

Team 1

Derick Brassard vs. New York Rangers

Submissions on behalf of Derick Brassard (Player Side)

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1 Player Analysis

1.1 Introduction

This brief will analyze the performance and contributions of New York Rangers (the “Rangers”) forward Derek Brassard. As will become clear, Mr. Brassard should be eligible for compensation above the \$5,000,000 midpoint salary range. His consistent offensive production, elite playoff output and experience, and strong leadership qualities highlight why Mr. Brassard should receive an average annual salary above the \$5,000,000 midpoint range. Mr. Brassard is a strong contributing centerman, on a team that lacks depth at that position. As the Rangers look to return to the Stanley Cup finals, Mr. Brassard’s production and leadership at both ends of the ice are tremendously valuable for the Rangers.

1.2 Vital Playoff Contributor

Mr. Brassard has been a valuable playoff contributor throughout two playoff campaigns with the New York Rangers. In the 2012-13, Brassard was a point per game player in the playoffs, with six goals and the same number of assists.¹ This placed him at 3rd overall in goals and 2nd overall in GWG for all Rangers in the playoffs. He also had the team’s 3rd best shooting percentage (ratio of goals to shots taken) during the playoffs, an important indicator of capitalization on scoring opportunities.² Overall, in 35 career playoff games, Mr. Brassard has 8 goals and 16 assists, for an outstanding 0.69 points-per-game.³

The Rangers are consistently a competitive playoff team,⁴ and are hopeful to soon compete for another Stanley Cup Championship. The Rangers need players, who possess playoff experience and proven playoff production, for the upcoming seasons. Mr. Brassard has proven

¹ <http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8473544>

² <http://rangers.nhl.com/club/stats.htm?gameType=3&season=20132014&srt=gowg>

³ <http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8473544>

⁴ <http://www.nhl.com/ice/standings.htm>

himself to be a consistent playoff scorer, while also bringing energy to his team and making those around him better. His extensive playoff experience and production is integral to the Rangers' future playoff success.

Mr. Brassard has translated strong defensive and neutral zone play to the post-season. This is indicated by the fact that he was one of the three top-10 Rangers scorers, that also had a positive plus-minus in the 2013-14 playoff.⁵ Also, during those playoffs, he committed the least giveaways of any Ranger (of players playing at least 8 games).⁶ Furthermore, Mr. Brassard also contributed to team puck possession during the playoffs by registering the 4th most takeaways on the entire team.⁷

1.3 Powerplay Productivity

Mr. Brassard is a consistent powerplay producer, with the 2nd most powerplay points of all Rangers last season (16) and 1st overall in the previous 2012-13 season (11).⁸ He also led the team in powerplay goals last season.⁹ Combined, over the last two seasons, he is 31st overall in powerplay points for all NHL forwards.¹⁰ In the 2013-14 season, the Rangers were an average powerplay team (15th overall), with a less than average number of powerplay opportunities (19th overall).¹¹ The Rangers need strong consistent powerplay contributors, like Mr. Brassard, to continue to produce elite level special teams points to be successful in the regular season and ultimately in the playoffs.

⁵<http://www.nhl.com/ice/playerstats.htm?season=20132014&gameType=3&team=NYR&position=S&country=&status=&viewName=summary>

⁶<http://www.nhl.com/ice/playerstats.htm?fetchKey=20143NYRSASALL&sort=giveaways&viewName=rtssPlayerStats>

⁷<http://www.nhl.com/ice/playerstats.htm?fetchKey=20143NYRSASALL&sort=takeaways&viewName=rtssPlayerStats>

⁸<http://stats.hockeyanalysis.com/ratings.php?disp=1&db=201314&sit=5v4&pos=forwards&minutes=50&teamid=20&type=individual&sort=ipoints&sortdir=DESC>

⁹<http://www.nhl.com/ice/playerstats.htm?fetchKey=20142NYRSASALL&sort=powerPlayGoals&viewName=summary>

¹⁰<http://stats.hockeyanalysis.com/ratings.php?disp=1&db=201214&sit=5v4&pos=skaters&minutes=50&teamid=0&type=individual&sort=ipoints&sortdir=DESC>

¹¹ <http://www.nhl.com/ice/teamstats.htm?fetchKey=20142ALLSAAALL&sort=advantages&viewName=powerPlay>

1.4 The Rangers Lack of Centerman Depth

As previously discussed, the Rangers are a competitive playoff team, with aspirations of winning a Stanley Cup. However, the Rangers have limited time to win in the Playoffs, as impact players such as Martin St. Louis, Henrik Lundqvist, and Dan Boyle are all entering the final stages of their respective careers.¹² If Mr. Brassard was not a member of the Rangers, there would be an enormous hole at the center position. He was a third line centre last season, but his line arguably had the most consistent offensive production for the Rangers.¹³ Looking forward to the 2014-15 season, Brassard is poised to centre the first or second line of the Rangers.

Behind Mr. Brassard on the depth chart there are little promising centers who would be available anytime soon,¹⁴ as Dominic Moore is likely the next centre in the lineup.¹⁵ Also, the Rangers do not have enough significant cap space to sign a new unrestricted free agent centre.¹⁶ Mr. Brassard's strong scoring instincts¹⁷ allowed him to achieve multiple career-highs in the 2013-14 season,¹⁸ allowing the Rangers to be optimistic about future success as a hockey club, with production and consistency at the center position.

1.5 Value Into The Future

Mr. Brassard is 26 years old and entering the prime years of his career. He has scored at least 40 points in three seasons thus far in his NHL career. Last year, during the 2013-14 season, he set career highs in goals (18), games played (81), powerplay goals (7), powerplay assists (11), powerplay points (18), and game-winning goals (4).¹⁹ Mr. Brassard also established playoff

¹² <http://rangers.nhl.com/club/roster.htm>

¹³ <http://rangers.nhl.com/club/stats.htm?season=20132014>

¹⁴ <http://www.capgeek.com/rangers/depth-chart/>

¹⁵ <http://rangers.nhl.com/club/roster.htm>

¹⁶ <http://www.capgeek.com/rangers/>

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ <http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8473544&view=notes>

¹⁹ <http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8473544&view=notes>

career-highs in games played (23), goals (6), plus-minus rating (+4), game-winning goals (2), powerplay assists (3), and shots (45), and tied playoff career-highs in points (12) and powerplay points (3).²⁰ These are all very strong indications of a player who has is still getting better, and only beginning to reach his potential. The fact that Mr. Brassard achieved multiple career-highs in both the regular season and playoffs of his platform year, highlights his clear future value as an NHL forward.

Mr. Brassard is poised to remain an elite NHL player for many years. He provides a unique combination of offensive vision, toughness and finishing ability.²¹ He is always working to improve and is referred to as a “hockey nerd,” for his motivation to learn and get better.²²

2 Comparable Players

2.1 Comparable #1 - Bryan Little

On July 22, 2013 Bryan Little and the Winnipeg Jets signed a 5-year contract that pays Mr. Little an average annual salary of \$4.7 million.²³ This contract was signed when the NHL salary cap was set at \$64.3 million.²⁴ The salary cap for the upcoming 2014-15 NHL season has been set to \$69 million, a year over year increase of 7.3%.²⁵ Thus, Mr. Little’s inflation adjusted contract signed today would be closer to \$5.04 million per season, above the suggested \$5 million midpoint for Mr. Brassard. Both players share very similar offensive statistics, and have each developed into centerpieces for their respective clubs’ strategies moving forward.

²⁰<http://www.nhl.com/ice/playerstats.htm?season=20132014&gameType=3&team=NYR&position=S&country=&status=&viewName=summary>

²¹ <http://www.rotoworld.com/recent/nhl/2043/derick-brassard>

²² <https://ca.sports.yahoo.com/author/jen-neale-20140424/>

²³ <http://www.nhl.com/ice/news.htm?id=678681>

²⁴ <http://www.cbc.ca/sports/hockey/nhl/nhl-labour-deal-the-nuts-bolts-1.1368772>

²⁵ <http://www.nhl.com/ice/news.htm?id=724192>

Mr. Little and Mr. Brassard are the same age. They were both high first round draft picks in the 2006 NHL draft.²⁶ When Mr. Little signed his contract, he had accumulated 227 points in 404 career games.²⁷ In comparison, Mr. Brassard registered an almost identical 225 points in 403 games.²⁸ A more detailed look into these numbers highlights important differences. Mr. Little had played many more minutes, 20:13 and 19:47 per game in 2012-13 and 2013-14 respectively,²⁹ giving him more opportunity to accumulate points on a Jets team that had less depth than the Rangers. In fact, if Mr. Little were on the Rangers, he would most probably be given less ice time, and would arguably have decreased production. In his last two seasons, Mr. Brassard has logged approximately 16 minutes per game on average, while greatly contributing to the Rangers regular season success, while also helping them solidify a position in the playoffs in both years.³⁰ Given that both players have generated similar offensive statistics, it is telling that Mr. Brassard has been able to do so less ice time, efficiently helping his team become more competitive than the Jets.

Mr. Brassard's value relative to Mr. Little's is further bolstered by a proven track record of playoff success. With the help of Mr. Brassard, the Rangers are a perennial playoff contender, and consequently require players who have established that they are able to contribute effectively in the post-season. As discussed, Mr. Brassard has been able to effectively and consistently produce in the playoffs for the Rangers. Conversely, Mr. Little's seven-year NHL career does not include a single playoff appearance.³¹ It is unknown whether Mr. Little can produce in the playoffs, but it is well known that he possesses no playoff experience, in a league where teams

²⁶ <http://www.nhl.com/ice/playersearch.htm?navid=nav-ply-plyrs#>

²⁷ <http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8473412&docid=TeamPlayerBio:42520#&navid=nhl-search>

²⁸ <http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8473544>

²⁹ <http://www.nhl.com/ice/playerstats.htm?season=20122013&gameType=2&team=WPG&position=S&country=&status=&viewName=timeOnIce>

³⁰ <http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8473544>

³¹ <http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8473412>

pay a premium for that commodity. Mr. Brassard's playoff experience at a young age is in high demand for competitive teams, such as the Rangers, and given that he and Mr. Little's regular season contributions have been nearly identical, this playoff factor greatly differentiates Mr. Brassard's relative comparative value.

Mr. Little was awarded a contract that, in today's dollars, would likely pay an average annual salary greater than \$5 million each season. Both players have very similar regular season production, but Mr. Brassard has had less ice time and thus less opportunity. Furthermore, Mr. Brassard's significant contribution to his team's recent success in the playoffs separates him from Mr. Little, and is a strong justification for a contract that exceeds \$5 million annually.

2.2 Comparable #2 - Patric Hornqvist

On April 30th, 2013 Patric Hornqvist and the Nashville Predators signed a 5-year \$21.25 million contract.³² Like Mr. Little, Mr. Hornqvist signed his contract under last season's salary cap restrictions, and the inflation-adjusted number would look closer to \$23 million if signed in 2014. Mr. Hornqvist is a year older than Mr. Brassard. Mr. Hornqvist possess a similar profile to Mr. Brassard, although there are notable differences in areas such as playoff performance and offensive efficiency.

To highlight offensive similarities between the players, a snapshot of their young careers provides insight into their comparative productivity. In 287 career games before signing his new contract, Mr. Hornqvist had accumulated 163 points, giving him a strong ratio of 0.57 points per game.³³ Mr. Brassard's point per game ratio is similarly impressive and almost identical, at 0.56

³² http://espn.go.com/nhl/story/_/id/9228566/patric-hornqvist-nashville-predators-signs-5-year-contract-worth-2125-million

³³ <http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8471887>

points per game.³⁴ However, when given the opportunity in a game to shoot, Mr. Brassard has proven that he is far more capable at converting those opportunities to goals, in comparison to Mr. Hornqvist. Mr. Brassard has capitalized on his chances, as reflected by shooting percentages (ratio of goals to shots taken) of 11.2%, 11.1%, 20%, and 11.3% in his last four NHL seasons.³⁵ Meanwhile, Mr. Hornqvist's shooting percentages in the four seasons leading up to his contract were 10.9%, 7.9%, 11.7%, and an alarming 4.6% in his platform year.³⁶ For a known goal-scorer, Mr. Hornqvist has failed to either take high-percentage shots, or worse, has shown a proficiency to miss his targets relative to Mr. Brassard, who's shooting percentage is very high and very stable. Even armed with these statistics, the Predators still awarded Mr. Hornqvist with almost \$5 million per year. A more reliable Mr. Brassard deserves a substantially higher salary.

While Mr. Hornqvist has been a member of the Nashville Predators, they have made the post-season three times, and his offensive production has helped lead his team to those playoff appearances.³⁷ However, Nashville has suffered a lack of playoff success, with Mr. Hornqvist's offensive production diminishing greatly in these playoff appearances. Mr. Hornqvist has been unable to translate his 0.57 points per game to the playoffs, where he has only managed 8 points in 24 appearances, which is 0.33 point per game.³⁸ Nashville was relying on Hornqvist, one of their top offensive players, to help the team compete in the playoffs, but they never advanced past the second round in any of the aforementioned three years.³⁹

³⁴ <http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8473544>

³⁵ <http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8473544>

³⁶ <http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8471887>

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ <http://www.hockey-reference.com/teams/NSH/>

Alternatively, in the playoffs Mr. Brassard has elevated his play to an elite level, which has allowed him to generate 24 points in 35 games.⁴⁰ This 0.69 point per game average is more than double the 0.33 average that Mr. Hornqvist has accumulated in his playoff career, indicating that Mr. Brassard is comparatively a much stronger and more consistent playoff scorer. More importantly, Mr. Brassard was a key centerpiece on the Rangers team that made it to within one victory of the Stanley Cup.⁴¹ Mr. Brassard's minor injury, which led to him missing the final two playoff games, had an enormous impact on the team's ability to compete against the Los Angeles Kings. These glaring differences in post-season success and experience additionally make the case for Mr. Brassard as a superior player to Mr. Hornqvist, deserving of a contract that far exceeds Mr. Hornqvist's.

3 Conclusion

Mr. Brassard is a durable centre that contributes greatly to the Ranger's offensive output. He is gifted in all areas of the ice, and elevates his game in the playoffs, at a time when the Rangers are pushing to win a championship, given the talent in their core group, in addition to the ages and career stages of their best players. Given similar regular season output to the two comparable players and Mr. Brassard's superior playoff experience, he deserves a contract greater than \$5 million per season, and we recommend an award of a \$5.2 million annual salary.

⁴⁰ <http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8473544>

⁴¹ <http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8473544>