



2014 HOCKEY ARBITRATION COMPETITION OF CANADA
SALARY ARBITRATION OF LARS ELLER (MONTRÉAL CANADIENS)

SUBMISSION MADE ON BEHALF OF THE PLAYER

TEAM 24

1) BACKGROUND



Lars Eller #81
Montréal Canadiens Center

NUMBER:	81	BIRTHDATE:	May 8, 1989 (AGE 25)
HEIGHT:	6' 2"	BIRTHPLACE:	Rodovre, Denmark
WEIGHT:	215	DRAFTED:	STL / 2007 NHL Entry Draft
SHOOTS:	Left	ROUND:	1st (13th overall)

Lars Eller (“**Eller**”) is a 25 year old, 6’2”, 215 pound center from Denmark. He was drafted 13th overall in the 2007 NHL Entry Draft by the St. Louis Blues. After a brief stint in St. Louis in his rookie season, Eller was dealt to the Montréal Canadiens (“**Canadiens**”) in the summer of 2010, where we would play his next four professional seasons.

In accordance with articles 12.1 and 12.2 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the NHL and NHLPA (2012-2022), Eller filed notice of player-elected salary arbitration in July of 2014. The midpoint salary is \$3,500,000 per season. It is our submission that Eller should be paid an annual salary of more than the midpoint.

2) CAREER PROGRESSION

Figure 1: Career Offensive Statistics for Lars Eller¹

Season	Games	Goals	Assists	Points	+/-	TOI /g	PPG	PP TOI /g
2009-2019	7	0	2	2	2	10:49	0.29	1:20
2010-2011	77	7	10	17	-4	11:08	0.22	0:17
2011-2012	79	16	12	28	-5	15:18	0.35	0:39
2012-2013	46	8	22	30	+8	14:49	0.65	0:42
2013-2014	77	12	14	26	-15	15:57	0.34	1:06

¹ <http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8474189&docid=TeamPlayerBio:41071#&navid=nhl-search>

*Photo and graphic courtesy nhl.com

Eller's career offensive statistics are not exceptional. But Eller's value can't properly be ascertained in offensive output alone. Although part of the equation, Eller has demonstrated his value to the Canadiens by stepping into a role as a defensive-oriented, reliable two-way center. The Canadiens have not sought to maximize Eller's offensive output by putting him in situations commensurate with scoring. Instead, they've obtained value through his defensive play. As much as we can measure a player's contributions in these ways, Eller has demonstrated his value as one of the NHL's top third-line centers.

When Eller has been provided offensive opportunities, he has produced more consistently. In the 2012-2013 lockout-shortened season, Eller spent much of the season flanked by former team Captain Brian Gionta. He delivered 0.65 PPG, the highest of his career.

How a team chooses to utilize a player has a multitude of implications for the player's outputs. Some offensive-oriented players are sheltered either with high offensive zone starts, low quality of competition or high quality of linemates. Montréal has instead chosen to play Eller almost exclusively in a checking capacity throughout his career. He has not been sheltered by the team, nor has he been put in positions which would generate high offensive outputs.

Figure 2: Career Defensive Statistics for Lars Eller²

Season	Hits	Team Rank (Forwards)	Blocked Shots	Team Rank (Forwards)	Defensive Zone Start %	Team Rank (Centers)
2010-2011	85	4th	22	6th	48%	3 rd
2011-2012	72	5th	55	3rd	52%	2 nd
2012-2013	86	2nd	33	1st	51%	2 nd
2013-2014	130	1st	58	1st	56%	2nd

² http://www.behindthenet.ca/nhl_statistics.php?ds=30&s=63&f1=2010_s&f2=5v5&f4=C+LW+RW&f5=MTL&c=0+1+3+5+4+6+7+8+13+14+29+30+32+33+34+45+46+63+67;
<http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8474189&view=splits>

3) PLATFORM SEASON

In his platform season (2013-2014), Eller didn't match the previous year's offensive output of 0.65 PPG. There are a number of reasons for the offensive drop-off, which properly understood actually demonstrate Eller's value to his team besides pure offensive output. What Eller did in his platform season is solidify his role as one of the team's most important defensive forwards.

In October-November of the 2013-2014 season, when Eller scored 15 of his 26 points, he was playing nearly 18 minutes per game. He was also flanked by both Gallagher and Galchenyuk. As the season progressed, the Canadiens ultimately decided to utilize Eller in a defensive third-line capacity, checking the opponent's first or second line forwards. Various wingers were rotated to and from the third line over the course of the season, leaving Eller as the only constant on that checking (third) line.

The Canadiens almost exclusively put Eller in situations commensurate with a responsible, defensive minded checking center. Eller was only behind Plekanec in terms of defensive zone starts in 2013-2014 (56%). In terms of powerplay time, Eller lagged significantly behind both Desharnais (2:41) and Plekanec (1:56), averaging 1:06 per game.³

Eller has matured nicely into his role as a defence-first center on the Canadiens. In 2013-2014, his platform season, Eller had career highs in TOI (15:56), hits (130) and blocks (58). Eller led Canadiens forwards in both hits and blocks in 2013-2014. Eller has demonstrated that he can more than adequately fill the role given to him by his team.

³ Statistical splits from nhl.com

4) PLAYOFF PERFORMANCE

Although only participating in 25 career playoff games to date, Eller has certainly demonstrated an ability to raise the level of his game to match the intensity of the post-season. During the 2010-2011 post-season, Eller's rookie playoff campaign, he managed two points in seven games against the eventual Stanley Cup Champion Boston Bruins. The performance included 18 hits, third best among Canadiens players, and 5 blocked shots, second best on the team. Despite being a rookie, Eller made his presence felt.

Figure 3: Career Playoff Statistics for Lars Eller⁴

Playoffs	Games	Goals	Assists	Points	+/-	TOI /g	PPG
2010-2011	7	0	2	2	1	13:04	0.29
2012-2013	1	0	0	0	0	8:43	0
2013-2014	17	5	8	13	6	16:27	0.77

Last season the Canadiens advanced to the Eastern Conference Final for only the second time since their 1992-1993 Stanley Cup Championship. Eller was an integral part of the Canadiens playoff success. Eller recorded 13 points in 17 games, the best among Canadiens forwards and second on the team behind P.K. Subban. He was tops among forwards despite having less minutes than fellow centers Tomas Plekanec and David Desharnais.⁵ While contributing significantly offensively, Eller continued to excel in defensive situations, finishing the post-season with 30 hits, 8 blocked shots and a +6 rating.

⁴ <http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8474189&view=splits>

⁵ Eller (16:47), Desharnais (18:40), Plekanec (20:19); <http://www.nhl.com/ice/playerstats.htm?fetchKey=20143MTLSASALL&sort=avgTOIPerGame&viewName=timeOnIce>

5) INJURY HISTORY

Eller has been almost entirely injury throughout his career. Since becoming a full-time NHL player in 2010-2011, Eller has played in at least 94% of his team's regular season games each season. Eller's only notable injury came as a result of an illegal hit, which occurred in Game 1 of the 2012-2013 playoffs. Eller missed the team's remaining four playoff games as a result of a concussion and other facial injuries. Eller has otherwise been a rock for the Canadiens during his time with the club.

Figure 4: Regular Seasons Games Played Over Career⁶

Season	Games Played	Percentage
2010-2011	77	94%
2011-2012	79	96%
2012-2013	46	96%
2013-2014	77	94%

6) YEARS OF SERVICE

Eller is one of only five Canadiens forwards to have played at least four seasons with the Club. With 311 career games played for the Canadiens, Eller is one of the team's longest serving players. Eller is integral to the team's recent youth movement. It is not unreasonable to suggest that as Eller continues to grow he will continue to alleviate the pressure from current two-way stalwart Tomas Plekanec.

7) CONTRIBUTION TO TEAM SUCCESS

Eller began playing full time in the NHL with the Canadiens at age 21. Since then, he's been a key player on a team that has been relatively successful, maintaining a 150-107-37 record over

⁶ Eller's pre-qualifying season in which he played seven games is excluded from this analysis.

the regular season. They've been a playoff team in three of four of Eller's campaigns since joining the team, most recently advancing to the Eastern Conference Final in 2013-2014.

8) PLAYER COMPARISON





Patrik Berglund #21

St. Louis Blues Center

NUMBER: 21	BIRTHDATE: June 2, 1988 (AGE 26)
HEIGHT: 6' 3"	BIRTHPLACE: Västerås, Sweden
WEIGHT: 217	DRAFTED: STL / <u>2006 NHL Entry Draft</u>
SHOOTS: Left	ROUND: 1st (25th overall)

In terms of physical characteristics, Patrik Berglund ("Berglund") and Eller are nearly identical. Berglund being 26 years old, 6' 3" and 217 lbs, and Eller 25 years old, 6' 2" and 215 lbs. Like Eller, Berglund was also a first-round pick of the St. Louis Blues (25th overall in 2006). Berglund, 26, is a Swedish center that has played six full seasons in the NHL. In the 2014 off-season, the arbitration eligible Berglund signed a three year deal with the Blues for an AAV of \$3,700,000 per season.

Figure 5: Career Offensive Statistics for Patrik Berglund⁷

Season	Games Played	Goals	Assists	Points	+/-	TOI /g	PPG	PP TOI /g
2008-2009	76	21	26	47	+19	14:43	0.62	3:14
2009-2010	71	13	13	26	-5	13:30	0.37	2:16
2010-2011	81	22	30	52	-3	17:11	0.64	2:53
2011-2012	82	19	19	38	+4	17:57	0.46	2:22
2012-2013	48	17	8	25	-2	16:49	0.52	2:20
2013-2014	78	14	18	32	+10	16:10	0.41	1:32

⁷ <http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8473534&view=stats>

*Photo and graphic courtesy nhl.com

Berglund's greater offensive production can be explained by the enhanced opportunities he has been provided by the Blues. This past season, for example, Berglund started in the offensive zone 55% of the time, in comparison to Eller's 43%. Berglund additionally had on average 50% more powerplay time per game than Eller in 2013-2014. Though it should be noted that Eller's PPG of 0.65 in 2012-2013 is right on par with Berglund's career best of 0.64 in 2010-2011.

Figure 6: 2013-2014 Offensive Statistical Comparison of Eller and Berglund⁸

Player	Games	Goals	Assists	Points	+/-	TOI /g	PPG	PP TOI /g
Berglund	78	14	18	32	+10	16:10	0.41	1:32
Eller	77	12	14	26	-15	15:57	0.34	1:06

Both players show an ability to take on a defensive role in order to better the team, despite showing also possessing the ability to deliver offensively when provided the opportunity to do so. Given their proximity age and experience, and the statistics outlined above, it is not unreasonable to suggest that Eller's salary should be similar to that of Berglund's. Where Berglund produces slightly better offensively, at least historically, Eller more than compensates in hard defensive zone starts, hits and blocked shots.

Figure 7: 2013-2014 Defensive Statistical Comparison of Eller and Berglund⁹

Player	Hits	Team Rank (Forwards)	Blocked Shots	Team Rank (Forwards)	Defensive Zone Start %	Team Rank (Centers)
Berglund	88	6 th	30	5 th	44%	4 th
Eller	130	1 st	58	1 st	56%	2 nd

⁸ <http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8473534&view=stats>

⁹ http://www.behindthenet.ca/nhl_statistics.php?ds=30&s=63&f1=2010_s&f2=5v5&f4=C+LW+RW&f5=STL&c=0+1+3+5+4+6+7+8+13+14+29+30+32+33+34+45+46+63+67;
<http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8473534&view=splits>

Like Eller, Berglund fulfils the role of a third-line center on a team that is both deep at the position and has achieved success in recent seasons. Berglund has been healthy for the majority of his career, playing in at least 70 games in all of his six seasons in the NHL (lock-out adjusted).

9) CLOSING REMARKS

Lars Eller has filled the role in which he has been cast more than adequately. He delivers tough minutes, night after night, against the opposition's top offensive players. He makes his teammates better, is relied upon to be one of Montréal's top defensively responsible forwards, and has shown limited flashes of top flight offensive production.

Although his offensive production hasn't been as consistent as it perhaps should be, our salary demand of more than \$3,500,000 reasonably compensates the player for both his existing role, which is substantial, and his potential to grow offensively as he enters the prime of his career.