**IN THE MATTER OF SALARY ARBITRATION BETWEEN:**

**DERICK BRASSARD**

**-AND-**

**THE NEW YORK RANGERS**

**BRIEF OF DERICK BRASSARD**

**TEAM 30**

 

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**INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

Pursuant to section 12.9 of the NHL Collective Bargaining Agreement, this brief will analyze the performance and contributions of the New York Ranger’s Derick Brassard. As will be evident from the analysis, Mr. Brassard’s ability to play on both ends of the ice, the fact that he is just entering his prime, and his leadership abilities are all assets that he brings to the table allowing us to reasonably ask for his raise in pay. As such, Mr. Brassard submits that he is entitled to an award above the $5.0 million midpoint figure, and that $5.1 million per season is an appropriate and fair award.

**A. Forced Into the First Line Due To Player Injury To Start The Season**

 On September 24, 2014, Derek Stepan, who is the designated center with the first line for New York’s program has been recently diagnosed with a fractured fibula and is expected to be unable to play due to injury for 4-6 weeks leading into the season.[[1]](#footnote-1) With Stepan out potentially for the first four weeks of the season at the least, Mr. Brassard will be forced into a leadership role where he will center the first line in only what will be his third year with the club. This is an essential reason to keep Brassard with the club because he is a known factor leading into the new 2014-2015 year. The club has dealt with him and the players are familiar with him, which is a huge comfort and added bonus in keeping him with the club with the requested amount of raise in salary.

**B. Proven Chemistry With First Line Players**

Furthermore, Rick Nash was a former line mate to Brassard when they both played for Columbus. With Nash playing wing on the first line, having Brassard centering it will be a huge asset for the team as they have historic chemistry there. While in Columbus Mr. Brassard was new to the league and defaulted to the veteran that Nash was instead of shooting as much as he could have. In fact, in the 2010-2011 season Brassard was responsible for assisting 31% of Nash’s 5v5 goals that season.[[2]](#footnote-2) After that season Brassard centered another line and was able to develop his own offensive identity. This is why since playing on Nash’s line directly, he will be more effective to be placed back on it in New York due to his gained experience in being his own offensive threat.

Mr. Brassard has recorded 5 goals and 6 assists in the shortened season of 2012-2013 and 18 goals and 27 assists in the 2013-2014 season.[[3]](#footnote-3) These stats can be compared to his stats from 2010-2011 when he played on Nash’s line, where he recorded 17 goals and 30 assists.[[4]](#footnote-4) The stat totals are roughly the same, testifying both to his incredible consistency and his selflessness as well.

**C. Brad Richards Buy Out Placing Brassard In The Second Line**

 With the buy out of Brad Richard’s contract earlier this year, the need for a consistent center is essential for the Ranger’s success this year as a club. With his departure, it is predicted that Brassard will take his place as the number two center.[[5]](#footnote-5) This is another added responsibility that the club is thrusting upon Mr. Brassard and fair market compensation is a reasonable request for that.

**D. Proven Performance At A High Level**

 One of the biggest assets that Mr. Brassard brings to his team is his special teams ability. He leads his team with power play goals and tops the league being in the top 5% of power play goals scored last year.[[6]](#footnote-6) The Rangers also ranked 15th in special teams according to percentage leaders.[[7]](#footnote-7) Considering this Mr. Brassard is clearly a key element in New York’s powerplay unit relative to the entire league.

 Mr. Brassard is fierce competitors come playoff time and this is evident in the numbers he puts up. He is the 12th player in the league in goals scored last year, which is a huge accomplishment and a large reason why the Rangers made it all the way to the Stanley Cup Finals last year.[[8]](#footnote-8) Brassard has proved himself in the playoffs and has a reputable amount of experience being there so young with the added bonus of playing through the entire playoffs to get to the finals. This imposes a leadership role onto Brassard, which is an added responsibility that should be considered in his raise in salary.

 Mr. Brassard is ripe at the age of 26 and is just now entering the prime of his career. With a stellar season last year, where it is important to recall his most recent playing production in last year’s playoffs. On that stage he was a key element to the Ranger’s success where he tied for second on the team for game winning goals and also ranked third in goals.[[9]](#footnote-9)

 Beyond that, Mr. Brassard posted relatively phenomenal numbers to his teammates testifying to the fact that he was a large asset in carrying the club into the playoffs. During last year’s regular season he tied for the team lead in points per game while tying for second in points on the power play. Mr. Brassard tied for third in game winning goals throughout the season while ranking fourth in both goals and points. He also tied for fourth in power play assists and ranked fifth in assists besides that.[[10]](#footnote-10)

 While Mr. Brassard might have been designated as a third line center last year these statistics place him within the top five places in the club in comparison to every other player on the roster. Taking this into consideration, it can be safely assumed that he is a both a proven asset and young enough to place a safe bet that he has a huge potential to improve.

**I. Valid Comparable Players**

**A. Radim Vrbabta – Vancouver Canucks**

Radim Vrbata is a 31-year-old right wing forward who plays for the Vancouver Canucks and was a restricted free agent this year.[[11]](#footnote-11) He requested for arbitration and his club settled with him before it got to that to a two-year extension of his contract worth $5 million.[[12]](#footnote-12) While Mr. Vrbata is a proven veteran in the league, his age is a huge risk for the club to have signed him for another two years. This is a stark contrast to Mr. Brassard’s young age of 26, which is considered to be around the prime age of an NHL player.

Also, while Mr. Vrbata’s regular season stats are stellar, his playoff performance is cast under a shadow in comparison to the numbers that Mr. Brassard put up. Mr. Vrbata finishes in the minus, every year in the playoffs that is not a good indication that he can be relied upon in clutch situations where the cup is on the line.[[13]](#footnote-13) He also has never scored more than two goals or produced more than three assists in the playoffs as well.[[14]](#footnote-14) This is a drastic difference from the largely effective numbers that Brassard provides his team with.

**B. Ryan O’Reilly – Colorado Avalanche**

Ryan O’Reilly is a 23-year-old forward center that plays for the Colorado Avalanche and was a restricted free agent this year. He requested for arbitration and his club settled with him before it got to that to a two-year extension of his contract worth $6 million.[[15]](#footnote-15) While Mr. O’Reilly has had strong seasons with his club within the points department, he often finishes his seasons in the minus and has poor playoff performance in comparison to Mr. Brassard as he has never earned more than two goals in the off season.[[16]](#footnote-16) However, Mr. O’Reilly is the leader of Colorado in goals as well.[[17]](#footnote-17)

Taking these facts into consideration, we do not request that Mr. Brassard receive an agreement to grant him $6 million in salary, we only want $5 million. This is the case because while Mr. Brassard is more consistent and a more experienced player who dominates in special teams play as well as the playoffs, O’Reilly is much younger and has already proven he can be effective within the regular season as well as take on a leadership role as a leading scorer.

**II. CONCLUSION**

 The raise in pay that Brassard is asking for is a direct result from the demands in performance that the Rangers have thrust upon him. He is starting the season as a first line center with the given advantage that he has experience playing with Rick Nash in the past, which is a designated wingman on that line. Furthermore, Mr. Brassard is predicted to be placed into the second line that is another added responsibility as the club is going to expect more from Brassard in terms of performance. Also, Brassard ‘s consistent performance throughout all of his career in both the regular season and the post-season makes him a huge asset for the team as he lead the Rangers to the Stanley Cup Finals last year. In comparison to both Radim Vrbata and Ryan O’Reilly, Mr. Brassard’s requested salary raise is moderate and is fair market value for his specific skill set that he provides the club with.

1. http://bleacherreport.com/articles/2209606-derek-stepan-injury-updates-on-rangers-stars-leg-and-return [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. http://www.blueshirtbanter.com/2014/9/26/6849339/new-york-rangers-lineu-derek-stepan-rick-nash-derick-brassard [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8473544&view=stats [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. *Id*. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. http://www.usatoday.com/story/sports/nhl/rangers/2014/07/27/derick-brassard-new-york-contract/13244105/ [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8473544&view=stats [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. http://espn.go.com/nhl/statistics/team/\_/stat/special-teams/sort/powerPlayPct/year/2014 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8473544&view=stats [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8473544&view=notes [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. *Id*. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8468085 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. http://www.capgeek.com/player/898 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8468085 [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. *Id*. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. http://www.capgeek.com/player/1576 [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. http://avalanche.nhl.com/club/player.htm?id=8475158&view=stats [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. http://avalanche.nhl.com/club/player.htm?id=8475158&view=notes [↑](#footnote-ref-17)