Lockout Update: Day 32 - There is still a lockout…but now there's hope…

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Fantasy Guide - Fully updated as of October 10, including the Draft List - and when a season is announced I will re-jig the projections - all 600 of them.

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Some fairly promising news in yesterday's ramblings was followed up in an awful hurry by very good news. The NHL gave the offer that they probably already had drawn up back in July, but had to play the childish negotiating game to ensure the best chance of success at getting it. I'm sure you've heard most of the deets, but I'll go through the key points anyway. Afterwards, I'll go over some fantasy implications.

1. Revenue to be split 50-50 throughout the proposed contract

2. Contract is to run at least six years (Donald Fehr said in his press conference "I think" six years)

3. Entry Level Contracts run two years, down from three. This is to ensure that the "second contract" that has been killing teams, won't be as bad. After all, teams won't have to sign through his free agency season now, because…

4. Contract maximums will be five years and…

5. A player's UFA season would be pushed back to 28 years old, from 27. So there is no way for the second contract to take the player into unrestricted free agency. There needs to be a third contract. The player needs to be 28, or he needs to play eight years in the NHL. So the ELC is 2+5 (contract max)=7, which is less than eight.

6. This season, all players retain their full contract. There is no rollback. This is done in two ways. First of all, the salary cap will be allowed to be exceeded up to $70 million. Anything over their 50% share will be deferred payment (future years they will get the money owed).

7. Per Pierre Lebrun , year-to-year salaries can only go up or down by five percent.

8. Arbitration eligibility pushed back from fourth year to the fifth.

9. A 33% increase in revenue sharing from big-market to small-market clubs. Currently $150 million is being shared. This will increase to $200 in the new proposal.

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The two sides will speak on the phone tonight to clarify a couple of areas (mainly revenue) and they will meet again Thursday - and I would expect a counter proposal of sorts. If the agreement is reached by October 25, the season can begin on November 2 and all 82 games will be played. The playoffs will start two weeks late and an extra game will be added for each team every five weeks.

That's not a huge workload thrown in there, but you have to think that backup goaltenders will see an added three or four games. If it means eight games are slotted into the schedule, you have to think that at least half of them would result in back-to-backs.

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The big thing that I'm looking at are the NHLers who flocked to Europe quickly. Some of them have played upwards of 10 or 12 games. Professional games against other men, complete with plenty of hitting, training and practicing. So these guys are looking at a 94-game season, with 82 games a little more condensed than they are used to. Injuries are bound to increase, particularly among the guys who have played 10 or more games already. And compound that even further if the player is a Band-Aid Boy , such as Evgeni Malkin .

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And then there are the players who have sustained injuries over there - if the season begins November 2, Jakub Voracek won't start. Neither will Corey Emmerton. Lots of intangibles to consider, and I'll update all I can on that in the Fantasy Guide.

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Here is an article on Cam Barker, criticizing and questioning scouts on their rating of him as a top prospect as a teenager.

Why I think the stance is a wrong one: he was injured. Like, a hundred times. If I remember correctly, he missed much of a key development year (still a teenager) from mono, and then it was injury after injury after that. His skills stalled at the age of 18, or at least showed very little progress. And then by his early 20s he was taking steps backwards. This is a banged up body, combined with being a little more tentative - a little gun shy. I don't think the scouts were wrong - if he missed 10 games in his last eight years (at all levels, not just the NHL), then I'm sure he'd be a good player today. But he was drafted in 2004, played just 27 games in 2005, missed a dozen games the following year and that's about how things went after that, missing 10 or 15 games each year. Shoulder, ankle, groin, ankle, ankle (yes, ankle three times, plus three "lower body" injuries that could also be ankle-related).

I'm not defending the player. I don't think I've ever owned him in fantasy hockey. I'm just defending the scouts. Sometimes it's not a matter of the scouts "getting it wrong". Sometimes, it's just that the player is forced down the path to failure by injuries. And the same can be said

about any fantasy owner and his or her evaluation of young players. Sometimes you don't get it wrong - things just went wrong that are out of your control.

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Jeff Angus interviews Justin Goldman about Kari Lehtonen for Defending Big D .

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Another player at risk of injury this year? Dmitri Kulikov . He's eating ice time like it's going out of style right now and has already played seven KHL games. Add that to the fact that he's already a Band-Aid Boy , and I would bet $50 right now that he won't play 70 games this season in the NHL.

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Taylor Hall is still nursing a shoulder injury and will keep collecting a paycheck be out for - what's that? The lockout could be over soon? Oh. Yeah, so uh, Taylor Hall is cleared from his shoulder rehab (after surgery) and will report to OKC. Nicely timed, sir - well done!

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Puck Daddy investigates the all-too-serious rumor that the NHL will announce expansion to Toronto and Quebec City after a CBA is settled. My thoughts? I've been saying this would happen all year. I think a team (Phoenix or Florida?) moves to Seattle, and the league will expand to Vaughan (Toronto) and Quebec City. So 32 teams and 20 playoff teams - and the

Leafs finally get some competition, which would be fantastic for them (though they don't know it yet).

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Damien Brunner has 17 points in 10 games for his Swiss club so far, and his future teammate Henrik Zetterberg
is expected to play on his line Friday. At this point, though, Zetterberg may only get in two games before he has to fly back for Detroit's shortened training camp!

(am I too optimistic?)

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Vancouver prospect goaltender Eddie Lack just about made it through two full games without allowing a goal, to kick off his AHL season.

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MORE things you won't hear during the NHL lockout (the bloopers weren't great, but the "more things" part was hilarious):

{youtube}NUuxnAINVnk{/youtube}