

Team Number 2

Case: Derick Brassard

Player's Representative

Introduction

As Mr. Derick Brassard's representatives, we have reviewed Mr. Brassard's play and statistical output over the last season as well as his career. Taking into consideration the salary of valid comparable players, we believe that a fair value for Mr. Brassard's services would be a one year contract in the amount of \$5,097,200.00.

Mr. Brassard has proven himself to be a young top six centre in the NHL, and is poised to anchor the New York Rangers' second line for the near future. He has made the most of his opportunities by producing solid offensive numbers in limited minutes while playing behind Brad Richards and Derek Stepan. Mr. Richards' departure from New York will allow Mr. Brassard to reach the potential that saw him go sixth overall in the 2006 NHL entry draft.

To determine the fair value of a player's contract, salary must be viewed in the context of the market for similar players who were recently eligible for arbitration. As we will demonstrate, Sam Gagner and Bryan Little are the two best comparable players when determining the fair value of a contract for Mr. Brassard. Based on his statistical output and role on the team, Mr. Brassard should receive a similar contract to both Mr. Gagner and Mr. Little. However, Mr. Brassard's salary should be adjusted to reflect the increase in salary cap since Mr. Gagner and Mr. Little signed their contract.

Mr. Brassard's History:

Mr. Brassard is known as an offensive-minded centreman. In 2013-2014, his platform year, Mr. Brassard played in 81 games, scoring a career high 18 goals and producing 27 assists for a total of 45 points. He played on average 13:14 per game at even strength and 2:31 on the powerplay, for a total average time on ice of 15:47 per game. Mr. Brassard ended the season at +2, and has been a “plus” player in every season he has played for the New York Rangers¹.

Mr. Brassard's statistics have consistently improved since joining the Rangers midway through the 2012-2013 season after being traded from the Columbus Blue Jackets. Mr. Brassard has averaged 0.24 goals per game and 0.6 points per game as a member of the Rangers, which is an improvement over the 0.19 goals per game and 0.55 points per game he scored as a member of the Columbus Blue Jackets. Mr. Brassard also has a plus/minus rating of +5 during his career with the Rangers, but was a -42 over his four and a half seasons in Columbus. This indicates that Mr. Brassard's career plus/minus rating of -37 is not a reflection of bad defensive play. Mr. Brassard played a large portion of his career on a Columbus team that regularly finished near the bottom of the standings, which inevitably resulted in a high minus rating for Mr. Brassard, as well as most of his teammates. Mr. Brassard's improved offensive production since joining the Rangers is a positive trend that suggests he may continue to improve on his numbers from the 2013-2014 season.

Brassard's Production on the Rangers v. Blue Jackets

	G/G	A/G	P/G	+/-
Rangers	0.24	0.36	0.60	+5
Blue Jackets	0.23	0.32	0.55	-42

¹ All statistics for Mr. Brassard: <http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8473544&view=stats>

Mr. Brassard's 15:47 average time on ice ranked third among Rangers centres in 2013/2014, behind Brad Richards (18:41²) and Derek Stepan (18:03³). He was also the third option on the powerplay, where his 2:31 average time per game trailed Richards's 3:40 and Stepan's 2:42. It is therefore not surprising that Mr. Stepan (17 goals, 40 assists, 57 points) and Mr. Richards (20 goals, 31 assists, 51 points) were both able to outscore Mr. Brassard during the 2013/2014 season. If we control these numbers for ice time, however, we can see that Mr. Brassard was able to outscore Mr. Richards, as he had an average time on ice per goal of 71:05, compared to 76:36 for Mr. Richards, an average time on ice per assist of 47:23, compared to 49:25 for Mr. Richards, and an average time on ice per point of 28:26, compared to 30:02 for Mr. Richards. This suggests that Mr. Brassard would have produced better than Mr. Richards if he had played the same amount of minutes that Mr. Richards played.

Comparison of NY Rangers' Centremen, 2013-2014

Player	TOI/G	G	A	P	TOI/P
Stepan	18:03	17	40	57	25:58
Richards	18:41	20	31	51	30:02
Brassard	15:47	18	27	45	28:26

Mr. Brassard is expected to see an increase in ice time in the coming season. During the offseason, Mr. Richards's contract was bought out and he has since signed a contract with the Chicago Blackhawks⁴. The Rangers have not signed a centreman to replace Mr. Richards's

² All statistics for Mr. Richards: <http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8467389&view=stats>

³ All statistics for Mr. Stepan: <http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8474613&view=stats>

⁴ "Blackhawks sign Brad Richards to one-year contract":
<http://www.nhl.com/ice/news.htm?id=724999#&navid=nhl-search>

minutes, which suggests that they are confident that Mr. Brassard will be able to adequately step up and anchor the second line. We can reasonably expect Mr. Brassard to play an additional two minutes per game in the upcoming season, which could directly increase his point production above the 50 point mark, all other things equal. Mr. Brassard should also benefit from additional powerplay time due to Mr. Richards' departure, which should increase his offensive production further still.

Throughout his career, Mr. Brassard has elevated his game in the NHL playoffs. He has a goal per game average of 0.23, compared to 0.20 in the regular season, an assist per game average of 0.46, compared to 0.36 in the regular season, and a point per game average of 0.69, compared to 0.56 in the regular season. This is particularly significant considering that scoring tends to decrease in the Stanley Cup playoffs, as defensive coverage tightens and bad defensive teams have been eliminated. Mr. Brassard also has a career plus/minus rating of +5 in the playoffs, compared to -37 in the regular season.

Brassard's Production in the Playoffs and Regular Season

	G/G	A/G	P/G	+/-
Regular Season	0.20	0.36	0.56	-37
Playoffs	0.23	0.46	0.69	+5

Valid Comparable Players

Sam Gagner of the Arizona Coyotes and Bryan Little of the Winnipeg Jets are two players who negotiated their salaries with their respective teams, avoiding arbitration, following the 2012-2013 season. The salary cap for the 2013-2014 season, the first in which their salaries will take effect, was \$64.3 million⁵. Therefore, that is the cap under which these players and their clubs were negotiating. Mr. Gagner negotiated a deal for an average salary of \$4.8 million over three years⁶, while Mr. Little negotiated an average salary of \$4.7 million over five years⁷.

Based on Mr. Brassard's statistical output and role on the team, he should receive a similar contract to both Mr. Gagner and Mr. Little. Taking the average of their respective contracts, \$4.75 million, and adjusting it to this upcoming season's cap of \$69 million⁸, we as Mr. Brassard's representatives believe he is worth \$5,097,200.00 to the team.

In his platform year, Mr. Gagner registered 38 points, playing in every game of the lockout shortened 48-game season⁹. He played an average of 19.4 minutes in these games¹⁰. His points per minute total was therefore 0.04 ((38P/48G)/19.4 MPG). Mr. Little's point per minute production comes to 0.033 having produced 32 points in 48 games playing an average of 19.78 minutes a game¹¹. Mr. Brassard falls between these numbers at 0.035 having registered 45 points in 81 games playing an average of 15.78 minutes a game¹².

As mentioned, Mr. Brassard is slated as a second line center for this upcoming season following Brad Richards' departure. Therefore, Mr. Brassard's minutes per game are likely to

⁵ <http://bleacherreport.com/articles/1472481-nhl-salary-cap-set-to-drop-to-643-million5-teams-that-will-need-to-make-moves>

⁶ <http://www.capgeek.com/player/23>

⁷ <http://www.capgeek.com/player/342>

⁸ <http://www.nhl.com/ice/news.htm?id=724192>

⁹ <http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8474040&docid=TeamPlayerBio:47038#&navid=nhl-search>

¹⁰ <http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8474040&view=splits&season=20122013&gameType=2>

¹¹ <http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8473412&view=splits&season=20122013&gameType=2>

¹² <http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8473544&view=splits&season=20132014&gameType=2>

increase with his increased role on the team. Centering the second line opposed to the third where Mr. Brassard spent his platform year, the player at hand will likely be playing with higher caliber teammates as well. This promotion thus places Mr. Brassard in a position to produce even higher point totals as a result of the predicted minute increase as well as exceed his point per minute totals as a result of the better quality linemates.

Mr. Brassard has also produced very similar numbers to the comparable players, Mr. Gagner and Mr. Little, in regard to their faceoff percentage. As a center, which all three are, faceoff percentage is very important to your team as it directly leads to puck possession. Mr. Brassard won the faceoffs he took 48%¹³ of the time, landing him between Mr. Gagner's 43.9%¹⁴ and Mr. Little's 51.2%¹⁵ in each of their platform years.

Mr. Brassard should also be noted for his performance on the powerplay unit. Mr. Brassard, Mr. Gagner, and Mr. Little all are rewarded with substantial time on the powerplay. On a per game basis in their platform years, they have respectively logged 2.52¹⁶, 2.92¹⁷, and 2.53¹⁸ minutes. Out of the three, Mr. Brassard has produced the greatest share of his points (40%¹⁹) on the powerplay, demonstrating his effectiveness on the man advantage. (See Appendix 1).

Age plays into the fair valuation of Mr. Brassard's contract as well. Brassard at 27 is older than Gagner (23 when he negotiated his contract²⁰) and Little (25 when he negotiated his) during their arbitration-eligible summers. A University of British Columbia study conducted at the Sauder School of Business "found that the performance of forwards peaks between the ages

¹³ <http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8473544&view=splits&season=20132014&gameType=2>

¹⁴ <http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8474040&view=splits&season=20122013&gameType=2>

¹⁵ <http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8473412&view=splits&season=20122013&gameType=2>

¹⁶ <http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8473544&view=splits&season=20132014&gameType=2>

¹⁷ <http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8474040&view=splits&season=20122013&gameType=2>

¹⁸ <http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8473412&view=splits&season=20122013&gameType=2>

¹⁹ <http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8473544&view=splits&season=20132014&gameType=2>

²⁰ <http://www.edmontonsun.com/2013/07/22/edmonton-oilers-ink-three-year-contract-extension-with-centre-sam-gagner>

of 27 and 28”²¹. Professor Bander, who personally conducted the study, also admitted that “[t]he vast majority of players are at 90 per cent of their best by age 24”²². So while all three forwards are in their peak years, there is reason to believe that this is especially true for Mr. Brassard. Either way, it is one other variable that points to why Mr. Brassard should be awarded a contract similar to the two players who are used as comparisons.

As the player at hand’s representatives, we are aware the arbiter may consider Mr. Brassard’s injury history in a negative light. While this matter should be considered, it has been accounted for in our proposed award and the comparable players we are relying upon to justify this award. Mr. Gagner also had a notable injury history before coming to terms on his salary in his arbitration-eligible year. Further, what is similar about each is that both played full or almost full seasons in their platform year, demonstrating that their prior injuries no longer affected them.

Mr. Brassard and Comparable Players’ Platform Year Comparison

	Total Points	Games Played in Platform Year	Powerplay Points	Powerplay Point Percentage (%)	Time On Ice Per Game (mins)	Powerplay Time Per Game (mins)
Brassard	45	81	18	40	15.78	2.52
Gagner	38	48	15	39.5	19.40	2.92
Little	32	48	5	15.6	19.78	2.53

²¹ <http://news.ubc.ca/2014/05/15/nhl-study/>

²² *ibid.*

Conclusion

Mr. Brassard will be a key player for the New York Rangers for the foreseeable future, forming a core of young players with players such as Derek Stepan, Chris Kreider and Ryan McDonough, who will ensure that the Rangers are a competitive years for years to come. He has shown that he can be relied on as a second line centre on a Stanley Cup contending team, and that he elevates his game in the playoffs. Mr. Brassard, as a young productive offensive centre, is comparable to Sam Gagner of the Arizona Coyotes and Bryan Little of the Winnipeg Jets, and should receive a similar contract. Taking the average of their respective contracts, \$4.75 million, and adjusting it to this upcoming season's cap of \$69 million, we as Mr. Brassard's representatives believe a fair award is a one year contract in the amount of \$5,097,200.00.