


FREEZING THE PUCK: THE NHL LOCKOUT

Introduction

Focus

Canada's passion for hockey took a wallop in the fall of 2004 when the NHL decided to lock out its players. With mounting losses and no collective bargaining agreement in place, the league felt it had no option but to lock out its players. *News in Review* examines the issues behind the lockout and considers the future of Canada's favourite game.

 Sections marked with this symbol indicate content suitable for younger viewers.

It was all tied up early in the third period of the championship game of the World Cup of Hockey when Shane Doan took a Joe Thornton pass from behind the net and beat Finnish goaltender Miikka Kiprusoff for the go-ahead goal. That made the score 3-2 for Canada. With a combination of grit and luck, the Canadians hung on to win the game and the World Cup. Canada's squad of elite NHL players had established themselves as the dominant global hockey power. One would expect that the celebration after the game would reflect the euphoria of a team that had done their nation proud. However, the post-game celebration lacked passion. Why? Because the players—the Canadians, the Finns and the other NHLers who participated in the tournament—were about to be locked out by team owners the next day. It was a great hockey moment that lost its lustre to a labour dispute.

Lockout!!!

Hockey fans got official news the next day. NHL commissioner Gary Bettman announced that the league's inability to negotiate a collective bargaining agreement (CBA) with the players' union meant that the long-rumoured player lockout was a reality. When employers and employees cannot come to terms on a CBA, there are two legal paths that can be taken: the employers can prevent their employees from working—and thereby earning a paycheque—by locking them out, or the employees can withdraw their services in the form of a strike. In the case of the NHL, the owners chose to keep the players from playing, much to the disappointment of the players and the fans.

NHL: We Need a Salary Cap

The main issue in the labour dispute is a wage control mechanism called a salary cap. The owners claim that player salaries gobble up over 75 per cent of league revenues, leaving only a fraction left over to handle other expenses. Other professional sports do not have this problem: the National Football League spends 64 per cent of its revenues on player salaries, while Major League Baseball spends 63 per cent and the National Basketball Association spends 58 per cent. These three leagues have a salary cap. If the NHL owners could put a cap on salaries, they could lower the percentage ratio between salaries and revenues so that they could make a profit. According to a report commissioned by the NHL, teams collectively lost \$273-million in 2002-2003. It is estimated that the league lost another \$225-million in 2003-2004. According to the owners, these colossal losses will lead to the death of a number of franchises. Based on this situation, NHL commissioner Gary Bettman is arguing for a salary cap in order to provide owners with an accurate idea of club costs from season to season, something he calls "cost certainty."

The Players: We Want a Free Market

Meanwhile, the NHL Players' Association (NHLPA) says they will never agree to a salary cap. The owners got themselves into this mess by willingly offering huge salaries to players in a free-market system. No one forced the Colorado Avalanche to pay Peter Forsberg \$11-million per season—the team chose to pay him that much money. The NHLPA does agree that the players are well paid, but soaring

Further Research

To stay informed about recent developments concerning the NHL owners and players, visit their official Web sites at www.nhl.com and www.nhlpa.com.

salaries are a problem created by owners who drove the salaries up trying to build winning teams. It is insincere for the owners to turn on the players and call for the elimination of a free-market approach to salary negotiations just because they mismanaged their own businesses. According to NHLPA executive director Bob Goodenow, “They [the owners] say they want a relationship between revenues and player costs. We say it already exists.”

What’s Next?

What comes next is anyone’s guess. The owners and the players are at polar opposites on the issue of a salary cap. No talks took place in October 2004 and, as the month drew to an end, there were no plans for future talks. In the meantime, both sides have amassed huge war chests to weather the storm; the NHLPA has \$100-million put away while the owners have had \$300-million

put aside since 1999 in anticipation of a lockout or a strike. The NHLPA was warning players for over a year to save money because a lockout was coming. Meanwhile, the league, after near bankruptcies in cities like Ottawa and Buffalo, have secured a group of extremely wealthy owners—many of whose net worth exceeds the \$2-billion that the NHL generates each season. Some optimistic hockey fans are hoping that the league and the players will come to their senses and get back to the bargaining table. After all, this isn’t the first lockout in NHL history. The owners locked out the players in 1994, and the two sides managed to negotiate a new CBA and salvage the season. However, hockey insiders are not quite as optimistic this time. Both sides seem to have the will and the money to watch this lockout go into perpetual overtime. Meanwhile, the fans wait.

To Consider

1. Why was Canada’s World Cup victory celebration cut short in September 2004?

2. What is a lockout? How is it different from a strike?

3. Why does the NHL think it needs a salary cap? Support your answer with information from the article.

4. Why does the NHLPA oppose a salary cap?

5. Whose side are you on? Support your answer with evidence from the article.

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Video Review

Carefully respond to the questions as you view the video

Further Research

To satisfy your interest/need for hockey, consider a visit to these Web sites: The Canadian Hockey Hall of Fame at www.hhof.com. The National Hockey League itself is at www.nhl.com. The National Women's Hockey League is at www.nwhlhockey.com and the National Hockey League Fan Association is at www.nhlfa.com.

1. What happened in September 2004 to put the NHL hockey season in jeopardy?

2. Who is Gary Bettman?

3. Why was he angry when he appeared before the media on September 15, 2004?

4. Who else stands to be affected by the NHL lockout? Be specific.

5. What other labour troubles has the NHL had to deal with in its history?

6. Are Andrew Ference's comments accurate? In your opinion, is there too much animosity between the players and the league?

7. Why do you think Bettman and Goodenow refuse to talk to one another?

8. Are the owners supporting Bettman's approach to negotiations?

9. Where else can NHL fans get their hockey fix during the lockout?

10. How long do some sports-watchers think the lockout will last?

11. In your view, will there be any long-term effects of this dispute? Explain carefully.

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The Issues

So what are the issues in the latest battle between the NHL and the NHLPA?

History

The last CBA was negotiated in 1994 after a 104-day lockout by the owners. By all accounts, the players looked like they had lost the negotiations, but time would prove the skeptics wrong. The new CBA included a rookie salary cap, serious restrictions on free-agent movement, and changes to the league's salary arbitration system. By 1997, the CBA took a turn in the players' favour. In that year, the Boston Bruins signed Joe Thornton to a contract that technically

met the conditions of the rookie salary cap but, with bonuses and incentives, pushed his salary to over \$2.3-million a season. Meanwhile, Colorado's Joe Sakic was offered a three-year, \$21-million contract by the New York Rangers. Under the terms of the CBA, the Avalanche had the right to match the Rangers' offer—and they did—making Sakic the highest paid player in the NHL, surpassing all other players by \$1.5-million per season. Those two cases are cited by many as the beginning of a spending spree that put the league into the mess in which it found itself by 2004.

The Issues

Issue	NHL Owner's Position	The NHLPA Position
Salary Cap	- set salary cap between \$30-million and \$40-million per team. The league wants to create "cost certainty" so that clubs will know how much money they can count on from year to year.	- no salary cap - keep the free-market system. The players feel the owners have voluntarily agreed to pay players large salaries and that it is unfair for them to come back and demand that players agree to limit their wages.
Payroll Tax (also called a luxury tax)	- not interested in this idea	- teams that pay more than \$50-million in player salaries could be taxed on their excess spending, with the money redistributed to the teams that stay under \$50-million.
Salary Arbitration	- bilateral arbitration, where teams and players have equal access to arbitration. The owners say that, since players are the only ones who can apply for arbitration, they are either forced to give in to player demands or the player will hold out until he gets the money he is looking for.	- keep the model that exists now where only players can apply for arbitration.
Free Agency	- NHL players are considered restricted free agents up until the age of 31. The NHL would agree to drop that age limit to 29.	- drop the unrestricted free agent limit to at least 29 and lift many of the restrictions on free agency.

Issue	NHL Owner's Position	The NHLPA Position
Rookie Salary Cap	- strengthen the rookie cap by eliminating incentives and bonuses that allowed owners to dance around the 1994 cap.	- the players would agree to some modifications to the existing rookie salary cap.
Revenue Sharing	- revenue sharing is something that the owners could decide on independently of the players' association.	- the owners could put a tax on regular season and playoff ticket sales. The tax collected could be put into an account and redistributed to teams that aren't making as much money.
Minor Issues	NHL Owner's Position	NHLPA Position
Scoring Statistics	- want to scrap the reporting of statistics related to hits, blocked shots, giveaways, and takeaways. Too often they have been used in arbitration cases to boost player salaries.	- want proper statistics maintained so that they can be used in contract negotiations as an indicator of overall player performance.
The Turin Olympics	- participation contingent on scheduling, travel considerations, TV rights, and revenue certainty.	- support Olympic participation.

Source: Faceoff 2004 – www.cbc.ca.

Further Research

With no games to watch, you might consider reading one of this season's new books on hockey, including: *Hardcore Hockey Trivia* (Greystone) by Don Weekes, *Remembering Guy LaFleur* (Raincoast) by Craig MacInnis, *The Unofficial Guide to Even More of Hockey's Most Unusual Records* (Greystone) by Don Weekes and Kerry Banks, or *Hockey Town: Life Before The Pros* (McClelland and Stewart) by Ed Arnold.

Definitions:

Salary cap – a maximum amount that teams can spend on salaries

Payroll tax – also called a luxury tax; a monetary charge against teams who spend more than the amount set by the league

Arbitration – a process whereby an impartial person listens to and resolves disputes between a player and the owner of the team

Restricted free agency – when a player's contract expires and he is restricted from signing with other teams based on deterrents such as the draft-choice compensation system

Revenue sharing – channeling money from rich teams to cash-strapped teams

Analysis

1. Which two contract signings saw the CBA turn in favour of the players?

2. Analyze the positions of both sides. Make a point-form list under the following headings:

Issues That Are Most Important to the NHL

Issues That Are Most Important to the NHLPA

Common Ground

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Solutions

Did you know . . .
Hockey Night in Canada is Canada's longest running and most popular television program?

Quote

"I will satisfy my hockey 'fix' by going to see more local minor hockey games. At least our minor hockey association will appreciate my support more than the greedy NHL owners and players." — Thomas Schafer, fan, *Toronto Star*, October 14, 2004

With the NHL and the NHLPA refusing to meet after the lockout started in fall 2004, two solutions were put forward by outside parties: one by *Hockey Night in Canada* analyst and former NHL executive Brian Burke and one by hockey experts from the all-sports channel TSN (The Sports Network).

Burke's 15-point Plan:

- phase in agreement over two years
- sign a 12-year deal
- put some league revenues into a third-party account for things like payroll and arena construction
- create a revenue-sharing fund of \$200-million; \$125-million from regular season revenue and \$75-million from playoff revenue
- establish a pay threshold (salary cap?) of \$38-million, with teams having to spend a minimum of \$33-million
- tax teams that spend more than the threshold; gradually increase this tax the more the team goes over the threshold to make it undesirable for teams to spend excessive amounts on player salaries
- reward teams that honour the pay threshold by charging fees to those who do not honour the pay threshold
- guarantee that 55 per cent of league revenues will go to player salaries
- establish audit controls of league revenues that involve both the NHL and the NHLPA
- establish gradual pay increases for rookies, with a maximum of \$250 000 for bonuses and incentives
- drop the unrestricted free agent age from 31 to 29

- make it easier for teams to keep restricted free agents on their teams
- drop the number of regular season games from 82 to 70 to improve the quality of the game
- revise the salary arbitration system so that both teams and players can apply for arbitration; also adopt final offer arbitration where an arbitrator picks the most reasonable salary put forward by both parties
- set a drop-dead date for player signing. If a player doesn't sign by a certain date, he's out for the season

Source: Faceoff 2004 – cbc.ca

The TSN Solution

- a hard cap on salaries with no player making more than \$6-million per season.
- a luxury tax of 100 per cent on teams spending over \$40-million; tax money would be redistributed to teams who honour the pay threshold
- revamp the salary arbitration system, allowing both teams and players to apply for arbitration; also adopt final offer arbitration where an arbitrator picks the most reasonable salary put forward by both parties
- liberalize free agency
- make it easier for teams to keep restricted free agents on their teams
- introduce a rookie salary cap of \$850 000 per season with a bonus and incentive limit of an additional \$850 000. Thus rookies could make a maximum of \$1.7-million.

Source: The TSN Solution – tsn.ca

Investigate

1. Make a list of similarities and differences between the two plans.

2. Both plans call for some form of wage control. The TSN example proposes a 100 per cent luxury tax on teams that spend over \$40-million on player salaries. In 2003-2004, the New York Rangers spent \$77-million on payroll, so their tax burden would be \$37-million under the TSN plan. Does this seem fair to you? Explain.

3. On the other hand, Burke's plan insists that teams spend \$33-million on player salaries. The Nashville Predators spent \$23-million on payroll in 2003-2004. Under Burke's scheme they would not qualify for any revenue collected in luxury taxes. Is it fair to penalize a team for being economical? Explain.

4. What suggestions might you have to end the dispute?

5. Which proposal do you think is most reasonable? Explain.

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Voices

Read the selection of quotes listed and indicate whether you agree or disagree with the comment. Be prepared to explain your thoughts. Then complete the activity that follows.

Did you know . . .
Players who were injured before the lockout will continue to receive their full salary until fully recovered? Which players on your favourite NHL team fit into this category and how much are they earning during the lockout?

Canadians certainly have much to say about their favourite sport or lack thereof!

Voice #1: The Owners

“I stand here today to say that we owe it to hockey’s fans to achieve an economic system that will result in affordable ticket prices and stable, competitive franchises. The very future of our game is at stake, and the NHL’s owners are united as never before, determined to do everything humanly possible to bring hockey’s economic system into the 21st century. We have no other choice.” — NHL commissioner Gary Bettman announcing the lockout on September 15, 2004

Agree _____ Disagree _____

“We’re apologetic to our fans, but we’re not apologetic for what we felt we needed to do.” — Ken King, president of the Calgary Flames, commenting on the lockout, September 16, 2004

Agree _____ Disagree _____

“The Oilers support the league and the commissioner 100 per cent. The league and member clubs are seeking for fans the right deal; not a time-bomb deal and not just any deal, but the right deal.” — Edmonton Oilers president Patrick Laforge, September 16, 2004

Agree _____ Disagree _____

“The system is clearly broke. It doesn’t take any more reports or financial analysis to see that.” — Ottawa Senators president Roy Mlakar, September 16, 2004

Agree _____ Disagree _____

“It’s an embarrassing day for everyone.” — New York Islanders general

manager Mike Milbury, September 15, 2004

Agree _____ Disagree _____

“No one likes losing money and no one wants the league to miss games. But this stark fact remains: the Capitals will lose less money by not playing.” — Washington Capitals owner Ted Leonsis, September 14, 2004

Agree _____ Disagree _____

“They are somehow convinced that at some point the owners will lose their resolve. That is wrong, wrong, wrong. . . . It will turn out to be a flawed strategy.” — NHL commissioner Gary Bettman, September 15, 2004

Agree _____ Disagree _____

Voice #2: The Players

“This is a disappointing day for NHL players and fans. . . . Unfortunately, the league has rejected all opportunities for compromise, while stubbornly insisting that Gary Bettman has the single solution to every problem—a salary cap.” — NHLPA executive director Bob Goodenow reacting to Bettman’s lockout announcement, September 15, 2004

Agree _____ Disagree _____

“It is clear the owners remain stuck at trying to get a salary cap. At some point the owners need to understand the players will never accept a salary cap or any system arbitrarily linking payroll to league revenues.” — Vancouver Canucks and president of the Players’ Executive Committee Trevor Linden speaking about the salary cap issue, September 9, 2004

Agree _____ Disagree _____

Did you know . . .

During the lockout, many NHL players are going to play in Europe, or in minor leagues in North America? Chris Chelios of the Detroit Red Wings is training with the U.S. national bobsled team, although he hopes to join the Greek bobsled team at the Winter Olympics!

“The bottom line is: if they want a hard [salary] cap, we’ll sit out for the rest of our lives. If they’re not going to budge off of that, there’s really nowhere to go.” — Toronto Maple Leaf Bryan McCabe on the salary cap, *Toronto Star*, January 2004

Agree _____ Disagree _____

“The owners are being so hard-nosed about a salary cap, but they have to realize that it’s not going to happen. We’ll be down to 10 teams before that happens.” — Philadelphia Flyer Jeremy Roenick, *Toronto Star*, September 15, 2004

Agree _____ Disagree _____

“I’m disgusted by what’s going on. I can’t believe that the two sides can’t get together and do a fair deal. This isn’t about one side winning over the other. It’s about the game winning.” — Bobby Orr, speaking to The Sports Network, September 2004

Agree _____ Disagree _____

“An honest partnership can never be achieved under the league’s ‘my way or the highway’ approach.” — NHLPA executive director Bob Goodenow, September 15, 2004

Agree _____ Disagree _____

Voice #3: The Fans

“The hockey players get paid way too much freaking money.” — Vancouver Canucks season-ticket holder David Gilmour, September 2004

Agree _____ Disagree _____

“These guys don’t seem to know what they are selling. They seem to think they are selling a product like Pepsi-Cola. They don’t realize they are selling a relationship between the public and a

team.” — Edmonton Oilers fan Doug Spaner, September 2004

Agree _____ Disagree _____

“They’ve [the owners] created a bubbled economy that has burst and now they’re going back to the players with empty pockets.” — Hockey fan Jeff Eyamie on CBC’s *The National*, September 22, 2004

Agree _____ Disagree _____

“. . . the average NHL player at 30 years old can have \$5-million U.S. in their pocket to start any life they want, and I have to tell you that I think anybody in this planet would jump at such an opportunity.” — Hockey fan Andrew Stelmack on CBC’s *The National*, September 22, 2004

Agree _____ Disagree _____

“You [the NHLPA] have to take a direct step and take some concessions. We’ll support your side and we’ll go to the NHL and say, look, these guys are making serious concessions.” — NHL Fans Association president Jim Boone speaking to Bob Goodenow on *The National*, September 22, 2004

Agree _____ Disagree _____

Voice #4: The Media

“I give the analogy of the popsicle and two kids in the summer: you can argue all you want but that popsicle is melting away.” — *Hockey Night in Canada* host Ron Maclean, September 16, 2004

Agree _____ Disagree _____

“Down in the States, they’ll lose about four or five franchises, guaranteed.” *Hockey Night in Canada* commentator Don Cherry, quoted in *The Globe and Mail*, September 16, 2004

Agree _____ Disagree _____

“If it [a salary cap] doesn’t take place then I can say this for certain: both Alberta franchises and the Ottawa Senators and even for that matter the Vancouver Canucks and maybe the Montreal Canadiens can’t remain economically viable.” — Howard Bloom, publisher of *SportsBusinessNews.com*, September 2004
Agree _____ Disagree _____

“This is a fight about money. Money. Money. If you understand that, it provides clarity to the situation.” — Columnist Damien Cox, *Toronto Star*, September 16, 2004.
Agree _____ Disagree _____

“There is no right here, only wrong. The victims are not the overpaid players and the stupid owners—which they

have to be for having put themselves in this very position with their ability to control their own budgets—they are those who have already lost jobs, who won’t have employment because there is no hockey, who will lose benefits because the game is shutting down.” — Columnist Steve Simmons; *The Toronto Sun*, September 16, 2004
Agree _____ Disagree _____

“Goodenow champions the supremacy of a market-based economic system and will fight fiercely against a salary cap. If Bettman can’t or won’t come up with an alternative to a cap, this standoff could be—to borrow from the 17th century philosopher Thomas Hobbes’s take on life—nasty, brutish, and long.” — Michael Farber of *Sports Illustrated*, September 13, 2004
Agree _____ Disagree _____

Sources: All quotes are from www.cbc.ca/sports/indepth/cba/quotes.html unless otherwise indicated.

Activity

1. Pick one quote from each section that you feel represents the “voice” of each group.
2. Explain your selections to a partner.
3. As a class, discuss the points of view of each group. Which point of view makes the most sense? Why?

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The Numbers

Did you know . . .

The CBC pays the NHL about \$60-million a year for television rights to games but makes almost twice that amount in advertising revenue?

Take a look at the numbers listed in the chart below and complete the activity that follows. (All dollar figures are in U.S. dollars.)

2	Number of times the owners extended the collective bargaining agreement (CBA) of 1994. If they hated it so much, why did they extend it twice?
3	Number of labour disputes in NHL history; a strike in 1992 along with the lockout of 1994 and the lockout of 2004 (baseball has had eight work stoppages—the most in professional sports)
4	Average length in years of a professional hockey player's career
30	Number of NHL franchises
76	Percentage of NHL revenue that the owners spend on player salaries (by comparison: NFL – 64%; Major League Baseball — 63%; NBA — 58%)
104	Days without hockey in 1994-1995
230	Estimated number of NHL players playing for European hockey teams by the end of October 2004
700	Estimated number of regular players in the NHL
1018	Number of players who suited up for at least one game in the NHL in the 2003-2004 season
\$30 900	Average income before taxes for a single person living in Canada in 2002
\$73 200	Average combined income before taxes for married couples living in Canada in 2002
\$141 000	Salary for a member of Parliament in Canada; Prime Minister Martin makes twice that amount
\$455 000	The salary of Buffalo's Chris Taylor — the lowest paid player in the NHL prior to the lockout of 2004
\$733 000	Average player salary in 1994 prior to the lockout
\$1.8-million	Average player salary in 2003-2004
\$11-million	The salary per season of Peter Forsberg of the Colorado Avalanche and Jaromir Jagr of the Washington Capitals going into the lockout
\$23-million	The Nashville Predators payroll — the lowest payroll in the league going into the lockout
\$31-million	The salary cap amount proposed by the owners
\$41-million	Average amount of money that NHL teams spent on player salaries in 2003-2004

\$77-million	The New York Rangers payroll — the highest payroll in the league going into the lockout
\$100-million	Amount of money put aside by the NHLPA in the event of a lockout in 2004
\$225-million	Amount of money the owners say they lost in 2003-2004
\$273-million	Amount of money the owners say they lost in 2002-2003
\$300-million	Amount the owners put aside in 1999 in anticipation of labour woes in 2004
\$500-million	Average personal net worth of NHL franchise owners; the high rollers include Buffalo Sabres owner Thomas Golisano (\$1-billion), Colorado Avalanche owner Stan Kroenke (\$1.4-billion), Tampa Bay Lightning owner William Davidson (\$2.8-billion), and Los Angeles King owner Philip Anschutz (\$5-billion); that's just the individuals—many clubs are owned by wealthy businesses and consortiums
\$2.1-billion	The total amount of revenue that the NHL generates each season. This is the amount of money that the players and the owners are fighting over!

Sources:

Associated Press – April 15, September 15, 2004

cbc.ca – www.cbc.ca/sports/indepth/cba

Statistics Canada – www.statcan.ca/english/Pgdb/famil05a.htm

Toronto Star – October 24, 28, 2004

USA Today – <http://asp.usatoday.com/sports/hockey/nhl/salaries>

Let's Play With the Numbers!

You will need a calculator to complete this exercise.

- How much more money does the lowest paid player in the NHL make than the Prime Minister of Canada?

 - If the average length of an NHL player's career is four years, how much money does a player stand to make? Use the average salary number to make this calculation.

 - If the NHL revenue to salary ratio was the same as in the NBA (58 per cent), how much money would they spend on player salaries?

 - Based on the previous calculation, how much money is available for each of the NHL players to fight over? (In a bitter irony, many calculators will not calculate in the billions so you will have to move the decimal place over three spaces—therefore, instead of \$1 220 000 000 / 700 players you will have to divide \$1 220 000 / 0.7 on your calculator. If your calculator calculates in the billions you are in a perfect position to successfully complete this exercise in NHL math.)

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5. How many Chris Taylors (the lowest paid player in the league in 2004) can you pay with \$1.22- billion? (Use the bitter irony rule again if you need to.)

6. How many single people can you pay with \$1.22-billion? Use the average salary for a single person. (Use the bitter irony rule again.)

7. Add the personal net worth of the owners listed in the chart above. How many years of NHL revenue are these owners worth?

8. What do you think of this fight over money?

Answers

1. \$173 000

2. \$7.2-million

3. $\$2.1\text{-billion} \times 58\%$ (or $2.1 \times .58$) = \$1.22-billion for salaries

4. \$1 742 857.14 per player

5. 2681

6. 39 482

7. They are worth \$10.2-billion or 4.9 seasons of NHL revenue.

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Activity: Let's Make A Deal!

Archives

To view audio-visual material on past hockey events and personalities, visit www.cbc.ca/archives and investigate the sports files, which include stories on Wayne Gretzky, Don Cherry, Rocket Richard, the Canada-Soviet Series of 1972, and a feature on Sports Labour Disputes.

A collective bargaining agreement (CBA) is an arrangement reached by employers with their employees relating to the rights and responsibilities of both parties. In the case of the NHL and its players, an agreement was not reached by the time the old CBA expired, so the owners exercised their right to lock out the players. An investigation of the labour dispute indicates two sides that are at polar opposites when it comes to the main issues.

Now It's Your Turn

Your teacher will divide the class into two groups: the NHL Owners and the NHL Players. Here are your responsibilities:

Each group should pick a chief negotiator—the spokesperson for the group who will do the talking during negotiations.

Each group will discuss the main issues and decide on a position to take on each issue during bargaining. Use the information provided in this issue of *News in Review* as your bargaining package. This information should help you come to terms with the main issues.*

Two students in the class will be mediators who will work to move negotiations along during formal bargaining and will try to move each side to common ground. One mediator will work with the owners and one mediator will work with the players.

Begin bargaining. Each session will involve an issue statement of the position of each group and an honest attempt to find common ground. If an impasse is reached, break off talks and go back to your groups to discuss where the talks need to go next. You are allowed two impasses. A third impasse means your negotiations failed and your CBA goes to binding arbitration. In other words, your teacher will decide who has the best proposal.

***IMPORTANT NOTE:** You are your own bargaining team. You do not have to become entrenched like the NHL and the NHLPA. Any suggestion is acceptable. You might want to introduce a salary cap and luxury tax with money going to charity, expansion to Europe to improve league revenues, a salary rollback for players, a profit limit for teams, a shortened NHL season to improve the quality of NHL games, a decrease in salaries and ticket prices, and many more ideas that are in the best interests of the game and the fans. You want to think of this exercise as a way to create the ideal professional hockey league.