

**2014 HOCKEY ARBITRATION COMPETITION OF CANADA**

**Cody Franson vs. Toronto Maple Leafs**

*Submission on Behalf of Cody Franson*

*Midpoint: \$3.3 Million*

*Submission by Team 2*

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## Introduction

This brief will outline Cody Franson's key skill set and importance to the Toronto Maple Leafs organization, as their top right-handed offensive defenseman. Cody Franson was drafted in the 3<sup>rd</sup> round, 79th overall by the Nashville Predators in the 2005 NHL entry draft<sup>1</sup>. The 2005 draft has been considered by many to be amongst one of the deepest and strongest of the past decade, with such notable defensemen as Kristopher Letang (3<sup>rd</sup> round), Marc-Édouard Vlasic (2<sup>nd</sup> round), Marc Staal (1<sup>st</sup> round), Jack Johnson (1<sup>st</sup> round) and Matt Niskanen (1<sup>st</sup> round), amongst many others<sup>2</sup>. In 2006, Cody Franson helped lead the Vancouver Giants to the President's Cup as WHL champions, resulting in a chance to compete for the 2006 Memorial Cup. The following year, he was named to the 1<sup>st</sup> WHL West All-Star Team, and was nominated for the Bill Hunter Memorial Trophy as the league's top defenseman.

After an impressive junior career, tallying 147 points in 3 seasons with the Vancouver Giants, Franson signed his first NHL 3-year entry-level Standard Player Contract (SPC) with the Nashville Predators in July 2006. In July 2011, he was traded from the Nashville Predators to the Toronto Maple Leafs, along with Matthew Lombardi in exchange for Brett Lebda and Robert Slaney. Cody Franson is now 27 years of age and has five years of experience in the NHL. Mr. Franson is eligible for salary arbitration pursuant to section 12.1 of the collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.hockeydb.com/ihdb/stats/pdisplay.php?pid=72049>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.hockeydb.com/ihdb/draft/nhl2005e.html>

<sup>3</sup> NHL Collective Bargaining Agreement, 2013, 12.1 (a)-(c)

This brief summary will outline the following aspects: the overall performance of Cody Franson for all five NHL seasons (including his playoffs performance), total number of games played by Cody Franson and the historical background of his injuries throughout his past five NHL seasons, overall contribution (leadership skill, on ice performance, etc) in relation to the success of the club, outstanding qualities, and direct comparisons of overall performance between Cody Franson and similar players of comparable salaries.

We are confident that the statistics and analysis provided will conclude that Cody Franson is an essential component and asset to the Toronto Maple Leafs organization. His qualities have been and will continue to be profitable and advantageous for the Maple Leafs for many more years to come. As such, this brief will demonstrate that Cody Franson is entitled to a salary above the \$3.3 million midpoint. Therefore, Mr. Franson respectfully requests a salary arbitration award of \$4 million.

## OVERALL PERFORMANCE OF THE PLAYER

### Career Performance.

**Table 1: Career Statistics for Cody Franson<sup>4</sup>**

SEASON	TEAM	GP	G	A	P	+/-	PIM	PPG	SHG	GWG
2009-2010	PREDATORS	61	6	15	21	15	16	1	0	3
2010-2011	PREDATORS	80	8	21	29	10	30	2	0	2
2011-2012	MAPLE LEAFS	57	5	16	21	-1	22	2	0	0
2012-2013	MAPLE LEAFS	45	4	25	29	4	8	3	0	0
2013-2014	MAPLE LEAFS	79	5	28	33	-20	30	1	0	0

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8471742&view=stats>

Mr. Franson is known as an offensive defenseman yet still continues to maintain a noticeable, physical presence on the ice. Since his first full season in the NHL, he has utilized his size to make himself invaluable to the Leafs core defensemen. At 6.5 ft tall and weighing 210 pounds, he is a constant threat when on the ice. Since his rookie year, Mr. Franson has shown a steady progression and has been consistently been given more responsibility. His ice time has been increasing, as has his time on the power play and penalty kill. Indeed, he is used in practically every defensive situation possible. He has showcased his dependability every season, having never recorded a season with fewer than 20 points. In 322 total games at the NHL level, Cody Franson has recorded 28 goals and 105 assists for a total of 133 points. Of these 133 points, 50 points has been recorded on the power play<sup>5</sup>. He has also maintained a positive plus-minus rating of +8 since the start of his career in the NHL, notwithstanding the notion that the 50 PP points are not factored within the plus/minus ratio. Mr Franson has shown his potential on numerous occasions by matching his 29 points career high in only 45 games during the shortened 2012-13 campaign. In fact, he was the 8<sup>th</sup> best productive defenseman in the NHL during the lockout season, notably trailing P.K. Subban, the Norris Trophy Winner and most productive defensemen by a mere 7 points<sup>6</sup>. Moreover, his comparable point production was achieved with an average ice time of 18:41 per game, far less than the average of other leaders, who would typically play close to 22 minutes per game.

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<sup>5</sup><http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8471742&view=splits&season=20092010&gameType=2>

<sup>6</sup><http://www.nhl.com/ice/playerstats.htm?gameType=2&position=D&season=20122013&sort=points&status=A&viewName=summary>

Although Mr. Franson has shown some weakness on the defensive part of his game, he is constantly improving, increasing the number of blocks, hits, and shots, while maintaining the impressive work ethic and character needed to thrive in the NHL.

## 2013-2014 regular Season Performance

**Table 2: 2013-2014 Statistics for Cody Franson<sup>7</sup>**

	<b>GP</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>+/-</b>	<b>PIM</b>	<b>PP</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>Hits</b>	<b>BkS</b>	<b>GvA</b>	<b>TkA</b>	<b>TOI/g</b>
2013-2014 REGULAR SEASON	79	5	28	33	-20	30	1	115	282	111	68	50	20:41

Cody Franson plays as a top 4 defenseman throughout the 2013-2014 season. He is the 3<sup>rd</sup> most used defenseman on the Maple Leafs. He has been paired-up consistently with elite prospect Jake Gardiner for the majority of the season. Although his 2013-14 campaign showed a slight regression in point production, his ability to hit and block shots improved drastically, which many consider to be just as valuable. Mr. Franson was ranked 1<sup>st</sup> among league leaders for hits with 282, improving from his previous ranking of 9<sup>th</sup> in the 2012-13 season. The number of blocked shots also improved significantly, blocking 111 shots last years, an increase of 58. Last season, he recorded 5 goals, 28 assists for a total of 33 points in 79 games, despite being only the 3<sup>rd</sup> most used defenseman on the team, he led the Toronto Maple leafs in points for defenseman while playing less than the average ice time of 20:31 minutes<sup>8</sup>. Of these 33 points, 18 points was

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8471742&view=stats>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.nhl.com/ice/playerstats.htm?season=20112012&gameType=2&team=TOR&position=D&country=&status=&viewName=summary>

recorded on the power play<sup>9</sup>. The Toronto Maple Leafs had the 6<sup>th</sup> best power play with a success rate of 19.6%<sup>10</sup>, a statistic in which Cody Franson has undoubtedly contributed to.

## OVERALL CONTRIBUTION TO THE CLUB AND QUALITIES

In the past three years within the Toronto Maple Leafs organization, Mr. Franson has proved that he has been a vital and dependable part of the team's defensive core. Cody Franson was an essential component in helping the team qualify for the playoffs for the first time since the 2003-2004 season<sup>11</sup>. Although the Maple Leafs lost to the Boston Bruins in seven games, Mr. Franson demonstrated in that in a game seven situation with the season on the line, he could elevate his performance to yet another level, scoring 2 important goals in the beginning of the third period, giving his team the lead.<sup>12</sup>

Cody Franson has led all other defenseman on the team in points in two of these three seasons by recording 29 and 32 points for a total of 61 points<sup>13</sup>. Of these 61 points, 35 were recorded on the power play, demonstrating yet again one of the many outstanding elements of Mr. Franson's game. It is difficult to find a 6 foot 5 offensive defenseman, who can "quarter back" a power play, while not only maintaining an ability to both move the puck and fire accurate and timely point shots, but simultaneously *increasing* his hit and block shot totals with each season. While

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8471742&view=splits>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.nhl.com/ice/teamstats.htm?fetchKey=20142ALLSAAAll&sort=powerPlayPercentage&viewName=summary>

<sup>11</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_Toronto\\_Maple\\_Leafs\\_seasons](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Toronto_Maple_Leafs_seasons)

<sup>12</sup> [http://www.thestar.com/news/insight/2013/05/17/toronto\\_maple\\_leafs\\_and\\_the\\_loss\\_to\\_the\\_boston\\_bruins.html](http://www.thestar.com/news/insight/2013/05/17/toronto_maple_leafs_and_the_loss_to_the_boston_bruins.html)

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.nhl.com/ice/playerstats.htm?season=20132014&gameType=2&team=TOR&position=D&country=&status=&viewName=summary>

Mr. Franson has to improve certain aspects of his defensive game, his style of play fits perfectly with the Toronto Maple Leafs, who stress a physical, aggressive style of hard-hitting defense. Cody Franson's statistics speak for themselves, leading the team and recording 508 hits in the past two seasons alone.<sup>14</sup>

## COMPARABLE PLAYERS

### Zach Bogosian (Winnipeg Jets)

Zach Bogosian is a 24 year-old offensive defenseman with the Winnipeg Jets.<sup>15</sup> Mr. Bogosian was selected 3<sup>rd</sup> overall by the Atlanta Thrashers in the 2008 NHL entry Draft. Given his overall statistics and style of play, Mr. Bogosian is a valid comparable player vis-à-vis Mr. Franson.

**Table 3: Career statistic of Zach Bogosian<sup>16</sup>**

SEASON	TEAM	GP	G	A	P	+/-	PIM	PP G	SH G	S
2008-2009	THRASHERS	47	9	10	19	11	47	2	1	90
2009-2010	THRASHERS	81	10	13	23	-18	61	3	1	155
2010-2011	THRASHERS	71	5	12	17	-27	29	0	0	155
2011-2012	JETS	65	5	25	30	-3	71	1	0	150
2012-2013	JETS	33	5	9	14	-5	29	0	0	85
2013-2014	JETS	55	3	8	11	3	48	0	0	134

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.nhl.com/ice/playerstats.htm?fetchKey=20142TORDADALL&sort=blockedShots&viewName=rtssPlayerStats>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.hockeydb.com/ihdb/stats/pdisplay.php?pid=96505>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8474567>



**NHL TOTALS****352****37****77****114****-39****285****6****2****769**

Both defenseman were drafted and used for their offensive qualities, especially on the power play. Since the beginning of his career, Mr. Bogosian has recorded 37 goals and 77 assists in 352 games for a total of 114 points. He shows a career PPG average of 0.32. For his part, Mr. Franson recorded 28 goals and 105 assists in 322 games for a total of 133 points. He shows a career PPG average of a 0.41, which is very similar to Mr. Bogosian. Both season high point totals are also comparable. In his best season, Mr. Bogosian recorded 30 points while Mr. Franson recorded 33 points. In considering the two players as possessing the ability to “quarter back” the PP, both players are utilized in similar roles on the power play. Last season, Mr. Bogosian had an average ice time of 22:54 minutes and an average of 1:54 minutes on the power play while Mr. Franson had an average of 20:40 minutes and an average of 2:54 minutes on the power play. This equates to the notion that the two players are very similar with regards to the offensive part of the game. In addition, both players are nearly identical in both height and weight, as Mr. Franson is 6 foot 5, 213 pounds and Mr. Bogosian is 6 foot 3, 225. Both show a defensive weakness with a career plus/minus ratio of -39 for Mr. Bogosian, while Mr. Franson had a ratio of -20 last year, but yet a career +8 ratio. At the end of 2012-13 season, Zach Bogosian signed a 7 year, \$36 Million contract, with a cap hit of \$5.142 Million per year.<sup>17</sup> Given their similarities, Mr. Bogosian is the most appropriate player as a basis of comparison. Comparing the experience and age to Mr. Bogosian, Mr. Franson may not merit the annual salary of Mr. Bogosian, but the comparative statics certainly justify an increase in salary from the \$3.3 Million midpoint.

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<sup>17</sup> <http://www.capgeek.com/player/349>

## Justin Schultz (Edmonton Oilers)

Originally drafted 43<sup>rd</sup> overall, in the second round, by the Anaheim Ducks in the 2008 NHL entry draft, Mr. Schultz was unable to come to terms on a contract with the team. During the last week of May 2012, Mr. Schultz officially "de-registered" from the University of Wisconsin, triggering a process that made him a "Blue-Chip Player". On June 30, 2012, Mr. Schultz agreed to a two year entry-level contract with the Edmonton Oilers<sup>18</sup>.

SEASON	TEAM	GP	G	A	P	+/-	S	S%
2012-2013	OILERS	48	8	19	27	-17	85	9.4
2013-2014	OILERS	74	11	22	33	-22	109	10.1
	NHL TOTALS	122	19	41	60	-39	194	9.8

Table 4: Career Statistics for Justin Schultz<sup>19</sup>

Justin Schultz has 2 seasons of NHL experience, where he recorded 60 points (19 goals and 41 assists) in 122 games. Mr. Schultz's career PPG average of 0.49 is slightly over that of Mr. Franson's career PPG average of 0.41. Both have the same season high point total with 33 points in a season. Both players are widely considered as power play specialists. Mr. Schultz's average ice time of 3:26 minutes on the power play is slightly over the 2:54 minutes of Mr. Franson. Last season, in 74 games, Mr. Schultz's recorded 12 points on the power play, while Mr. Franson recorded 18 points. While both players have recorded similar offensive stats, both have struggled in the defensive zone. Last season, Mr. Schultz's plus/minus ratio was -22, while Mr. Franson's was -20. Nevertheless, in comparing their career +/- ratio, Mr. Franson's is +8, while Mr. Schultz's ratio is greatly weaker at -39. At the end of the 2013-14 season, Mr. Schultz

<sup>18</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justin\\_Schultz](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justin_Schultz)

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8474602&view=stats>

re-signed a new contract with the Oilers; a 1-year deal worth \$3.675 million<sup>20</sup>. While both players possess very similar statistics offensively, they differ defensively and physically (282 hits last year for Mr. Franson compared to 30 hits for Mr. Schultz<sup>21</sup>). Thus, it is evident that Mr. Franson is a much more valuable asset to his Club. Therefore, Cody Franson deserves an award over \$3.675 Million; notably one of \$4 Million.

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<sup>20</sup> <http://www.capgeek.com/player/2305>

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.nhl.com/ice/playerstats.htm?fetchKey=20142EDMDADALL&sort=hits&viewName=rtssPlayerStats>