

NHL Labor Clock Ticking Entering The Labor Day Weekend

August 31, 2012 | [Labor And Employment](#)



**Gerald F.
Lutkus**
Of Counsel
(Retired)



Today is a big day in the continuing negotiations between the National Hockey league and the NHL Players Association. The parties get back to the table today with the owners posed to receive the NHLPA counter-offer. The owners and NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman have made it clear that if the CBA expires on September 15 without a new agreement, the owners will lock-out the players. The hockey fans at the BT Labor Relations blog are rooting that the puck drops as scheduled on October 11.

Big surprise - the primary issue is the revenue split. The players' share is currently capped at 57% of league revenue and the league owners (after tossing around enormously expensive multi-year deals to free agents this summer) opened negotiations seeking to reduce that cap to 43%. After the Union presented its opening proposal (which effectively offered to shave the

RELATED PRACTICE AREAS

Labor and Employment
Labor Relations

cap to 54%), the owners came back and upped their offer to 46% while adopting much of the structure if not the language in the NHLPA proposal.

NHL.com is reporting today that the league's offer from earlier this week was a six-year package which included fixed-dollar amounts for the players' share in each of the first three seasons, with respective reductions during those seasons of 11 percent, 8.5 percent and 5.5 percent compared to what the players received in 2011-12. In year four of the Agreement, and each of the following years, there would be a 50-50 split of "hockey-related revenues" between the players and owners. The [league's explanation](#) is that by year 4, due to anticipated growth of the NHL's revenues over the prior 3 years, the player's shares would be restored to previous levels and would grow as the league grew in years 4-6 of the Agreement.

Here are some links to more in-depth coverage on the status of the negotiations:

The Globe and Mail - "[NHL, NHL Players' Association to resume contract talks on Friday](#)"

TicketNews.com - "[NHL, NHLPA negotiations continue as deadline looms](#)"