck ... None of the players bothered to take out insurance for the game. "I think it's more risky playing 1-on-1 with Chris Neil in practice than playing a game," said Alfredsson.

C'EST WHAT?: "Until we get something substantial to work on, I'm not too optimistic. I'm hoping this is going to happen now, but I'm not putting any hopes into it." - Alfredsson, sounding a little like a Swedish Yogi Berra, when asked if he's optimistic recent CBA talks will lead to a breakthrough in negotiations.

THREE STARS

Shean Donovan had a hat trick before the second period was over. Everyone's "Chum" has to be first star.

Derick Brassard had five points with two minutes left in the second. He couldn't even confirm he was coming until the morning of the game, so he didn't have the same "prep" time.

Guillaume Latendresse had one goal and five assists through two periods. Did the Senators realize this guy's playmaking skills when they signed him?

Ottawa Sun LOADED: 11.06.2012 643754 Philadelphia Flyers

NHL, players' union to meet Tuesday

Will the momentum from Saturday's lengthy, productive talks carry into Tuesday's negotiations between representatives of the NHL and the players union?

That's the hope as both sides enter the 52d day of the lockout.

Bill Daly, the NHL's deputy commissioner, and Steve Fehr, the NHL Players' Association's special counsel, will meet Tuesday in New York. There's a chance they could be joined by the big honchos - NHL commissioner Gary Bettman and Donald Fehr, executive director of the players union.

There was guarded optimism after the sides met Saturday and discussed core economic issues. The league is believed to be considering guaranteeing the players' contracts - without money being deferred through escrow.

The players have been vocal about their disdain for deferred payments.

The league has canceled games through Nov. 30. If a collective bargaining agreement is in place and the season starts Dec. 1, a 64-game, conference-only schedule is a possibility.

- Sam Carchidi

Philadelphia Inquirer / Daily News LOADED: 11.06.2012

643755 Philadelphia Flyers

NHL, union make progress

November 05, 2012|By Sam Carchidi, Inquirer Staff Writer

Both sides said progress has been made in the NHL's labor dispute, but the lockout is far from over.

Representatives from the NHL and the players' union met Saturday night at an undisclosed location and did not end their session until 1 a.m. They did not come close to a settlement, but at least they are negotiating.

It was their first face-to-face meeting in 16 days. The sides reportedly will meet again Tuesday in New York.

Bill Daly, the NHL's deputy commissioner, and Steve Fehr, special counsel for the NHL Players' Association, were at Saturday's lengthy session.

Daly said there was "a series of meetings" that produced "good, frank talk" on the core issues.

Said Fehr: "Hopefully, we can continue the dialogue and expand the group" to include commissioner Gary Bettman and Donald Fehr, head of the NHLPA.

The lockout started on Sept. 15, and the NHL has canceled games through Nov. 30. It also canceled the popular Winter Classic on New Year's Day.

If a new collective bargaining agreement is in place and the season starts Dec. 1, a 64-game season against conference rivals is possible - with teams perhaps playing six times against division opponents, and four times against the others.

Contact Sam Carchidi

Philadelphia Inquirer / Daily News LOADED: 11.06.2012

643756 Philadelphia Flyers

NHL, NHLPA return to bargaining table Tuesday

Among the new strategies toward paving a smoother road to collective bargaining talks in the NHL lockout may be ... silence.

Both the league and the NHLPA issued statements this weekend following Saturday's marathon session that lasted into Sunday morning.

Now, with talks scheduled to resume Tuesday in New York City (which is still struggling to get back on its feet after last week's hurricane) silence may be way to go, given it is expected both sides intend to meet through the week.

A league spokesman told CSNPhilly.com on Monday not to expect a formal news conference after Tuesday's session because there is a feeling among their negotiating team that the less said to the media the better, that silence may lead to better traction in the talks.

The union was to conduct a conference call on Monday afternoon to update board officials and membership on the talks.

There was widespread optimism after this past weekend's talks -- held at an undisclosed neutral site -- that the two sides might have started to find some common ground to bridge the enormous gap between "making whole" current contracts and gaining a 50/50 split in revenue sharing.

Both sides are hoping that Tuesday's talks become the impetus for continuous dialogue throughout the week.

If that unfolds, then this would be the most important week of talks yet if there is to be a season of at least 60 games.

To achieve such, play would have to resume no later than the start of December.

The two keys to getting an agreement:

- From the union's standpoint: the NHL "makes whole" by guaranteeing all existing contracts; the owners would make up any differences between revenue and salaries by providing escrow themselves and not the players.
- From the league's standpoint: the players agree to a 50/50 split of hockey related revenues.

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Comcast SportsNet.com LOADED: 11.06.2012

643757 Pittsburgh Penguins

Adams, Crosby may skip labor meeting

By Rob Rossi

Sidney Crosby is returning to Consol Energy Center on Tuesday, but only to see Madonna.

The NHL lockout hits Day 52 on Tuesday, though a group negotiation meeting between the league and its Players' Association is scheduled for somewhere in New York City.

A series of meetings Saturday between deputy commissioner Bill Daly and union special counsel Steve Fehr sparked this session.

"Both sides feel it's important to step it up and meet in larger groups — so that's a good sign," Penguins union rep Craig Adams said Monday after a players-organized practice at Southpointe.

"Clearly, there's a feeling there is some traction there ... and it's worth pursuing."

Fehr agreed Sunday with Daly's assessment that their meeting included "frank discussion on the most important issues separating us." Adams, on Monday, said those issues as revenue division, salary-cap calculation and escrow.

"But there are a lot of other big issues, too — in the player contracting department," he said.

Adams said he was "looking into flights to New York," but had not committed to attending the Tuesday meeting. Penguins teammates at Southpointe on Monday — Crosby, Matt Cooke, Pascal Dupuis and Chris Kunitz — said their plan was to practice again Tuesday and not attend the New York meeting.

Crosby, who along with Adams attended the last group negotiating session between the NHL and NHLPA in Toronto on Oct. 18, said he was unsure "who's invited."

Thus, he invited teammates and their significant others to join him in a private suite at Consol Energy Center for the Madonna concert.

"You don't want to read into anything," Crosby said of the Tuesday meeting.

The NHLPA held a negotiation committee conference call at 4 p.m. Monday, though players downplayed its significance.

"There are updates when updates need to happen," Cooke said. "That's all the call is about."

Cooke returned to practice after leaving a workout Friday because of a facial wound. He said players did not pay attention to weekend speculation within the media that the NHL would propose an offer to split revenue evenly and immediately guarantee current contracts.

The NHL has not divulged details on any alterations to the "make whole" portion of its last offer, made Oct. 16. The union viewed that offer, which called for an immediate 50/50 split of revenue, as unacceptable because players believed down-the-road payments of current guaranteed contracts would ultimately count against potential future earnings.

The meeting Tuesday would not produce a labor agreement, Adams said.

"I don't think we're at that point where 24 hours will be enough," he said.

Tribune Review LOADED: 11.06.2012

643758 Pittsburgh Penguins

Penguins remain eager but realistic about NHL lockout

By Dave Molinari / Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

It would be easy to get dramatic now, to breathlessly suggest that the chances of having a 2012-13 NHL season hinge entirely on the round of negotiations between the league and the NHL Players' Association that will begin today in New York.

It just wouldn't necessarily be very accurate.

Not the way a number of Penguins players see things, anyway.

Oh, they recognize the importance of these talks -- "There's definitely urgency on our side, and we hope there's urgency on their side as well," Penguins player rep Craig Adams said Monday -- but they also seem to be convinced there isn't a looming drop-dead date for forging a new collective bargaining agreement.

And there is precedent to prove it.

"History has shown that it's not the end-all," left winger Matt Cooke said. "I mean, in '94, they went back in January, so you could still have a season."

The first three-plus months of the 1994-95 season were nuked by a lockout that limited teams to just 48 games before the Stanley Cup playoffs.

Whether four dozen games are enough to establish a legitimate postseason field is a matter of opinion, but there's no question that 48 games are fewer than either side in this dispute would like to see.

Such an abbreviated schedule would cut deeply into ownership's revenues and limit players to about 58.5 percent of what they would be paid during a conventional 82-game season.

Such fiscal realities might be what provides the greatest urgency to the talks.

"It's definitely an important time, considering the timing of everything, knowing in the back of all of our minds that it's probably the last chance to get anything close to a full season," center Sidney Crosby said. "I'm thinking that's on everyone's mind. That should, hopefully, create a little more discussion."

The pivotal issue in this lockout, which began after the previous CBA expired Sept. 15, is how "hockey-related revenues" are shared between the owners and players.

Both have proposed plans that would lead to a 50-50 split, but the league wants that to happen immediately, while the players, who got 57 percent under the previous CBA, prefer to see it work down to that level over several years.

"Both sides have shown their willingness to get to 50-50, or close to it," Adams said. "The question is, 'How do you get there? How long does it take to get there?' And in getting there, how do you do your best to honor existing contracts?

"There are a lot of smart people on both sides. There are ways to do it. We just have to get to an agreement on how to do it."

The talks that begin today stem from traction created when NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly and NHLPA special counsel Steve Fehr had a series of face-to-face negotiations that began Saturday and spilled over into early Sunday morning.

Precisely what tangible progress, if any, was accomplished in those sessions isn't known, but they clearly created some positive momentum and flickers of hope that it will be possible to find enough common ground to agree on a settlement eventually.

"I'm optimistic about it," Cooke said. "I don't know if there's [reason for] encouragement there, but I'm optimistic something will get done -- that eventually the owners will realize it's not worth it."

He was quick to add, however, that players have done most of the giving to this point in the negotiations.

"We've made concessions -- drastic concessions -- and they, up to this point, really haven't made any toward us," Cooke said.

The NHLPA could learn as early as today what the league might be willing to give as the talks move along. Whether the NHL will accept the union's plan for honoring existing contracts, for example, and whether it will be flexible on its demand for term limits on contracts or new guidelines for attaining free agency.

All of which explains why Penguins players will be hoping for the best, but taking nothing for granted, while monitoring these talks, whether they last one day or go on indefinitely.

"I don't know what to think anymore," Crosby said. "A couple of weeks ago, I thought things were heating up. I thought we were going to get some traction with everything.

"But that wasn't the case. This time around, I'm trying to not get my hopes up."

NOTE -- Cooke participated in Monday's player-organized workout at Southpointe sporting a large Band-Aid on his forehead, where Crosby's stick had removed a divot during a drill Friday. Cooke said he isn't upset with Crosby, but disputed stories that Crosby helped with first aid for his injury. "I should correct previous reports in the paper that he had anything to do with aiding or fixing the cut," Cooke said, smiling. "Because he did absolutely nothing except for laugh." Crosby's recollection of events: "There was a good little chunk out of [Cooke's forehead] but I knew it wasn't his eye or anything, so we had a good chuckle."

Post Gazette LOADED: 11.06.2012

643759 Pittsburgh Penguins

Penguins hope to erect an ice rink

By Mark Belko / Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Even without an end to the NHL lockout, there just might be some hockey nights in Pittsburgh after all -- in a soccer stadium, no less.

The Penguins are working with the Pittsburgh Riverhounds on plans to erect an outdoor ice rink inside the soccer team's new stadium at Station Square.

Travis Williams, the Penguins' chief operating officer, said the team hopes to open the rink for public skating and amateur and high school hockey games Dec. 14 and operate it until early or mid-January.

The timetable is contingent on the Riverhounds having most of Highmark Stadium completed by the end of November. Mr. Williams and Melissa Lazar, the stadium's general manager, said the construction appears to be on pace to meet that date.

"We feel fairly confident at this point that they will be done by the end of November," Mr. Williams said. "We're getting more and more comfortable with that every day."

Ms. Lazar said the stadium's turf, concession stands, bleachers, restrooms and scoreboard should all be ready by the end of the month. In fact, everything but a team building that will house locker rooms, offices and restaurants should be finished by then.

If all goes according to plan, this will be the third straight year that the Penguins have built an outdoor ice rink for public skates and amateur and high school hockey teams.

The rink made its debut outside Heinz Field in 2010 as part of the festivities surrounding the National Hockey League's Winter Classic, which was played New Year's Day. Last year, the rink was erected in a parking lot at Sidney and South 26th streets on the South Side near the SouthSide Works complex.

Mr. Williams said the soccer stadium, on the banks of the Monongahela River, is a "great fit" for the ice rink. It will have the Downtown skyline as a backdrop and will be visible from the Fort Pitt Bridge and some of the parkway ramps.

In those respects, the new location, he said, will be similar to the one two years ago on the North Shore, another highly visible spot that offered views of the skyline.

Details such as hours and prices for the rink have yet to be established.

The Penguins decided to go ahead with the rink despite the NHL lockout, which has resulted in the cancellation of numerous games, including this season's Winter Classic.

"Pittsburgh, despite the lack of NHL hockey, is still very much a hockey town, so we want to celebrate that," Mr. Williams said. "We would love to see kids playing on the ice and in the elements just like the Winter Classic."

Ms. Lazar said crews will begin installing the soccer field's turf this week. The ice rink essentially will sit on a tabletop to protect the turf from damage. The Riverhounds also are hoping to host flag football games at the \$10.2 million stadium on Thanksgiving Day.

The Riverhounds' season won't start until spring. Beside soccer, the stadium will host Pittsburgh Passion women's football games, lacrosse and rugby matches, and mid-tier concerts attracting 4,000 to 7,000 people. It also will be used by local colleges, universities and high schools. Youth lacrosse and soccer academies and tournaments also are planned.

Post Gazette LOADED: 11.06.2012

643760 San Jose Sharks

Sharks hopeful talks lead to CBA progress, Boyle mum

SAN JOSE – The NHL lockout reached a new low point on Friday with the cancellation of the Winter Classic, which would have brought more than 100,000 fans to Michigan Stadium to witness the Maple Leafs and Red Wings in the annual outdoor spectacle.

Less than 24 hours later, NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly and NHLPA special counsel Steve Fehr engaged in a lengthy bargaining session in an undisclosed location, and issued brief statements afterwards that were absent of the petty public sniping we've seen throughout the labor impasse.

There is optimism, albeit cautious, that the corner has finally been turned in terms of getting a new collective bargaining agreement in place and beginning a shortened season in early December or even late November.

"I think it made, I guess, the possibility of missing a whole season kind of hit home for everybody," said Brad Stuart of losing the Classic. "Obviously, nobody wants that to happen. Maybe that was something that made everybody kind of wake up and say, let's try to do something before we cancel more than just the Winter Classic."

Stuart was one of just four current Sharks skating at Sharks Ice on Monday, joining Dan Boyle, Patrick Marleau and Thomas Greiss for an hour-long session. Islanders goalie Evgeni Nabokov has also been a regular participant, as the former Shark maintains a residence in the Bay Area. Ryane Clowe also is still local, but has decided to practice with the ECHL's San Francisco Bulls for the time being. Eight players are overseas in various leagues across Europe.

Stuart and Marleau are hopeful that the band will be back together soon.

"I guess they're talking, and that's a good thing," Stuart said. "There hasn't been too many details as to what exactly has been discussed, but the fact that they're talking and it seems like they're going to continue to talk, is a good thing. I guess if there's any hope or a reason to be optimistic, that's it."

Marleau said: "Any time you talk, hopefully cooler heads will prevail and [the owners will] scrap whatever script they are going by and realize that they're hurting the game. They're only hurting themselves in the end of things."

Marleau was especially critical of the hard-line owners in comments 11 days ago, when he suggested the league planned all along to cancel games through November. On Monday, he doubled down on that criticism, although he believes that the Sharks ownership is not among those taking a hard-line stance.

"It's tough when someone on the other side doesn't want to talk for so long. It's a good sign that they're talking," he said.

"We wanted to talk the whole time, and they just said no. They're going off of their agenda, and doing whatever they want. They're written this script already, so it's no big surprise."

Should commissioner Gary Bettman and union head Donald Fehr rejoin the bargaining sessions (something that's unclear at the moment), it would be the first time the two leaders were in the same room together since Oct. 18. That was when Bettman and the NHL representation look just minutes to reject the union's counter-proposals to the league's previous offer on Oct. 16.

An agreement is still far from a certainty at this point, of course, as there are a number of contentious issues to solve. The single biggest roadblock seems to be current contracts, as the players' association wants NHL ownership to be fully responsible to the deals that are currently signed. The league would like an immediate 50-50 split of hockey-related revenue, as well as new restrictions on future contracts.

Boyle mum on latest news

Dan Boyle has been among the more outspoken NHL players when it comes to the current lockout.

On Oct. 4, he made headlines when he suggested that the owners wanted the players to miss some paychecks before truly negotiating, and that Bettman only requiring eight votes to deny a CBA proposal didn't make

On Oct. 25, he suggested that both the NHL and NHLPA had yet to really begin bargaining. "It's supposed to be a negotiation, and I think right now both sides feel like it's their way or the highway. I think you've got to give to get, and I don't know that we're at that point yet," he told CSNCalifornia.com.

On Monday, Boyle declined to answer anything lockout-related, save for one brief statement.

"Until this thing gets done, we just have to wait and hope. That's it," he said.

Kevin Kurz

Comcast SportsNet.com LOADED: 11.06.2012

643761 San Jose Sharks

CBA talks expected to last all week

Are the NHL and NHLPA finally coming to their senses?

After the emotional cancellation of the Winter Classic on Friday, NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly and NHLPA special assistant Steve Fehr met into the early morning hours in an undisclosed location on Saturday night. That has apparently kick-started negotiations once again, as multiple reports are saying the two factions will get together again in New York on Tuesday. Previously, the sides had not met since Oct. 18, when the league rejected three counter-proposals from the NHLPA within minutes. It's unclear whether or not commissioner Gary Bettman or NHLPA head Donald Fehr will rejoin the discussions.

In fact, talks are expected to last all week long, according to CSNPhilly.com's Tim Panaccio. The league would also like to keep things mum with the media after Tuesday's session, and after the rhetoric that's been spewed on both sides throughout the eight-week lockout, can only be viewed as a positive.

While an 82-game schedule and the marquee regular season event are out the window, the league and players do have time to cobble together a 64-to-72 game slate, so long as an agreement is in place relatively quickly. Last season's 66-game NBA season began on Christmas Day, although in that league, each team had multiple occurrences of three games in three nights. That's not likely to happen in the much more physically demanding sport of hockey, despite the regularity of it in the AHL.

To date, the NHL has canceled all games through the month of November, representing more than a quarter of the regular season.

If an agreement can be reached, it would minimize the damage among fans that suffered through 2004-05, when a labor dispute resulted in a completely lost season.

There's still work to be done, but there's optimism in the air.

Kevin Kurz

Comcast SportsNet.com LOADED: 11.06.2012

643762 St Louis Blues

NHL lockout costing those who have least to gain

4 hours ago • By Dan O'Neill doneill@post-dispatch.com314-340-8186

They are quarreling over the division of revenue that exceeded \$3.3 billion last season. They meet in Armani suits and silk ties, dismiss proposals out of hand, cancel games like they are canceling haircut appointments.

Most are millionaires many times over. They include players who have banked lucrative salaries in previous seasons, owners who have the financial wherewithal to invest in sports ownership, consultants who are paid handsomely for their bravado and contentious advice.

The players have hockey alternatives in Europe or minor league cities. They pursue them for the activity, not the paycheck. Or they spend time with families they would rarely see this time of year, with ample income to

support the luxury. The owners have businesses to run, businesses other than hockey, endeavors that created their positions in life.

If you're looking for signs of economic stress, you won't see it among the parties that are butting heads in the NHL labor war. In the end, they will arrive at a settlement and split the billions they fence over.

In the end, the damage is strictly collateral.

The ones being hurt financially by the NHL lockout are the ones who have the least to gain, the ones who lean on professional hockey for a critical piece of their livelihood.

"Boy, those Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday night games ... we depend on it quite a bit," said Jeff Owens, manager of Friendly's Sports Bar & Grill in Tower Grove South. "We're one of the closest sports bars, if not the closest sports bar, to Scottrade Center. We're probably going to see a 25 percent decrease in sales just from not having hockey.

"If it was a home game, we killed it, I mean we really packed them in before and after the game. We had a planning meeting (last week). We're cutting back staff. We're going to run a pretty lean November and December and hopefully it's only that long. I mean ... it's going to be a tough winter for us."

Friendly's takes a direct hit, but the fallout is far-reaching. Watering holes don't have to be in the immediate neighborhood to feel the concussion. Offering multiple television screens, food and drink specials and camaraderie-building environments, the tentacles of the sports bar business stretch throughout the community.

Located in Brentwood, O'B Clark's is among the area's most popular sports-oriented establishments. The family-run restaurant/bar is the home for Blues postgame radio shows on Saturday nights. When former Blues coach Jamie Kompon brought the Stanley Cup to town over the summer, after winning it as a staff member of the Los Angeles Kings, he transported the celebrated chalice to O'B Clark's for the hockey faithful to embrace.

Proprietor Joe O'Brien speaks passionately about the lockout. He has developed relationships with players and fans over the years. He doesn't take sides in the dispute, but he worries about the wounds being self-inflicted.

"It impacts places like us substantially from the mere fact that ... the hockey fan is not your typical, average fan," O'Brien explained. "There is a lot of loyalty, especially here with the St. Louis team. I've had a lot of people come in and throw up their hands and say they're just fed up. They're not going to renew (tickets)."

As for his business: "I would say, from the Saturday night shows that we do, that would be 25 percent of our business for that day. You multiply that by as many Saturday nights as they have and it adds up. It would buy a lot of Budweisers, let's put it that way."

The Cardinals helped by playing deep into October, providing postseason bandages for hockey-impaired night spots. Unlike last season, the fun didn't advance as far as a World Series.

The Rams create traffic only one day a week. And in these playoff-starved times, only 16 weeks a year. There is no NBA team in town and a reciprocal lack of interest. Without hockey, college football has been the only spark for sports-related businesses.

In September, the Blues laid off 20 employees, while reducing salaries and cutting hours for those who stayed. The Blues website erased the listed games on the October and November calendars. At this point, 62 games remain.

Levy Restaurants employs around 375 people to work Blues games at Scottrade Center, just one of 30 NHL buildings. By contract, the ushers, bartenders and vendors are forbidden to discuss their jobs or circumstances with the press. For this article, a few were willing to comment only if they were not identified.

One, a 55-year-old single parent, has a son who set a date to be married this fall. The happy occasion has been put on hold because of the lockout. The employee makes in the neighborhood of \$5,000-\$6,000 annually from working events at Scottrade, a sum that represents 20 percent of the household income, and nearly all the disposable portion.

For perspective, the average NHL player was making \$2.4 million before last season, a figure that has since gone up. Minimum wage for players under the previous collective bargaining agreement reached \$525,000. It would take the aforementioned Scottrade employee about 100 seasons to make that much money from Blues hockey.

"The last time there was a lockout (in 2004-05), we had the Billikens," the employee said. "But we don't even have the Billikens anymore. I've been trying to use my income wisely, save up for retirement and at the same time, try to keep the household going, so it's been tough.

"And I know others in the same situation. When it's just you and this is what you're counting on for your budget, and you have it pulled out from underneath you ... I think it's just so concerning that they couldn't get this thing worked out way before now."

And it's more than that. Most of the people who work in the building are hockey fans, as well. They make acquaintances, build relationships, emotionally invest in the team and the patrons.

"I love hockey," a Scottrade bartender, 49, said. "That was the main reason I took the job. I miss my fans. You build up regulars because you're in the same spot. It's heartbreaking, it really is and it's affecting so many people."

According to statistics on hockeydb.com, the Blues drew an average crowd of 18,560 during the 2003-04 season. After the 2004-05 season was canceled by a labor stalemate, attendance dipped to 14,213 per game in 2005-06. The following season, the numbers dropped to 12,520. It wasn't until 2008-09 that attendance climbed back over the 18,000 plateau.

"You wonder if they're going to come back," another Scottrade employee said. "A lot of them got mad the last time. And honestly, over the past couple of years, I began seeing people I had not seen for six years previous to that, because they were so mad.

"I've had people tell me, 'Yeah, this is my first game since that last lockout.' And here it is they're doing it again."

The timing could hardly be worse for the Blues in particular. After a lengthy stretch of uninspiring, ineffectual hockey, the 2011-12 team finished two points removed from the best record in the league. Under the guidance of Ken Hitchcock, the Blues advanced to the second round of the playoffs before losing to the eventual Stanley Cup champs.

In May, St. Louis-based investors purchased the team, led by Tom Stillman. With local ownership and a dynamic base of young talent, a new-found stability and energy is in place. During the summer, the flames were fanned with the signing of Russian import Vladimir Tarasenko, a highly anticipated prospect.

As a new season approached, the excitement surrounding hockey in town was palpable. Instead of nurturing that momentum, the hockey franchise, and those who depend on it, can only hope it hasn't been extinguished entirely.

"The sad part about the whole deal is that they've had so many stoppages over the last, whatever it is, 10 to 15 years," O'Brien added. "It's like, you can only cry wolf so many times. People are fed up, that's all I hear from my customers, how they're fed up with both sides.

"Who's right or who's wrong, it really doesn't matter to them. What matters to them is that, 'Hey, we've been faithful to the sport for years. And here we finally have something going here in St. Louis and we have nothing to show for it.'

"You had this excitement built up and now everybody is at a loss because there's nothing they can do."

In the end, the parties will settle and split the billions. But for those who need it most, the revenue losses will never be recovered.

St Louis Post Dispatch LOADED: 11.06.2012

643763 Tampa Bay Lightning

New York Rangers' Brad Richards to join teammates in helping Sandy's victims "any way we can"

The reunion, as short as it was, between Rangers center Brad Richards and former Lightning teammates Vinny Lecavalier and Marty St. Louis was a good time for all.

"It brings back memories," Lecavalier said after the trio, who helped lead Tampa Bay to the 2004 Stanley Cup, skated Monday at the Ice Sports Forum in Brandon. "It's definitely fun. We played a long time together. When you have that chemistry, you always have it."

But as much as Richards loves the Tampa Bay area, he is headed back to New York Tuesday and on Wednesday plans to join teammates to lend a hand "any way we can" to the city's victims of Hurricane Sandy.

"We've got a bunch of good guys on the team," Richards said. "Guys want to get together and help."

Richards said his upper-floor Tribeca apartment was unscathed from the storm, though he had been without power.

"When it first happened, being in Manhattan with no power, you didn't really know how bad it was," he said. "Now, being down here and seeing it on TV and seeing the stories about people who haven't been helped yet, you can see how widespread the destruction was."

Added Rangers defenseman Steve Eminger, who joined Richards and teammate Brian Boyle in Brandon: "It's not just athletes, celebrities, it's everyone in general. The whole city is pulling together. It's not something we're doing to get our names in the paper, it's just something we're doing."

Posted by Damian Cristodero

Tampa Tribune LOADED: 11.06.2012

643764 Tampa Bay Lightning

Tampa Bay Lightning captain Vinny Lecavalier on CBA negotiations: "Hopefully, it's for real this time"

With negotiations between the league and Players' Association set to resume Tuesday, locked-out players skating at the Ice Sports Forum in Brandon were both encouraged and cautious about what may be in store.

"I'm kind of tired of the ups and downs," Lightning defenseman Marc-Andre Bergeron said. "Nothing has happened for so long, every time there's a little blip, everybody goes crazy."

Added Lightning captain Vinny Lecavalier: "Hopefully, it's for real this time and they start talking and get it done."

The lengthy negotiating session Saturday between NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly and union special counsel Steve Fehr laid the groundwork for Tuesday's session. Specifically, the league amended its "make whole" provision to shift the cost from players to ownership. The provision protects current player contracts under a plan that would reduce the players' share of revenue from last season's 57 percent to 50 percent.

While that sounds good, Rangers center and former Lightning Brad Richards said the devil is in the details that have yet to be revealed. He also is cautious after the league on Oct. 23 rejected in 10 minutes three proposals put forth by the union.

"I mean, you're always happy when they're talking, but staying even keel is probably smarter," Richards said. "Last time, I thought the proposals we were working on, we would negotiate, and 10 minutes later it was over.I don't want to sound pessimistic but I'm not going to jump the ship here, either. We'll see how this week goes."

Posted by Damian Cristodero

Tampa Tribune LOADED: 11.06.2012

643765 Toronto Maple Leafs

Don Cherry: Why would Roberto Luongo join the Maple Leafs?

QMI Agency

Don Cherry thinks Toronto Maple Leafs fans would love to see Roberto Luongo in blue and white.

But he doesn't think the Vancouver Canucks goaltender, who has been rumoured to be Toronto-bound once the NHL lockout is over, would be thrilled with the idea of playing for the Leafs.

"Why would he want to come here and step into the same thing as Vancouver?" the long-time Hockey Night in Canada commentator told

Sportsnet 590 The Fan Monday. "Every time they lose, it's his fault. He only took them to the seventh game (of the Stanley Cup final in 2011). How many goaltenders have taken them to the seventh game?

"I don't think he wants to step into a real hot-spot like here. I think he wants to go to Florida because his wife comes from Florida."

Luongo, seen as the odd-man-out in Vancouver with the emergence of Cory Schneider, said in September that a return to the Florida Panthers "makes sense" and is his preferred location if or when he is traded. He has 10 years left on a contract that carries a capt hit of \$5.33 million and includes a no-trade clause.

Toronto Sun LOADED: 11.06.2012

643766 Vancouver Canucks

Burrows back in town, dressing for success

elliottpap

Vancouver Canuck winger Alex Burrows hasn't been among the players skating regularly at UBC during the lockout but he's managed to keep busy playing charity games in Quebec and dressing for success. The 31-year-old forward was back in Vancouver Monday, specifically to make a promotional appearance at the RW&Co. clothing store in Pacific Centre mall. Burrows has been based in Montreal since the seven-week-old work stoppage began and hopes he won't be returning to La Belle Province any time soon unless it's to play the Montreal Canadiens.

"Hopefully I am here for a long time," Burrows said inside the store while hundreds of fans waited outside to meet him and get an autograph. "Hopefully they'll be able to get a deal done soon and I won't go back. Hopefully the talks (scheduled for Tuesday) will spark something and we can get the season going soon. I've got my fingers crossed."

In the meantime, Burrows has been showing his fashion sense while the league and players association bicker over dollars and sense. It was a deal, he explained, set up by his agent Paul Corbeil last summer. "It was a good fit for me," he said, without realizing the pun. "I like to be comfortable in my clothes and I always liked this kind of clothing."

Burrows estimates he has played in about a dozen charity games with locked out players from the Montreal-Quebec City area so he hasn't lacked for ice time or workout partners. He signed a four-year, \$18 million contract extension with the Canucks on Sept. 14, the day before the lockout began.

Vancouver Sun: LOADED: 11.06.2012

643767 Vancouver Canucks

Schneider: Home-state election result easier to forecast than end to NHL lockout

By Ben Kuzma

VANCOUVER — Cory Schneider hasn't cast an absentee ballot for the U.S presidential election Tuesday because the Massachusetts native knows his state is a stronghold for incumbent Barack Obama.

"Massachusetts is heavily Democratic, so it doesn't matter and I probably won't vote this time around," the Vancouver Canucks goaltender said Monday following a UBC practice with the Thunderbirds. "I've watched all the debates and have been paying attention to all the coverage. I enjoy it. It all impacts us.

"It's not necessarily picking sides for me, it's who you feel is best to run the nation and represent your country."

As a member of the 31-player NHL Players' Association negotiating committee — which maintained guarded optimism following a conference call Monday in advance of high-level negotiations resuming Tuesday — Schneider was asked which presidential candidate would make a better league commissioner than Gary Bettman to end the 51-day lockout

"Good question," he chuckled. "Obama. He seems more likeable, but [Mitt] Romney is a better numbers guy, so you never know."

What Schneider does know is NHL owners and players are approaching make-or-break territory to resolve the revenue split, settle contracting issues and salvage a season that has already lost the Winter Classic. With games cancelled through Nov. 30, significant collective bargaining agreement traction in the next two weeks would ensure a shortened schedule could commence next month. It could mean 64 games for the Canucks — six against division rivals (24) and four games versus each of the remaining Western Conference teams (40) — but it won't mean anything unless there's legitimate CBA progress. And while some was made Saturday with a marathon session in a secret location, it's hard to put a lot of stock into it until Bettman and NHLPA executive director Donald Fehr meet face-to-face.

"It wasn't that secret, everyone knows about it," said Canucks winger Daniel Sedin. "I feel better, for sure. At least they're talking and it seems like they made some progress, too."

Especially now that the slower portion of annual gate receipts has passed for many U.S. franchises?

"Baseball season is over," pointed out Daniel Sedin. "It's tragic if that's the case."

Still, the fact that Ottawa Senators owner Eugene Melnyk broke Bettman's silence code last week by stating that play should have commenced by now and owners of financially-challenged franchises should be miffed at two clauses in the league's latest CBA pitch may be encouraging. Reportedly, teams wouldn't be allowed to count bonus money toward reaching the salary cap floor — \$43.9 million US in the league's Oct. 17 proposal — and all salaries above \$105,000, even those in the minors, would be included in the cap count. Canucks centre Andrew Ebbett has a \$600,000 cap hit at the NHL level, but his two-way deal is paying \$300,000 with the Chicago Wolves and would be added to the cap count. You'd think that alone would make a lot of owners howl in protest.

"It depends on which owners control the power," countered Schneider. "This is why we would love to have more come to the table. We'd love to hear all their opinions as opposed to four or five of the more wealthy ones. You can see why people don't like the cap. It forces teams to spend more than they normally would and cap [ceiling] teams who want to spend more because they can."

It's not just the 50-50 division of the revenue pie and how to get their on a sliding scale to protect current contracts that concerns players. In the league's proposed \$59.9 million cap ceiling, entry-level deals would move from three to two years to create a greater gap before arbitration. And eight years of eligibility for unrestricted free agency move those who entered the league at 20 to age 28 from 27.

"Any leverage you have or any position you can be in to become a free agent or shop you abilities around becomes so much more important when there's less to go around," stressed Schneider.

Schneider is still weighing a European playing option in Switzerland should the lockout persist because he has dual citizenship and wouldn't be classed an import player. Staying put is staying optimistic.

"I like to keep my optimism and pessimism in check, but it's getting down to the point where something has to happen one way or another," he said. "They [owners] understand the players want to play and a majority of the owners would love to be playing. They didn't purchase hockey teams to not have a business and sell entertainment. I'm sure some are more demanding on what they want [in the CBA], but I'm sure they want to win more than anything."

Vancouver Province: LOADED: 11.06.2012

643768 Washington Capitals

Jay Beagle on trying to keep a routine during NHL lockout

By Eric Detweiler , Updated: November 5, 2012

Capitals center Jay Beagle finished up his workout with four other players at the Kettler Capitals Iceplex at about 10 a.m. on Wednesday morning. The group continues to secure ice time at least three times a week at the team's practice facility, trying to keep a routine during the uncertain time.

The sessions also serve a different function for Beagle as he prefers to get his updates on the labor progress from two of his workout partners — Capitals winger Jason Chimera and Jeff Halpern, a former Capital now with the New York Rangers.

Players are scheduled to hold a conference call on Monday night for an update on the weekend's negotiations, and Beagle said while he's encouraged that the sides continue to talk, he'll wait to hear the specifics from Chimera, the team's representative to the players' association.

"I don't really have much input to bring," said Beagle, who signed a three-year contract extension in July. "I'm a guy who just came into the league, and when they tell me to play, I'm going to be playing. I stay away from it, and when I hear some good news, it's obviously uplifting and I get excited."

While many of Beagle's teammates have scattered the globe with some playing overseas, the 26-year-old Calgary native never gave much thought to leaving the area, even with regular season games cancelled through Nov. 30 and last week's decision to call off the league's annual Winter Classic, which he called "sad."

"I feel like the minute I go, I'll be coming straight back. That'll be my luck," Beagle said before leaving KCI on Monday.

Instead, Beagle – who recorded five points last season in a career-high 41 games before a broken foot in the playoffs ended his year – will keep doing his best with his new routine and wait for the lockout to be lifted. When other players are scrambling to get back to the area once the stoppage ends, Beagle will be waiting for them, preferably sooner than later.

"We're not used to this," Beagle said. "This is tough to be in November and not playing games and not playing hockey. It's definitely a different experience. We're looking forward to hopefully something getting done in the next couple weeks and playing some games and getting back to our normal routines."

Washington Post LOADED: 11.06.2012

643769 Washington Capitals

Adam Oates on Hall of Fame nerves, waiting for NHL lockout to end

Posted by Eric Detweiler on November 5, 2012 at 12:20 pm

Since getting word he'd been elected into the NHL Hall of Fame in late June, Adam Oates has been thinking about how to boil down his 19-year playing career in the league into a five-minute speech.

Hired as Capitals coach the same day he received the Hall of Fame call, Oates, 50, has had more time than expected to plan for the ceremony with the NHL lockout dragging into its eighth week. He will do his best to sum up the experience when he's inducted in a ceremony next Monday in Toronto along with Joe Sakic, Pavel Bure and Mats Sundin.

"It's amazing how you can get nervous practicing [the speech] by yourself," said Oates, who has also been staying busy as co-coach of the team's AHL affiliate in Hershey. "It's getting closer and just talking to everybody every day, you definitely feel it."

Oates has been co-coaching in Hershey during the lockout. (Doug Kapustin/For The Washington Post)

Oates took time to look back on his career, including six years in Washington, and talk about his work with the Bears but not speculate on the NHL's uncertain future during a 16-minute press conference Monday at Kettler Capitals Iceplex.

Oates described the chore of balancing coaching duties, family time and speech preparations as "stressful." With Hershey, he said he's learning to manage players' ice time through the AHL's often rigorous schedule. He also appreciates the opportunity to work with assistants Calle Johansson, Tim Hunter and Blaine Forsythe, so they are all on the same page when the lockout ends.

"You've got to take a mature attitude about it," Oates said. "Do I want to coach the [NHL] guys? Absolutely. But it happened to me when I was a player [during the 1994-95 season.] As I said, [work stoppages happen] everywhere. You've just got to wait it out."

Oates, a Toronto native, said he made his first Hall of Fame trip with his father as a youngster, and as he's enshrined alongside the game's greats, he'll thank as many people as possible and focus the speech on the connections made during his time in the NHL, which included stops in seven different cities.

On Monday, he remembered his time in Washington fondly, including the team's 1998 run to the Stanley Cup finals. He did not, however, have those fuzzy feelings about its former home, the Capital Centre: "Thank God I only had to play there for a month," he joked. It was "dark and slow. 'Let's get out of here."

Oates got a reminder of how small the hockey world is over the weekend when he ran into former St. Louis Blues trainer Mike Folga before an AHL game in Connecticut. Folga is now the trainer for the Mercyhurst College team that played Sacred Heart on Saturday before the Bears took on the Bridgeport Sound Tigers.

"Everybody does that all the time," Oates said. "You bump into someone, right? Hockey's no different, that's life. Those memories are the ones I'm going to try to bring out and touch on as many as I can in that short span of time."

Washington Post LOADED: 11.06.2012

643770 Washington Capitals

Capitals coach Adam Oates staying busy with Hershey Bears

Gaining experience while co-coaching in minors

By Stephen Whyno

In an alternate universe where NHL owners and players got a deal done over the summer to prevent a lockout, Adam Oates would be coaching the Washington Capitals. He'd be spending his early mornings at the practice facility and 41-plus nights at Verizon Center.

Instead, much of his time is spent with Hershey of the American Hockey League as he gets more on-the-job training for a position in the NHL that should be his. And while Oates has taken to co-coaching in the AHL, it's not what he envisioned.

"It's very frustrating. But it's a work stoppage. It happens in all walks of life," Oates said Monday. "You got to take a mature attitude about it. Do I want to coach the guys? Absolutely. But it happened to me when I was a player, and as I said it happens everywhere, so you just got to wait it out."

Oates isn't just putting his feet up and watching film. With his Hockey Hall of Fame induction a week away, the 50-year-old is practicing his speech and has his hands full in Hershey.

Co-coaching alongside Bears head man Mark French and with the help of Washington assistants Calle Johansson and Tim Hunter, Oates has not had much of a chance to study his players at the NHL level. Putting so much energy into the Hershey job, he still thinks constantly about the Caps, even if that's, at least temporarily, a fruitless exercise.

"You don't want to think about it because your hands are tied," he said. "I just hope it gets resolved and we can start."

No longer a player and not an owner, Oates has no say in the labor talks, which are expected to resume Tuesday in New York. Asked if he was optimistic about there being an NHL season, Oates smiled and said: "I'm not supposed to go there."

Oates' mind isn't on the negotiations as much as it is on coaching the Bears. Between that and making preparations for Toronto and Hall of Fame weekend, he said life has been stressful.

But coaching at the AHL level hasn't necessarily been a problem affixed with growing pains. Oates embraces the chance to run a bench alongside French, but it wasn't something he even considered until general manager George McPhee suggested it.

"It just happened to be a coincidental time with a lockout where you get an opportunity to get some coaching experience," Oates said. "I don't believe that you have to coach in the AHL to coach in the NHL. ... I'm not against it. I didn't think I had to go through it, but given what's happened, has it been a good opportunity? Yes."

Oates said nothing about his AHL experience has surprised him. That's not a slight at the difficulty of the job but more a testament to what Oates learned from New Jersey Devils coaches Peter DeBoer, Jacques Lemaire and John MacLean and Tampa Bay Lightning coach Rick Tocchet during his three years as an NHL assistant.

"I wasn't a head coach, but when you're beside a guy for three years, you know that there's certain things you have to do, certain things that you have to think about, a certain amount of time you put in," Oates said. "I've made mistakes. But I think you'll make mistakes in the NHL, too. Nobody's perfect."

Oates even went so far as to say working with the Bears wasn't a substitute for trial and error with the Caps.

"I think you're still going to make mistakes in the NHL. ... Every coach makes mistakes every night," he said. "Nobody coaches a perfect game; there's no such thing. You try and eliminate as many as you can."

Little things are different. Oates hears his voice on line changes more than he did as an assistant, but other than that not much of a change. This lockout is just building onto his coaching experience.

But Oates is itching to coach the Caps.

"I was very excited, and I am excited and can't wait to touch base with them," he said. "When it happens, it'll happen."

Washington Times LOADED: 11.06.2012

643771 Winnipeg Jets

Jets winger Miettinen headed home to play in Finland

By: Tim Campbell

WINNIPEG -- Not gone but going -- Winnipeg Jets left-winger Antti Miettinen was on the ice with friends and teammates this morning at MTS Iceplex.

The 32-year-old is returning Tuesday to his hometown, Hameenlina, Finland, to join HPK Hameenlina in the Finnish top league.

"It's nice, at least to go play at home," Miettinen said this morning. "It's familiar surroundings and our families are there so it's good for the kids to go see their grandparents, all that stuff.

"If you have to go somewhere, that's probably the best place to go."

Miettinen is aware that the trip could be on the short side if any traction is gained in this week's negotiations between the NHL and NHLPA.

Miettinen and his PA compatriots have been locked out since Sept. 15 and he has been skating and working out with some of them three times at week at the Iceplex.

"I wouldn't say I'm worried about it," he said this morning. "Hopefully things get sorted out quick and that'll be just like a short training camp, but we'll see."

Miettinen skated with the Finnish team -- he played three seasons for HPK before beginning his NHL career -- during the summer.

"I trained with them already, before I came over here, for a month and a half on the ice," he said. "They asked about the situation back then and we talked about it and said we'll see how it plays out over here. We've got settled in here with the family, so I didn't want to go right back.

"I think it's a good time to go now, with a break, and there will be some practice before the first game."

In parting, did Miettinen have any parting advice for NHL commissioner Gary Bettman or NHLPA boss Don Fehr?

"I think they're up to date with what the thing is, so I don't think I have to give any advice there," he said.

Winnipeg Free Press LOADED 11.06.2012

643772 Winnipeg Jets

Jets prospect Adam Lowry off to flying start

By Ken Wiebe ,Winnipeg Sun

Adam Lowry is learning a new position to enhance his versatility, cherishing his return to full health and relishing the responsibility of serving as captain of the Swift Current Broncos.

The third-round pick (67th overall) of the Winnipeg Jets in the 2011 NHL Entry Draft is off to a solid start during his fourth Western Hockey League season, picking up nine goals and 21 points in 20 games to open the campaign.

"I've been happy with my start," Lowry said in a telephone interview from Swift Current, Sask. on Monday afternoon. "I knew coming into the year it was going to be big for me because I missed the last half coming off (wrist) surgery. I wanted to get off to a good start, not only for myself but for the

"I've battled a little bit of inconsistency, but I've been getting back on the right track."

Although he's been back on left wing the past few games, Lowry has mostly been used at centre, an experiment that dates back to training camp and began with a discussion he had in the summer with Broncos head coach and general manager Mark Lamb.

"I was open to it," said Lowry, who stands 6-foot-5 and weighs 201 pounds. "We felt that if I could learn a new position, it could only help my game. If you look at most successful teams, they have a couple of big guys down the middle. It helps in the defensive zone.

"It took me a little time to adjust to. I don't think I've been that tired in games, ever. You have to play a little bit more defence and you're having to keep your feet moving through all 200 feet of the rink. It's helped me a lot, allowed me to stay physical and I've enjoyed it."

Given the emphasis the Jets have placed on character for their draft picks, it's no surprise Lowry finds himself wearing the C this season after serving as an alternate last year.

"It's been good. It was nice to be recognized by your teammates," said Lowry, who was chosen captain by a team vote. "It's nice to be given the responsibility to lead these guys. It's something I've embraced and it says a lot about someone if you can bring your team together and have a positive effect, not only on the way they play but the way they handle themselves in the community. I've tried to get the best out of our team."

As for the left wrist that required surgery in Winnipeg late last December, Lowry is feeling no ill effects.

"It's feeling really good and the strength is back to where it was before the injury. It hasn't been an issue," said Lowry. "I know that in my first fight in pre-season, I was a little worried about how it was going to hold up, but it held up there."

For the second consecutive season, Lowry has been selected to play for Team WHL against Russia in the Subway Super Series, giving him another opportunity to leave an impression on the folks from Hockey Canada that will be handing out invitations to what figures to be an incredibly competitive camp early next month for the world junior team.

"I look forward to playing the Russians again," said Lowry, who will suit up in both games. "It's always fun to play in these all-star games and to play with some of the best players in your league. To know you're on the radar for Hockey Canada is something I'm pretty happy about. It's everyone's goal to potentially get an invite to the world junior camp and to make the

"I'm going to continue to try and play a strong two-way game and if that is something Hockey Canada likes, then that's great. If not, I'm going to try and help the Broncos."

Winnipeg Sun LOADED 11.06.2012

643773 Websites

ESPN / Oates reflects on full NHL career

By Scott Burnside

ESPN.com

Let's start this discussion about the newest member of the Hockey Hall of Fame, Adam Oates, with this: Don't ever feel bad for him because he didn't win a Stanley Cup.

Ever

Whether or not the fact that he doesn't own a ring delayed his induction into the Hall of Fame is moot, because Oates emphatically insists he wouldn't trade anything he had or accomplished or saw or did for the elusive ring.

Nothing.

"Nineteen years in the NHL, how lucky am I? I got to play in the NHL for 19 years," Oates told ESPN.com during a recent interview.

"There's other guys that won a Cup their first year [who] would trade a career for that ring, and if they say they wouldn't, they're lying," he said. "I got to play my job in the National Hockey League for 19 years, and I wouldn't trade the memories, I wouldn't trade playing with Brett Hull for anything."

When we catch up with Oates, he is standing outside the Hershey Bears' dressing room in Hershey, Pa., where the new head coach of the Washington Capitals is working as co-coach with the Caps' American Hockey League affiliate during the NHL lockout.

A few minutes earlier, he was wandering through the locker room with a laptop computer, glasses on, going over some strategy with one of his players.

Later, he will coach three games in three nights with the Bears.

Unlike many of his contemporaries, Hall of Famers like Steve Yzerman, Al MacInnis, Ron Francis and Joe Nieuwendyk who traded Hall of Fame careers for front-office jobs, Oates followed a different route back to the game.

After spending three years as an assistant coach in Tampa and New Jersey -- where he helped the Devils to the 2012 Stanley Cup finals -- Oates got a call from his old GM in Washington, George McPhee. Now Oates is tasked with getting the talented Capitals over the hump, a job he has embraced with gusto.

Adam Oates

Adam Oates collected 156 points in 163 postseason games and went to the Stanley Cup finals with Washington in 1998 and Anaheim in 2003.

It was one of those great twists of fate that the call to take over his first NHL team as a coach and the call beckoning him to the Hall of Fame came on the same day, literally minutes apart.

"I'm still looking for the words. I've been trying to find the right words [to describe the day]. I got the call for the job first, which I was so excited about. And I'm going through the process of calling everybody, telling them I got the job, when this number keeps beeping in, and George texts me and says you might want to take that call," Oates recalled with the kind of grin that looks like the memory hasn't faded much since that day in June.

That other call came from Hall of Fame selection committee executives Jim Gregory and Pat Quinn.

"It's one of those things where I hung up the phone and kind of said, 'You've got to be kidding me.' And everything goes through your mind. It's kind of like a wow moment. I called my dad, called my mom, obviously told my wife. That night I was just sitting there going, 'Wow, like wow,'" said Oates.

By its nature, a trip to the Hall of Fame is a time for reflection, a time for stepping away to consider all that went into the equation to result in that

phone call and a plaque hanging alongside the game's greatest players and builders.

Oates' career spanned 19 seasons, and his 1,420 points are 16th most in NHL history. His 1,079 assists are sixth overall and reflect his standing as one of the game's most gifted playmakers of all time.

He never won a Cup, as noted, but the undrafted Oates managed to collect 156 points in 163 postseason games, including trips to the Cup finals in 1998 with Washington and 2003 with Anaheim.

"Since that day, all I've really done is reflect on my career," Oates said.

"I'm going to say in my speech that I'm sure there's not one guy that when they actually thought about 'wow I'm in,' didn't all of a sudden spend the next period of time going 'hmmm,' and you start thinking about your career, and that's what I've done since June."

Interesting, though, that such an honor and the attendant introspection comes at a time when Oates is committed to learning new skills, to forging a new path in the hockey world.

"Right now, I have a new challenge in my life. How lucky am I at 50? I've got new responsibilities in my life. It's great," Oates said.

Former linemate and fellow Hall of Famer Hull admitted he was initially surprised when his old friend called a few years back and said he was thinking about trying coaching.

Great players are blessed with such innate talent that communicating the nuances of the game, what made them great, is sometimes difficult, Hull told ESPN.com in a recent interview.

"But if there's a guy that can do it and be successful, it's Adam," said Hull, who puts Oates' hockey savvy in a rare class with players like Wayne Gretzky, Mark Messier and Mario Lemieux.

Brett Hull

Adam Oates and Brett Hull clicked from the moment they met and spent almost three seasons punishing defenses and goalies.

Hull and Oates formed one of the most dynamic tandems in NHL history after Oates was traded from Detroit to St. Louis in June 1989, a deal that then GM Jim Devellano has often referred to as one of the worst hockey trades of his career.

"I know the moment we did meet and did become teammates there was a connection that was evident not only on the ice but off the ice," Hull said.

"It was peanut butter and jelly. We just went together."

The two were polar opposites, and maybe that's what made their connection so dynamic, so dangerous.

"He loved to see a guy score and to set up a goal as much as I loved to score," Hull said. "He was such a genius on the ice."

The two roomed together on the road, hung out at home and made life hell for opposing defensemen and goaltenders. In 195 games with the Blues over parts of three seasons, Oates scored 58 goals and added an incredible 228 assists. Hull scored 228 goals, for a remarkable average of 76 goals a season over those three seasons.

Together, the two would obsess over sticks, different lies, weights, curves. They would get after their teammates and suggest changes in lumber they thought would help.

A favorite moment for Hull?

Hull recalls playing in Minnesota one night against the North Stars when opposing center Marc Bureau did something to annoy Oates.

As they lined up in the North Stars' zone, Oates gave a nod to Hull, who went straight to the side of the net, and Oates deftly won the draw and sidestepped Bureau before sending the puck to a wide- open Hull, who tapped in from about three inches.

As they headed for the bench, Hull could see Oates jawing at Bureau, essentially saying, Look at you now.

"Obviously, Adam wasn't a fighter, but he had fire in him," Hull said.

Oates spent parts of only three seasons in St. Louis, although it seems longer.

When he landed in Boston during the latter stages of the 1991-92 season, he and tough, skilled winger Rick Tocchet became fast friends, and it wasn't long before the two developed significant on-ice chemistry, thanks in large part to some on-the-fly tutorials from Oates.

"He would tell me, Just go here and I'll get you the puck even though I'd been used to going somewhere else," Tocchet said with a laugh.

"Just little things that I'd never thought of. We were very successful. He was giving me tap-ins left and right."

When Oates retired after the 2003-04 season, he lived for the most part in California, getting up early in the morning to walk his dogs, work out and play golf. Then he'd go to bed early and get up and repeat.

"I remember when he told me about his routine I was like, 'Are you serious?'" Tocchet recalled.

Oates played a lot of golf, and when he wasn't playing, he taught some. He also caddied on the PGA Tour with Brett Quigley.

But when Tocchet called his old linemate before the start of the 2009-10 season and asked if Oates would be interested in helping out as an assistant with the Tampa Bay Lightning where Tocchet was the head coach, Oates bit.

It's not as though there was an epiphany along the way, the lightbulb going off over Oates' head that said "yes, I must coach."

"It didn't really work that way," Oates said. "I would say, in hindsight, I felt that as a player I did some coaching. Being a responsible player and talking as a veteran and doing the little things that you point out, I felt like that's doing a little bit of coaching. But no, I didn't have some sort of magic thing. Rick Tocchet called me and I asked my wife and she said let's do it, and I said, you know what, I'd like to try."

But it didn't take long for the job to get under Oates' skin, as in the first game with the Lightning.

"It's exactly how it went," Oates said with a grin. "It was fast. It was fast, and the electricity was unbelievable. It was, 'Yes, I miss this in my life."

Adam Oates

When hired as the Devils head coach, Peter DeBoer said he was planning on firing Adam Oates until meeting with the now Hall of Famer.

After a year in Tampa, Oates joined the Devils' coaching staff. In the summer of 2011, Peter DeBoer took over as head coach. DeBoer acknowledged that as he prepared to meet with Oates in the offseason, he was predisposed to not bringing him back so he could assemble his own staff

"Two hours later, I walked out and I said, 'This is a guy I want to work with and have to have back," DeBoer told ESPN.com recently.

"He's very honest. He's very forthright. He's got very strong opinions. He really coaches like he played, and he was a very unselfish player. He's a smart guy. I think he's going to transition well [to being a full-time coach]."

Oates knew his coaching career might have stalled a year ago when DeBoer took over.

"I'm a logical guy. I know he's going to have shortcomings about me. He doesn't know me. He's coming into a new team and I just wanted to let him know from the opening get-go that I got your back. I got information. You want it, you got it. You want me to just stand here, you got it. I'm an assistant coach, I know what my responsibilities are, I will support you," Oates said.

"I said to him, the only thing is, look, I'm not going to lie to you, there's a time in my life when I want to be a head coach. I don't want your job, but I want when someone calls you, you say, 'yeah, Oatsy's good,' that's my goal."

As it turned out, that call came earlier than maybe either Oates or DeBoer expected.

When former Capitals captain Dale Hunter decided to return to his junior hockey team in London, Ontario, McPhee called on Oates, who was with the Caps when McPhee took over as GM in 1997.

"Sometimes you don't know how good a player is until you work with that player," McPhee said in a recent interview.

Sometimes when you see a player up close, they turn out not to be as good as you imagined, McPhee said. Sometimes, and this was the case with Oates, you see much more depth and texture to a game than you imagined.

"I had no idea he was as good as he was defensively," McPhee said. "You realize how valuable one player can be when they do so many things well."

During the team's exit interviews last May, one veteran Capital suggested to McPhee that, if Hunter wasn't going to return, he could do a lot worse than talk to Oates.

"He said he thought that Adam Oates could become one heck of a coach from all that he was hearing," McPhee said.

Now he's about to find out.

"The coach has to be a lot of things, and he was a lot of things to us," McPhee said.

Calle Johansson played with Oates later in Oates' career and is now a member of Washington's coaching staff. He liked playing with Oates a lot better than playing against him.

"He was the kind of guy who could make you look silly," Johansson said.
"He's probably the most underrated player I've ever played with or against."

As for the transition from player to coach, Johansson sees the same traits on display every day at the rink as Oates delivers his game plan to his players.

"This guy knows what he's doing. It's detail, detail, detail. It's a great experience," Johansson said. "As a 45-year-old defenseman, I'm still learning from him."

Is Oates the man to take a talented Capitals team to new heights?

It's too early to tell, but if he's not, it won't be for lack of preparation.

"One of my things that I tried to say to George is that I think I'm a good coach because I can identify with every single guy on your team," Oates said. "I played in the minors. I got traded. I got benched. I had success. I played with superstars. I played on every line on the team. I played on the fourth line. I played in the fighting era. There's not a guy that I can't have a story for. I think I wore every hat as a player."

One of those hats now says Hall of Famer.

ESPN LOADED: 11.06.2012

643774 Websites

ESPN / Still reason to be cautious as talks resume

By Pierre LeBrun

The NHL and NHL Players' Association resume bargaining Tuesday in New York City after a marathon session between Steve Fehr and Bill Daly over the weekend that produced a little traction.

Cautious optimism were the two words most spoken in the hockey world Monday.

"I think every time there is a layoff where there's no talks and then talks resume, there's always optimism in the air," New York Rangers goalie Martin Biron, a member of the NHLPA's negotiating committee, told ESPN.com on Monday. "Obviously, everybody is cautiously optimistic with some of the exchanges that Steve and Bill had, even though it was more brainstorming than anything concrete. But to be able to schedule some meetings and get larger groups involved again is going to be a good thing. Still, as with every case in the last little while when people got too optimistic, it's just part of the process and we'll see where it goes."

Fact is, this thing can still go all kinds of directions; it's still in a very, very delicate state. It might produce more progress and lead to consecutive days of bargaining and ultimately a new CBA, but the two sides could just as easily clash again on key issues and the whole thing goes sideways.

Biron was set to fly to New York from Buffalo on Monday night.

The key development over the past week was word that the NHL was willing to fund a portion of the "make-whole" provision, language introduced

in the league's last official proposal that sees existing players' contracts honored -- a huge issue for players in this negotiation. Whereas the league's last proposal saw players pay other players under make-whole in deferred payments, the league is now showing a willingness to fork up money to pay for a chunk of it. That was certainly part of Saturday's discussion between Daly, the NHL's deputy commissioner, and Steve Fehr, the NHLPA's No. 2 man and outside counsel.

Thing is, the players still want to know more about the league's new approach to make-whole before getting too excited.

"That's the thing, there's not much detail to it right now," Biron said. "It's still more of a concept right now, more than anything. It was a general conversation [between Daly and Steve Fehr]. The make-whole also isn't the only thing that needs to be discussed, either. There are a lot of things like player contracting rights that are still there to be discussed and are still big items on the table. I think everybody is talking about the make-whole provision, but there's a lot more than that as players that we want to talk about as well."

Biron was part of Sunday's NHLPA internal call with the negotiating committee and again Monday afternoon when the negotiating committee plus the executive board had a larger call.

Biron said those calls are important platforms for NHLPA executive director Donald Fehr.

"Don is there to give us recommendations and lay some options in front of us, but he also sits and listens and answers every question," Biron said. "The more players that speak up, the better it is for Don to see what the pulse of the players is, and he's really good at doing that."

GMs Meetings

Next week is Hockey Hall of Fame induction weekend in Toronto, which over the past few years has also meant the league's 30 GMs gather right after, also in Toronto.

Not so this year. There was some internal debate at the league office about the merits of having 30 GMs get together during the lockout and being able to focus on the game without worry about the wins and losses that normally pre-occupy the GMs' thoughts in a normal season.

In the end, however, the decision was to not hold the GMs meeting while there was still no hockey.

For now, there's nothing scheduled, although my sense is that if and when there is hockey this year, the 30 GMs might meet fairly early in the shortened season, not only for the usual reasons but perhaps also to get help from the league's head office to wrap their minds around the new CBA.

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NBCSports.com / Was canceling the Winter Classic what CBA negotiations needed?

Mike Halford

For some, the cancelation of the 2013 Winter Classic was the worst moment of the lockout.

But could it also be the most important?

Friday's scrapping of the NHL's annual outdoor game was met with doom and gloom. The Winter Classic is, after all, the league's signature regular season event and a television ratings bonanza.

Canceling an event of this nature was significant. In addition to the public relations nightmare and lost viewership, an estimated economic impact of \$30-\$35 million fell by the wayside.

So too did the Hockeytown Winter Festival and, at the risk of getting all schmaltzy on you, the joy and excitement of the 80,000-90,000 people that had already purchased tickets.

The impact of the cancelation resonated with players. Red Wings defenseman Ian White, who was set to participate in the Winter Classic, said as much to the Windsor Star:

"If [Gary Bettman's] willing to cancel that, I don't know why he'd want to play a season after that, because that's the highlight of the year," he explained. "So if he's willing to throw away that game, then the balance of the season, I would think, is definitely on the line."

Bettman's reputation precedes him in these instances. This is the third lockout of his 19-year tenure as NHL commissioner, and he remains the only commissioner in North American pro sports to lose an entire season to a work stoppage.

Fear that scrapping the Winter Classic would lead to a canceled season might've been very real for players. Perhaps that's why, during Thursday's conference call, NHLPA members expressed they wanted their leadership to do more negotiating.

Something else to consider...

We've seen past instances where labor negotiations were kickstarted by a significant event — a recent example came during the NFL-NFLRA lockout, which started in June and lasted nearly four full months, with replacement officials working all four weeks of the preseason and 48 regular season games.

Despite both sides appearing entrenched in their respective positions and far from a deal, the work stoppage was solved in 48 hours after a highly publicized incident during Seattle's 14-12 victory over Green Bay on Monday Night Football.

A controversial, game-deciding touchdown call by a replacement official was roundly criticized — on-air, ESPN color commentator Jon Gruden called it "tragic and comical" — and within days, the regular officiating crews were back working games.

Now back to hockey.

On Friday, the Winter Classic was canceled.

Within 48 hours, the following happened:

- News leaked of the NHL making concessions to its "Make Whole" policy.
- NHL commissioner Bill Daly met with NHLPA special counsel Steve Fehr for a lengthy discussion that "covered a lot of ground."
- Reports surfaced that the NHL and NHLPA were set to resume meetings this week.

All of which begs the question: Did the lockout just have its Golden Tate moment?

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NBCSports.com / Report: New CBA may include ability to trade salary and/or cap space

Jason Brough

"What's in it for the players?"

It's a question that's been repeated over and over by NHLPA chief Donald Fehr. And it's a fair question, given the union went into negotiations accepting its share of revenues would fall from the 57 percent it earned under the last CBA.

Well, according to the StarTribune's Michael Russo, here's what could be in it for the players:

Among other things, the owners have proposed to 1) artificially inflate the salary cap in Year 1 so teams don't have to trade or release players; 2) trade player salary and cap charges in trades (this is something both teams and players have wanted); 3) eliminate re-entry waivers; 4) Increase revenue sharing with further increases as revenues grow, and the top grossing teams making the biggest contributions (revenue sharing is something Don Fehr is passionate about; wants it so the teams that really need assistance are assisted); 5) Introduction of appeal rights to a neutral third-party arbitrator in cases involving on- and- off-ice discipline (player-proposed wish).

Some other things that the players should like:

1) Joint NHL/NHLPA Health and Safety Committee with equal representation by the league and union; 2) Establishment of a "standard of care" and "primary allegiance" obligations between the team medical staff and players (this is directly due to the tragic Derek Boogaard situation that remains ongoing); 3) Offseason rehab activities would no longer be required in the team's home city; 4) Players have access to second medical opinions at the club expense; 5) Ice time restrictions and days off during training camp; 5) Improved facility standards in visiting locker rooms; 6) Ice condition improvements and standards; 7) More player friendly rules for parent-son trips, teams would have to pay for parents travel and lodging to first-ever games, other milestones; 8) Different standards for rent and mortgage reimbursements from teams; 9) increased access to tickets for visiting players and also a game ticket policy that minimizes the tax impact on players; 10) And also, the league has agreed to consider a player proposal for single rooms for all players on the road, which would be thousands of extra dollars spent on travel. Typically, players share rooms on the road unless you're a longstanding player (600 games), or in a lot of cases, goaltenders.

Lots of interesting stuff there, perhaps none more interesting than No. 2 in the first paragraph – "trade player salary and cap charges in trades."

It's not clear exactly what that may entail, and obviously there would be limits.

Leafs general manager Brian Burke, one of the NHL's most eager deal-makers, has been a proponent of being allowed to trade players while maintaining responsibility for part of their salary. But the league, which prides itself on competitive balance, has been hesitant to allow rich clubs to gain too much of an advantage over others.

That said, the ability for budget-conscious franchises to trade unused cap space for draft picks and/or prospects may serve to increase parity in the long run.

And for the players' sake, more trade flexibility could allow those stuck in bad situations to escape for fresh starts elsewhere.

And for PHT's sake, more trades mean more clicks, so we're on board.

NBCSports.com / LOADED: 11.06.2012

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NBCSports.com / NHL expected to go "silent route" this week

Jason Brough

Don't expect the NHL to say much publicly during this week's planned CBA talks. According to CSNPhilly.com's Tim Panaccio, the league plans to go the "silent route" with "the less said publicly, the better off."

At most, Pancaccio reports the NHL may release the odd statement, a la Bill Daly's "we talked about a lot of stuff and plan to talk about more stuff" (not his exact words, but pretty much) note that followed this weekend's meetings.

Common sense tells us this is a good sign, as much of the talk that's been done publicly during the work stoppage has been for the purpose of disparaging the other side.

NBCSports.com / LOADED: 11.06.2012

643778 Websites

Sportsnet.ca / Spec on Lockout: Uncovering the hawks & doves

Mark Spector

You would think the "hawks" and the "doves" in this National Hockey League lockout would be easy to identify. The more one digs however, like the labour war itself, the more complex things become.

With profits in the \$200 million range (all figures U.S.) it figures that the Toronto Maple Leafs would want this lockout over as soon as possible, right? Perhaps. But as long as team owners Rogers (Sportsnet) and Bell (TSN) are looking to increase their Maple Leaf TV properties, they are going to require Gary Bettman's support in the near future.

As such, the Leafs are said to be firm supporters of Bettman in this lockout, even though it's costing them as much as \$30 million per month in hockey profits.

When it comes to dissent on the owners' side, Bettman only requires the support of eight teams to veto any proposal from the NHLPA.

"There are more than 20 teams that are 100 per cent happy to wait" for the best deal, said a source.

As such, there's no money in being a lone dove, when NHL economics dictate that so many of your colleagues are going to wait as long as it takes to get a better deal from the players.

Then there is this fact: If Chicago owner Rocky Wirtz loses a season of revenue, but ends up with a better CBA than before, he will make up the lost revenues over future seasons. His captain Jonathan Toews has no mechanism to do the same, however. Every dollar in salary lost is a dollar lost forever.

Thus the owners' patience.

It is easy to identify the hawks around the owners' table. Some, like Boston's Jeremy Jacobs, makes all kinds if money yet simply smell more from a better Collective Bargaining Agreement. Others, like (insert name of Sunbelt team here) are losing so much dough, they not only require a better CBA, but they're saving money by not playing hockey.

The doves, on the other hand, are not so easy to spot.

First, there are precious few of them. Second, the sooner an antsy NHL owner jumps at an NHLPA proposal, the more it will cost his team in revenue sharing. So why be in a hurry?

Third, the better the deal for the owners, the more the junior franchises like Nashville and Carolina will be worth. That makes the Philadelphias, Detroits and New York Rangers worth even more as well.

Said one Western Conference source: "The guys that are in trouble, the guys who need the revenue sharing, they don't want to take revenue from the league. They don't want to rely on that.

"What bothers owners is when you can't make a go of it on your own. And now, teams that were OK before aren't OK anymore. The Dallas', the Anaheims, they can't make a go of it anymore. Colorado, St. Louis — they don't want to sit there and rely on handouts."

Nor do the rich owners want to write those checks, even if most of us see increased revenue sharing as a required element in any new CBA.

"Toronto, Philadelphia Boston, Montreal...," listed one source. "They aren't entitled to have their businesses get better. The rest of the NHL isn't healthy enough."

So who are the hawks? Who are the doves?

Here's what we know.

THE HAWKS

JEREMY JACOBS, Boston

The Chairman of the NHL's Board of Governors, Jacobs is a hawk in the truest form. Jacobs bought the Bruins in 1975 for \$10 million. Today Forbes magazine values the team at \$325 million, with revenues of \$125 million that ranks Boston sixth among NHL teams. Jacobs makes healthy profits from his Bruins. He just wishes them bigger. Having him on the negotiating committee is like having the ghost of James Norris on board. "He represents everything that's wrong with the owners," said a source.

MURRAY EDWARDS, Calgary

Departed Flames owner Harley Hotchkiss had a huge hand in the last lockout, and Edwards has assumed his seat on Bettman's negotiating committee (alongside Jacobs, Ted Leonsis and Craig Leipold). With relatively new owners in Vancouver, Edmonton and Winnipeg, Edwards speaks on behalf of the Western Canadian franchises. He is known as a tough businessman who will go hard after a better deal if he thinks one is there to be had. The Flames make all kinds of money, so you can count

Edwards in as league man who'll stand in support of all those U.S. owners whose expansion checks he has cashed. As well, the more favourable the CBA, the more the Flames are worth. With a new rink in Calgary on the burner, a higher franchise value wouldn't hurt with the bank.

HENRY SAMUELI. Anaheim

Samueli is a hawk by necessity, as he has lost millions since buying the Ducks from Disney for \$70 million in 2005. His team has missed the playoffs two of the last three seasons, and he'll have to pay dearly to renew contracts for his two stars, Corey Perry and Ryan Getzlaf, on July 1, or fall further into SoCal obscurity. All he has to cling to is a current Forbes franchise value of \$184 million, but in an economy where money-losers don't sell for nearly that high. "He's lost a lot of money out there," said one former NHL exec. The good news? The billionaire Samueli is tied at No. 271 on Forbes' list of The 400 Richest Americans. He's not sweating the lockout

PETER KARMANOS Jr., Carolina

Carolina, alongside San Jose, represents that best of the Sun Belt teams Gary Bettman has brought on board. They don't come more successful in a non-traditional market than the Hurricanes and Sharks — and both are still money losers. The Hurricanes average ticket price (Team Marketing Report) ranks 24th in the NHL, more than \$15 below the league average. Even with that, average attendance ranks 22nd, with losses in the \$5-10 million range annually. Karmanos is set to step down as CEO of Compuware Corp. He'd like to see his Hurricanes franchise value of \$169 million (Forbes) improve under the new CBA.

CRAIG LEIPOLD, Minnesota

The Wild owner is a major Bettman ally, after Bettman made possible Leipold's move from owning the perennial money-losing Nashville Predators, to Minneapolis, a traditional, northern hockey town. The Wild once sold out 409 straight games, but now have slipped to 16th in overall attendance. Then Leipold found out what it costs to put your team back on the map: identical \$98 million deals to Zach Parise and Ryan Suter. Now Leipold is a staunch supporter of rollbacks. The Wild are suddenly one of the NHL's highest spenders, and the revenues in Minny don't back that up.

PHILIP ANSCHUTZ, Los Angeles

You'd think Anschutz would be a dove, wanting games to capitalize on that Stanley Cup momentum, right? Well, think again. Anschutz Entertainment — the umbrella company that owns the Kings and the Staples Centre — was listed for public sale in September, and insiders believe it was shopped privately for some time with no success. Fitch Ratings put the Staples Center on Credit Watch Negative in October of 2011 before the NBA lockout. Now the NHL isn't filling those lucrative dates in the heavily financed Staples Centre. Who wants to spend more than \$230 million to buy a team that doesn't make profits unless it goes four rounds? Anschutz needs a better prospectus; a business model that guarantees more profits, in order to get the Kings sold. "They may have some momentum," said one front office type, "but he's old business."

JOHN McCONNELL, Columbus

The Columbus owner has watched his investment sewer since the day he bought the Blue Jackets. Forbes estimated he lost \$25 million in 2010-11, when the Jackets finished 24th in the league. McConnell spent \$9 million more last season and finished 30th, likely dropping another \$25 million along the way. He's dying in Ohio and needs something, anything, to nudge that franchise closer to financial viability. Missing games while the Ohio State Buckeyes are playing football is money in McConnell's pocket.

CLIFF VINER, Florida

With 13 names on the Panthers' ownership masthead underneath Viner, the ownership cooperative in Florida is starting to look like that 33-headed monster in Edmonton, pre Daryl Katz. Word is, you can join that Panthers group for very little coin, so long as your presence can help with the financing picture. "Florida is for sale. It's a disaster," said a source. "The system is so unpalatable for the Tampas, the Floridas, there's no way they should be at the (salary cap) floor." A key issue in Florida: Only three teams have cheaper premium tickets than Florida's (\$85.68). The Panthers average ticket price is also below the NHL average at \$55.67 (Team Marketing Report). In a gate-driven league, their gates stink. They need more revenue sharing or less player costs. And even those changes might not be enough.

TOM GAGLARDI, Dallas

The Canadian bought the Stars for a reported \$265 million a year ago, and proceeded to lose \$25 million last season. The Stars are another of those poor teams in a big U.S. centre where, if you don't spend money on star power — and then win — you simply will not draw fans. So Gaglardi signed Jaromir Jagr, Ray Whitney, and pumped another \$5.5 million into his payroll for 2012-13, but even in a shortened season his attendance is sure to stay near its 28th ranking. And his ticket prices are dead last, with an average ticket price of less than \$30. He'll go broke trying to make money in Dallas. As a first-year owner, Gaglardi will quietly support this lockout, knowing that the longer it lasts, the less he'll lose.

THE DOVES

LARRY TANENBAUM, Toronto

By sheer profits missed, we're willing to identify the Maple Leafs as a team that would support almost any agreement to get going at this point. But with two new media magnates — Rogers and Bell — now owning 75% of the team (Tanenbaum owns the rest), neither want to want to make waves in their first year at the owners' table. Especially not with a significant change in the Canadian TV landscape on the horizon, and the two undoubtedly forging game plans that will require Bettman's blessing. Also, if sharing increases, no one will pay more into the fund than the No. 1 revenues team in the NHL — just another reason to show patience.

MIKE ILITCH. Detroit

There likely is not a more player-friendly owner in the sport, a man genuinely loved by Red Wings players since he bought the club for \$8 million in 1982. Today Forbes estimates the Red Wings value at \$336 million. Detroit Metro and Convention Bureau recently announced the city will lose \$2 million per game, but a counter study noted that a major share of that was destined for llitch' pocket, in terms of restaurants and parking owned by his companies. At 83 years old, llitch is the owner equivalent of Teemu Selanne or Daniel Alfredsson in this fight. Not much to gain, plenty to lose. And with the Winter Classic in his town already sunk, it looks like llitch is in for the long haul like everyone else.

ED SNIDER, Philadelphia

Snider (79), like Ilitch, wants to play, but insiders say he won't buck the large group. As chairman of Comcast Spectacor, this lockout will adversely affect Comcast Sportsnet (which has a handful of regional NHL deals) as well as NBC Sports Network (formerly Versus), which also falls under the Comcast umbrella. NBC Sports Network must still pay the NHL \$200 in rights fees this year, but will get an extra year tacked on to the back end of its 10-year contract (it was to start this season) for free. On the ice, the Flyers are well over \$100 million in revenues, with relatively little debt servicing. They're a money machine that won't churn until Bettman and Donald Fehr reach an agreement.

EUGENE MELNYK, Ottawa

Does Melnyk think the NHL should be operating? Well he said exactly that on the Sportsnet 590 THE FAN last week, a conversation that drew the ire of Bettman's right-hand man, Bill Daly. "We should be playing hockey by now. Everybody knows it, and we're not," Melnyk spewed. "I'm extremely disappointed, like any fan, of where we are." Insiders say that Melnyk's passionate, fan-on-the-street approach has mitigated his impact at the Board of Governors level however, so even if he is a vocal dove, he won't be an impactful one. Also, word is out that he's looking for investors (like so many NHL owners). So a new, more owner-friendly deal produced by this lockout will be welcomed in Ottawa, both for improving the immediate bottom line of the sixth most valuable Canadian team, and also improving its saleability.

JAMES L. DOLAN, New York Rangers

In short, anything that Bettman wants, Dolan is said to wish for the opposite. He's a strange cat who operates out of the spotlight, though he broke his silence to ESPN.com's Katie Strang at the Rangers Dog Walk in September, saying, "The only thing I can say is that I want us to play hockey." In 2008, Dolan and the Rangers sued the NHL for control of its own web site. The Rangers lost, Bettman made threats, and the two settled out of court. With a \$1 billion renovation of Madison Square Gardens underway, as many as 60 dark nights wasn't what Dolan had in mind. Especially with a Rangers team that could produce huge playoff revenues. But although he is not Bettman- friendly, Dolan is in such a small minority that he can not pose much of a threat for the commissioner.

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643779 Websites

YAHOO SPORTS / Owner-player Jaromir Jagr sees both sides of NHL lockout

KLADNO, Czech Republic – Who's the owner around here? Seriously. Something needs to be done. It looks like this arena hasn't been renovated since it was built in 1949 – at least since they put the roof on 10 years later.

Jaromir Jagr owns and plays for HC Kladno, giving him a unique lockout perspective. (Courtesy of HC Kladno)Though it can fit 8,000 people, it can seat only 1,600. The rest have to stand on the concrete risers that wrap around half the rink. The halls are full of dark wood paneling, covered with nicks and scratches, and everything needs a coat of paint or three.

The scoreboard over center ice is small, with old Atari graphics. At least it works. There is another one near the rafters in an end zone, next to an analog clock, but it sits dark the whole game.

There are no luxury boxes, unless you count the cafe with windows to the ice. Almost all of the concession stands are outside under tents, because there isn't enough room inside for a concourse.

And then there is the dressing room. We'll just say it isn't up to NHL standards.

Isn't the owner taking grief?

"Oh," says center Tomas Plekanec, "we teasing him a little bit."

About what?

"Everything," he says. "Everything sucks here, this arena."

Plekanec smiles.

"But," he adds, "it's somehow kind of magic place, anyway."

Game time comes, and presto, the pumpkin turns into Madison Square Garden.

Fans squeeze onto those concrete risers. They squeeze in early, because it's first come, first served. Many don't leave during intermission, because they don't want to lose their spots.

And they don't just stand. They sing and chant to the beat of a drum, minute after minute, period after period. They scream and cheer, goal after goal.

[Related: #NickInEurope photo diary featuring Jagr, Ovechkin, Malkin & more]

The wood paneling doesn't matter. The faded paint doesn't matter. The lack of amenities doesn't matter. The negatives somehow morph into positives – character, atmosphere.

All that matters are the Knights of Kladno, and what has already been done, what is going on right now. Who's the owner around here? Seriously.

It's Jaromir Jagr.

*

He is an owner. He is a player. He is also a locked-out NHL player, a duespaying member of a union – the NHL Players' Association – in a labor battle with owners. That creates a unique situation in Kladno, and that gives Jagr a unique perspective on the NHL lockout.

Jagr (left) and the rest of HC Kladno salute the fans after a win. (Courtesy of HC Kladno)He doesn't want to be here; his team is benefitting because he is; he's having a great time. He understands what it's like to be a player; he understands what it's like to be an owner; he thinks both sides need to worry about the game.

"To be honest, I would like to be in Dallas right now," says Jagr, who signed a one-year, \$4.5 million deal with the Stars over the summer. "But if it is this opportunity, I'm happy about it. We're probably having the best team we're ever going to have in this city. I don't think it's going to be again. More games we play together, the more we're enjoying it.

"We just want to take the best from a bad situation."

Jagr grew up in Kladno, a town of about 70,000 people about 45 minutes northwest of Prague. He played in this arena, and he played for this club.

Then he left to become one of the greatest players in hockey history, winning two Stanley Cups and an Olympic gold medal, a Hart Trophy as the NHL's most valuable player and five Art Ross Trophies as its scoring champion.

[Nick Cotsonika: Wayne Simmonds won't let racist incident ruin his Euro trip]

His father, also named Jaromir, owned a chain of hotels and HC Kladno. The plan was to pass the club to his son when his NHL career ended – except it wouldn't end. After playing three years in the Kontinental Hockey League, Jagr returned to the NHL in July of 2011, signing with the Philadelphia Flyers.

"My dad was holding it for 17 years for me to come back, and he put a lot of money in it – own money in it," Jagr says. "He couldn't take it anymore. He's 70 years old. It was tough. The team was losing money. He wanted to keep it for me, and I didn't want to come back yet because I feel like I still can play in NHL."

So Jagr took over the club last year while he was playing in the NHL. He had to. Otherwise, it was going to move, and it has roots in Kladno that run as deep as 1924. Black-and-white team pictures line a wall in the cafe, on the other side of a door from a color photo of Jagr and the Art Ross.

Jagr owns 70 percent of the club; the town owns the rest. He changed the name to "Knights," because knights had the qualities he wanted in his team, like courage, honesty and tenacity; respect, selflessness and fairness. He helped design a new logo, a medieval knight wearing the helmet of St. Wenceslas I, patron of the Czechs. He is heavily involved in the business.

Jagr says HC Kladno is a "charity" endeavor compared to the high commerce of the NHL. (Y! Sports)"It's my baby," he says. Jagr isn't signing fat checks to his fellow players, even the locked-out NHLers like Plekanec, Marek Zidlicky and Jiri Tlusty. Plekanec, normally a Montreal Canadien, also grew up in Kladno, played in this arena and played for this club. He didn't want to go anywhere else during the lockout.

"There were no negotiations," says Plekanec, whose salary basically pays to insure his NHL contract. "You're playing for free."

Jagr isn't cashing fat checks, either. Hockey-related revenue? The Knights aren't generating much. They aren't even trying very hard.

Standing on those concrete risers costs only 130 crowns – about seven bucks. There is a merchandise shop, and there are signs with Jagr pointing the way, but when a fan tried to enter during the first intermission Sunday, the door was locked. It was closed – closed during a sold-out game.

"You don't make money," Jagr says. "The fans don't pay much for the tickets. You depend on the sponsors. If the players come wanting more, I will have to give them from my own pocket. I give them what I can. I'll have to tell them no. In NHL, it's still business. Owners still making money. This is charity."

Even if there are major differences between the NHL and the Czech Extraliga, Jagr's experience helps him see both sides.

In October, he told the Czech website idnes.cz that NHL owners weren't trying to cheat the players out of their existing contracts, as Washington Capitals captain Alex Ovechkin had asserted. He said it was simply business. He also said the owners "set the rules" and that commissioner Gary Bettman was working for the owners.

"I see it differently than when I was 25," says Jagr, who is 40. (Ovechkin, for the record, is 27.) "I see it differently because I'm an owner."

He knows more because he is an owner. He also knows what he doesn't know – that there is a lot involved with running a business and keeping the books, and that the players aren't involved with it. With a laugh, he says it is much easier to simply practice for an hour, work out and go home.

[Also: Sergei Fedorov's journey from defector to NHL superstar to Soviet savior]

"I don't see the details [in the NHL] – and I don't think I'm the only one," Jagr says. "I think the players don't know anything. You might know some numbers, but you actually don't know the details. If you don't know the details, it's tough to kind of react to it.

"That's why you depend on the guy who's running it for us, and the NHL depends on Bettman. Those two guys together, they have to make sense."

Jagr understands Bettman and NHLPA executive director Don Fehr are fighting for their constituencies. But he sees a league that grew tremendously while he played in Russia for three years, and he sees shame in damaging it.

When he returned to the NHL, Jagr played for the Flyers against the New York Rangers in the Winter Classic, the annual outdoor showcase, at a packed Citizens Bank Park in Philadelphia. The 2013 Winter Classic, which was supposed to draw a record crowd of 110,000-plus to Michigan Stadium to see the Detroit Red Wings host the Toronto Maple Leafs, has already been canceled.

"Most of the hurt, it's the fans and the game," Jagr says. "It got a lot more popular than before. You could see it, the money they're making. The league making a lot more money than before. The fans follow it a lot more than before. Hopefully they [make] some sense together and make a deal.

"Nobody's going to win [if they don't]. Everybody's going to lose."

Actually, somebody is winning right now. The Knights are winning. The arena is winning. The Czech fans are winning.

A young child plays ball hockey while Jagr and HC Kladno practice. (Y! Sports)"Last year it wasn't like this, for sure," says Kladno defenseman Jiri Drtina. "Now it's great."

The plan was for Jagr to play for the Knights after his NHL career ended, and that is still the plan. When he's finally done in North America, whenever that is, he will come back here and play.

But he is already here because of the lockout, and so the stands are full in Kladno, when they were far from full before, and they're full everywhere the Knights play on the road, when they aren't necessarily full otherwise, and everyone is enjoying the hell out of it, not knowing how long it will last.

"I think guys from NHL improve the Extraliga this year," says fan Tomas Horak, 42, who says he played with Jagr in junior. "Of course, they are on a higher level than the other players from the Czech Extraliga. I think especially for fans, it's great to see these guys in the Czech Republic, in our ice rinks."

This is truly Kladno's ice rink. In fact, it is simply called Municipal Ice Rink.

While the Knights practiced Saturday, a bunch of kids played ball hockey right on the other side of the boards – just as Plekanec says he used to do as a kid. Toward the end of Sunday's game, men walked between the boards and the packed stands carrying sticks and equipment bags, headed to their dressing rooms for their adult league. As Jagr did postgame interviews, they brushed past him in the cramped hall on their way to the ice. Jagr joked with one of them.

[More: KHL game no match for Alex Ovechkin's autograph session]

Jagr has gray in his beard, but he looks more like one of those up-and-coming kids than one of those has-been men. Against lesser competition, on the larger ice surface, he looks like the younger version of himself. His skills set him apart here even more than they do in the NHL.

In a 7-2 victory Sunday over Chomutov, Jagr had a goal and three assists. He turned a defenseman inside-out for a scoring chance. He played keepaway with four opponents in the neutral zone, then zipped a pass onto the tape of a teammate at the offensive blue line. He tried to poke the puck past a defender on the rush and failed – and like this was ball hockey on the other side of the boards, just laughed as he skated back toward the bench.

Jagr has 10 goals and 26 points, fifth in the league. He's two points behind Plekanec, his linemate, and he has played one less game (16).

"Sometimes I feel nervous to play with a guy like him," Drtina says. "You can see that he's a great player – his moves and everything. He's just the best."

The ancient arena rocked before, during and even after the game. The Knights came back out of the dressing room for a victory lap. Two years after failing to make the playoffs, they rank second in the league.

"KLAD-NO!"

Clap, clap, clap.

"KLAD-NO!"

[Nick Cotsonika: Longtime NHL coach starts all over behind the bench in Russia]

The owner sees no need to renovate.

"It's so cold here, they have to do something to keep them hot," Jagr says, laughing. "On the one side, of course it would be enjoyable for the fans. It would be a lot better for them. On the other side, this is our arena. It's got an advantage. It's old. It's cold. I know the other teams don't want to come here."

They put the roof on this place in 1959. Now, at least for now, they're blowing it back off.

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