



The National Hockey League is starting to feel the pressure. With its players playing in games in all parts of the globe, Commissioner Gary Bettman, his staff, and the owners have put together a new proposal for the NHL Players Association to chew on. The goal for the NHL is to find a way to reach a resolution in time to cram all 82 games of the schedule into the 2012-2013 calendar year, which was expected to run from October 11 to April 13.

The latest proposal features a 50/50 split in revenue sharing between the players and the league. The league originally wanted a 57/43 split in their favor. Contracts would be capped at five years. Players would reach free agency at 28 years old or eight years of service time. The salary cap for the 2012-13 season would be \$59.9 million, which, 16 of the league's 30 teams are currently exceeding that number. Teams would be allowed to exceed the cap for this season.

In the league's haste to get a 2012-13 season started, they will probably make the same mistakes that they made in the 2004-05 lockout and overlook some very important details. Because the league continued to allow the salary cap to rise, they got into the predicament that they are in now. So far, there have not been any details regarding how the league will manage the cap in future seasons or deal with salary rollbacks. Players are paid a pro-rated salary, but if 82 games are played this season, players would be paid in full.

One side note of these proceedings is that there are [strong rumors](#) circulating, the linked one

from Jason Kay of  
*Hockey News*

*The*

, that an agreement on a new CBA could spawn a couple of expansion teams. That tweet, specifically, addresses possible teams in Quebec City and Toronto. Quebec City, home of the beloved Quebec Nordiques (now the Colorado Avalanche), has been trying for a NHL franchise since they lost their team in 1995. Toronto, who already has the NHL Maple Leafs and the AHL Marlies, likely has the market size to support two teams, but there are hurdles to jump with adding another team in Toronto. There has been opposition to a team in Hamilton, citing that the city approximately halfway between Buffalo, NY and Toronto is too close to the two other teams. There are also TV rights and other issues that would have to be sorted out.

In any event, this latest proposal should get both sides talking seriously again. The league has sent the message that they are willing to make concessions. Also, the media and the public, who have blasted the NHL on Twitter, in articles, and in other ways, are now going to be able to put some pressure on the players association. As mentioned in last week's article about the NHL's delayed opening night, the players are already playing elsewhere and are largely content with what they are doing. The league is the desperate side. They are attempting to appear flexible. That should get both sides back to the bargaining table and make some progress on the lockout.

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An update on the Lake Erie Monsters. The Monsters won two out of three games during the American Hockey League's opening weekend. The home opener on Friday night was a victorious debut for this year's squad, winning 2-1 on a late goal from Andrew Agozzino in front of over 12,000 in attendance. The Monsters fell on Saturday afternoon by a 3-2 score, unable to crawl out of a 2-0 first period hole. On Sunday, the Monsters took the show on the road, playing a 3 p.m. game in Toronto. They won 4-0, with Calvin Pickard recording the 40-save shutout, after Sami Aittokallio, Friday's starter, was hit in the face with a puck during warmups.

All in all, it was a solid opening weekend for the Monsters, who, along with the Rochester Americans, were one of just two teams that had to play three games in three days to open the season. Thomas Pock led the way with a goal and three assists and defenseman Tyson Barrie was the only Monster to score more than once.

Monsters goaltenders Sami Aittokallio and Calvin Pickard, who make up one the league's

most-talented goaltending tandems, stopped 98 of 102 shots over the three-game span.

The Monsters will head off to Oklahoma City to face the Barons two more times on Saturday and Tuesday, meaning that four of their first six games will come against that team. The two games with the Barons are sandwiched with a Sunday early evening matchup with the Texas Stars. The Monsters will not play Oklahoma City again after Tuesday.

The Monsters return home on October 26 to face the Abbotsford Heat.