

2014 Hockey Arbitration Competition of Canada

Derick Brassard vs. New York Rangers Hockey Club

Submission on behalf of the Club

Midpoint Salary: \$5,000,000

Submission by Team 16

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I. INTRODUCTION

This brief analyzes forward Derick Brassard (the "Player"; "Mr. Brassard") regarding his past performance and contributions to the New York Rangers (the "Club"; the "Rangers") for the purpose of determining his salary in the 2014-15 NHL season. Mr. Brassard was drafted 6th overall in the third round of the 2006 NHL Entry Draft by the Columbus Blue Jackets ("Blue Jackets") and was traded to the Rangers on April 3rd, 2013. Having played in the NHL for 7 seasons,¹ Mr. Brassard is eligible for salary arbitration pursuant to Article 12.1 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (the "CBA").²

The CBA lists the following as valid types of evidence that may be offered for the purpose of an NHL salary arbitration: the overall performance of the player in the previous season or seasons; the number of games played by the player; his injuries or illnesses during preceding seasons; the length of service of the player in the League and/or with the Club; the overall contribution of the player to the success or failure of his Club in the preceding season; and any special qualities of leadership or public appeal.³ This brief will assess the Player as well as comparable players in regards to each of the aforementioned criteria to demonstrate why Mr. Brassard is entitled to a salary below the \$5-million midpoint salary figure. The Club respectfully request that Mr. Brassard be awarded a salary arbitration award of \$4.1-million.

II. OVERALL PERFORMANCE OF THE PLAYER

Exhibit A: Derick Brassard Career Performance Statistics⁴

Season	GP	G	A	P	P/g	+/-	PIM	PPG	SHG	GWG	S	S%	TOI/g
'07-'08	17	1	1	2	0.12	-4	6	0	0	0	13	7.7	9:03
'08-'09	31	10	15	25	0.81	12	17	3	0	1	59	17.0	14:25

¹ <http://www.tsn.ca/nhl/player-bio/derick-brassard/bio>.

² Article 12.1, National Hockey League and National Hockey League Players' Association, *Collective Bargaining Agreement*, <http://cdn.agilitycms.com/nhlpacom/PDF/NHL_NHLPA_2013_CBA.pdf>.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Derick Brassard, <http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8473544>.

'09-'10	79	9	27	36	0.46	-17	48	4	0	0	125	7.2	14:56
'10-'11	74	17	30	47	0.64	-11	55	6	0	3	183	9.3	17:01
'11-'12	74	14	27	41	0.55	-20	42	5	0	3	125	11.2	16:20
'12-'13 (CBJ)	34*	7	11	18	0.53	-2	16	1	0	1	63	11.1	16:31
'12-'13 (NYR)	13*	5	6	11	0.85	3	0	2	0	0	25	20.0	16:38
'13-'14	81	18	27	45	0.56	2	46	7	0	4	159	11.3	15:47
Career	404	81	144	255	0.63	-37	230	28	0	12	752	10.8	14:51

*Shortened 48-game season

Derick Brassard played his first NHL game in the 2007-08 season, but spent the majority of the year in the American Hockey League ("AHL"). The following season he scored at a rate of 0.81 points per game ("P/g") in 31 NHL games. The remaining games were lost to injury. Brassard has never been able to reach the same level of production as he had in 2008-09, his second highest offensive year being in 2010-11 where he scored at a rate of 0.64 P/g. Mr. Brassard has been utilized in an offensive role in the NHL, playing primarily on the powerplay while receiving nearly no time on the penalty kill, yet his career high in points is only 47.

Exhibit A: Derick Brassard Platform Year Statistics⁵

Season	GP	G	A	P	P/g	+/-	PIM	PPG	SHG	GWG	S	S%	TOI/g
2013-2014	81	18	27	45	0.56	2	46	7	0	4	159	11.3	15:47

In his platform year, Mr. Brassard's P/g average regressed slightly from the year prior. While Brassard's decreased offensive statistics may be a result of his lower average time on ice per game ("TOI/g"), Brassard still played 0:56 more in his platform year over his career average. In his platform season, Mr. Brassard averaged 2:31 of TOI/g while on the powerplay, which helps explain why 18 of his 45 points in the 2013-14 season came with the man-advantage. Considering the Rangers depth it is unlikely he would be given more TOI/g in the future.

⁵ *Ibid.*

III. NUMBER OF GAMES PLAYED AND INJURY HISTORY

Since the 2008-09 season, Mr. Brassard has played 388 out of a total possible 534 total games for the Blue Jackets and Rangers which equals a 73% games played percentage. The most time lost to injury was in the 2008-09 season, where Mr. Brassard missed 50 regular season and four playoff games with an injured shoulder. The Player also missed a total of 12 games throughout the 2009-10 and 2010-11 season with a recurring hand injury.⁶ Mr. Brassard has in fact never played a full 82-game season in his entire 7-season NHL career. Furthermore, in the 2013-14 playoffs, Mr. Brassard re-aggravated a back injury he suffered earlier in the season.⁷ His constant injuries raise concerns moving forward as a member of the Club.

IV. OVERALL CONTRIBUTION TO THE CLUB

Being a relatively new member of the Club, Brassard has had limited time to demonstrate his contributions to the Rangers. However, the Club has experienced relative success since his acquisition, making the Stanley Cup Finals in the Player's platform season. While Brassard led the Club with 12 points in 12 playoff games in 2012-13, his scoring regressed to his career averages the following season. In the 2014 playoffs, Brassard was tied for 6th on the Club in points. Mr. Brassard also added six goals and 12 points in 23 playoff games for the Rangers, averaging 15:46 of TOI/g to help the Rangers reach the Stanley Cup Finals.

Mr. Brassard ranked 8th among Rangers forwards in 2012-13 and 7th among Rangers forwards in 2013-14 in average TOI/g. In addition, the Rangers ranked 18th in the league in Goals For in 2013-14, showing that Brassard's limited offensive role was with a team that performed below average offensively in his platform year.⁸ Despite alternating with Derek

⁶ <http://www.tsn.ca/nhl/player-bio/derick-brassard/bio>

⁷ <http://www.nhl.com/ice/blogpost.htm?id=29557>

⁸ <http://www.nhl.com/ice/teamstats.htm?fetchKey=20142ALLSAAALL&sort=goals&viewName=goalsHomeRoad>.

Stepan as the Club's first-line center⁹ in his most recent season, these statistics demonstrate that Mr. Brassard's contributions to the success of the Rangers are limited.

V. SPECIAL QUALITIES OF LEADERSHIP OR PUBLIC APPEAL

Given the Player's short time with the Rangers, it is the Club's position that Mr. Brassard possesses minimal qualities of leadership and special appeal for the New York Rangers and their fans. In October 2008, Derick Brassard was named the NHL Rookie of the Month before missing 51 games to injury later that season.¹⁰ Since then, Mr. Brassard has not been recognized for any other NHL awards. Furthermore, Brassard's reputation of missing time with injuries damages the public appeal he has with Rangers' fans.

VI. COMPARABLE PLAYERS

In determining which players would serve as the most useful comparables, the Club has chosen forwards eligible for salary arbitration within the past two years who are similar in age, games played, and who have been relied on primarily in an offensive role. After controlling for these factors, we can compare salary figures by comparing Mr. Brassard to the comparables on the basis of the remaining criteria set out in Article 12 of the CBA.¹¹

A. Bryan Little

Bryan Little ("Little") was a 25-year old forward with the Winnipeg Jets ("Jets") when he was eligible for arbitration in the summer of 2013. Little was also drafted in the first round of the 2006 NHL Entry Draft. Similarities in age, games played and career points-per-game make Little a useful comparable.

⁹ "Derick Brassard Agrees to Five Year, \$25-million contract Extension", *NY Daily News*, <http://www.nydailynews.com/sports/hockey/rangers/derick-brassard-agrees-five-year-25-million-contract-extension-rangers-source-article-1.1882089>.

¹⁰ http://www.thestar.com/sports/2008/11/04/brassard_named_nhl_rookie_of_the_month.html

¹¹ *Supra*, note 2.

Exhibit C: Bryan Little vs. Derick Brassard Career Performance Statistics¹²

Player	GP	G	A	P	P/g	+/-	PIM	PPG	SHG	GWG	S	S%	TOI/g
Little	404	99	128	227	0.56	-5	125	27	2	15	817	12.1	17:47
Brassard	404	81	144	255	0.63	-37	230	28	0	12	752	10.8	14:51

Exhibit D: Bryan Little vs. Derick Brassard Platform Year Performance¹³

Player	GP	G	A	P	P/g	+/-	PIM	PPG	SHG	GWG	S	S%	TOI/g
Little	48*	7	25	32	0.67	8	4	2	0	2	84	4.8	19:47
Brassard	81	18	27	45	0.56	2	46	7	0	4	159	11.3	15:47

*Shortened 48-game season

Mr. Brassard and Bryan Little played the exact same number of games when eligible for arbitration despite Brassard playing in the NHL for one additional season. In that time, Brassard outscored Little at a rate of 0.63 P/g in comparison to Little's 0.56. However, in their platform seasons', Little outscored Brassard at a rate of 0.67 P/g versus Brassard's 0.56. Furthermore, Little has the advantage in terms of career highs in goals (31) and points (51). Both players' offensive statistics have hit plateaus in recent years, however Little has already surpassed 20-goals in a single season twice in his 6-season NHL career. Little has also been utilized as a two-way player for the Jets, playing regularly on the team's penalty kill and averaging more total TOI/g both over the duration of his career and in his platform year.

Since entering the league, Little has played a total of 88% of all eligible games in comparison to Brassard's 73%. However, most of Little's games lost were due to splitting time between the NHL and AHL in his rookie season. Little's most serious injury kept him out for eight consecutive regular season games.¹⁴ In the summer of 2013, the Jets signed Little to a five-year contract with an Average Annual Value ("AAV") of \$4.7-million. Considering Little has been a superior player on a less successful team in almost all categories set out in section 12.1 of

¹² Bryan Little, <http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8473412>.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ <http://www.tsn.ca/nhl/player-bio/bryan-little/bio>.

the CBA, the Club respectfully requests that Mr. Brassard receive a salary arbitration award similar to Bryan Little's \$4-million actual salary for the 2013-14 season.

B. Sam Gagner

Sam Gagner ("Gagner") was a forward with the Edmonton Oilers ("Oilers") who amassed 6 seasons in the NHL when eligible for arbitration in the summer of 2013. Although Gagner is younger than Mr. Brassard, both players were drafted 6th overall, have strong similarities in the role they play for their respective teams and have similar career games played and career performance statistics.

Exhibit E: Sam Gagner vs. Derick Brassard Career Performance Statistics¹⁵

Player	GP	G	A	P	P/g	+/-	PIM	PPG	SHG	GWG	S	S%	TOI/g
Gagner	414	91	167	258	0.62	-48	203	29	1	6	861	10.6	17:10
Brassard	404	81	144	255	0.63	-37	230	28	0	12	752	10.8	14:51

Exhibit F: Sam Gagner vs. Derick Brassard Platform Year Performance¹⁶

Player	GP	G	A	P	P/g	+/-	PIM	PPG	SHG	GWG	S	S%	TOI/g
Gagner	48*	14	24	38	0.79	-6	23	4	0	1	113	12.4	19:24
Brassard	81	18	27	45	0.56	2	46	7	0	4	159	11.3	15:47

*Shortened 48-game season

The career P/g and games played for Gagner and Mr. Brassard are nearly identical. However, Gagner demonstrated much more potential in his platform year, scoring at a rate of 0.79 P/g comparison to Mr. Brassard's 0.56. Gagner has also been used by the Oilers in a more extensive role than Brassard, averaging nearly four more minutes of TOI/g in his platform year. Gagner therefore possesses more potential than Brassard as demonstrated by his younger age and higher platform year statistics. Gagner and Mr. Brassard have similar injury histories. Overall, Gagner has missed less time to injuries, but neither him nor Brassard have ever completed a full

¹⁵ Sam Gagner, <http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8474040>.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

82-game season. Gagner's most extended absence was 14 consecutive games in the 2010-11 season.

Gagner has played in the 2007 NHL Youngstars game and has represented Team Canada at the 2008 World Championships as a reserve. Gagner was also the NHL's rookie of the month in February 2008 and is tied for the Oilers' club record for most points in a single game (8) and most points in a single period (5). Gagner's three-year contract is worth an AAV of \$4.8-million and an actual salary of \$4.4-million in 2013-14. Club requests that Mr. Brassard receive a salary arbitration award slightly lower than Gagner's actual salary in the 2013-14 season.

C. Blake Wheeler

Blake Wheeler ("Wheeler") is a right-winger for the Winnipeg Jets with five years of professional experience in the NHL. Similarities in age, games played and career statistics make Wheeler a suitable comparable player to Mr. Brassard.

Exhibit G: Blake Wheeler vs. Derick Brassard Career Performance Statistics¹⁷

Player	GP	G	A	P	P/g	+/-	PIM	PPG	SHG	GWG	S	S%	TOI/g
Wheeler	372	93	139	232	0.62	42	228	14	3	12	825	11.3	17:10
Brassard	404	81	144	255	0.63	-37	230	28	0	12	752	10.8	14:51

Exhibit H: Blake Wheeler vs. Derick Brassard Platform Year Performance¹⁸

Player	GP	G	A	P	P/g	+/-	PIM	PPG	SHG	GWG	S	S%	TOI/g
Wheeler	48*	19	22	41	0.85	-3	28	2	0	2	129	14.7	16:42
Brassard	81	18	27	45	0.56	2	46	7	0	4	159	11.3	15:47

*Shortened 48-game season

Throughout his career, Wheeler has scored at an identical P/g average to Mr. Brassard. However, Wheeler has scored more goals and has a higher shooting percentage both over the course of his career and in his platform year. In a single season, Wheeler has a better career high

¹⁷ Blake Wheeler, <http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8471218>.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

in points (64) and goals (21). Mr. Brassard and Wheeler are both used in similar roles for their respective teams, playing on the powerplay but receiving limited time on the penalty kill. In his platform year, Wheeler set a career high in goals and P/g average, scoring more goals than Brassard in 33 fewer games. Wheeler has a statistical advantage both in career performance and in his platform year.

Wheeler also has a higher average career TOI/g than Brassard, suggesting he plays a more crucial role in the success or failure of the Jets than Brassard does for the Rangers. Furthermore, Wheeler was the MVP of the 2009 NHL YoungStars game and represented the United States at the World Hockey Championships in 2011, scoring five points in seven games.¹⁹ Wheeler has missed only 2 games to injury since entering the NHL.²⁰ For these reasons, Wheeler also has an advantage over Brassard in terms of his injury history and public appeal. Wheeler signed a six-year contract with the Jets in 2013 worth an AAV of \$5.6-million and an actual salary of \$4.6-million in 2013-14. Since Wheeler is superior to Mr. Brassard in nearly every category set out in Article 12.1 of the CBA, the Club respectfully requests that the Player receive a salary lower than Wheeler's \$4.6-million actual salary in 2013-14.

VII. CONCLUSION

Mr. Brassard is a strong offensive forward, who has been used in a limited role for the New York Rangers. While Mr. Brassard's offensive statistics have reached a plateau in recent years. The Club respectfully submits that Derick Brassard receive a salary arbitration award below Blake Wheeler and Sam Gagner's actual salary after their platform years, but slightly more than Bryan Little's actual salary in 2013-14. The Club respectfully requests that the panel find that Derick Brassard is entitled to a salary arbitration award of \$4.1-million.

¹⁹ <http://www.nhl.com/ice/news.htm?id=406121>; <http://www.tsn.ca/nhl/player-bio/blake-wheeler/statistics>.

²⁰ <http://www.tsn.ca/nhl/player-bio/blake-wheeler/bio>.