

Team Number 25

Case: Lars Eller

Club's Representative

Introduction

It is our position as representatives of the Montreal Canadiens, that when Lars Eller's performance, and valid comparable players are taken into account, a fair award should be a one year contract valued at no more than \$3,200,000. Mr. Eller is entering the prime of his career at the age of 25, but has yet to establish himself as consistent enough to warrant a salary above the mid-point figure of \$3,500,000. He has excited our eager fan-base with flashes of brilliance, but has equally disappointed in long stretches of futility. Over the past two regular seasons, Mr. Eller has struggled to find the score sheet on a regular basis. In fact, in his platform year (2013-2014), Mr. Eller failed to register a single point in 5 or more games, on 5 different occasions¹. From an overall point-production perspective in that same year, Mr. Eller underwhelmed with 26 total points in 77 games, despite an increase in ice-time from the previous season.² An NHL forward's ability to produce on the score sheet is their most significant asset. Although Mr. Eller has shown the potential to contribute to the success of the Montreal Canadiens, we believe that his performance, when compared to valid players, proves that he does not merit an award of more than \$3,200,000

Mr. Eller's History

In Mr. Eller's platform year (2013-2014), he played 77 games, scoring 12 goals, and adding 14 assists for a total of 26 points³. He registered a plus/minus rating of minus 15, and averaged 15minutes and 58 seconds of ice-time per game⁴. He was scarcely used on the power play, averaging only 1minute and 13 seconds per game, and scoring a total of 3 points (2 goals, 1

¹ <http://www.hockey-reference.com/players/e/ellerla01/gamelog/2014/>

² http://espn.go.com/nhl/player/stats/_id/3946/lars-eller - TOI increased by 1 minute 8 seconds on average

³ Ibid

⁴ Ibid

assist)⁵. He also registered 130 hits, 58 blocked shots and 68 penalty minutes (PIMs)⁶. In 17 playoff games that season, Mr. Eller scored 5 goals and added 8 assists for a total of 13 points⁷.

In the previous season (2012-2013), Mr. Eller played 46 games, scoring 8 goals and adding 22 assists for a total of 30 points⁸. He registered a plus/minus rating of plus 8 and averaged 14 minutes and 50 seconds of ice-time per game⁹. He averaged 43 seconds of power play time per game, and registered 5 total points (1 goal, 4 assists)¹⁰. He also had 86 hits, 33 blocked shots, and 45 PIMs¹¹. Unfortunately, Mr. Eller's postseason that season was cut short by a severe concussion so he did not register any points.

Mr. Eller has stayed relatively healthy over the course of his NHL career. In the 2011 offseason, he required surgery on his right shoulder, which forced him to miss two games at the beginning of the season¹². In May 2013, Mr. Eller suffered a severe concussion in the playoffs that forced him out of the series¹³. Finally, in March 2014, he suffered a minor knee injury that forced him to miss one game¹⁴. Although shoulder surgery does provide for some measure of concern long-term, our organization's biggest concern is Mr. Eller's severe concussion. There is clear medical evidence that those who suffer severe concussions are more susceptible to further concussions¹⁵. Further concussions mean the potential for missed games and underperformance. We believe Mr. Eller's concussion history should be taken into consideration in the award granted to him.

⁵ <http://www.rotowire.com/hockey/player.htm?id=2793>

⁶ Ibid

⁷ http://espn.go.com/nhl/player/stats/_id/3946/lars-eller

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ <http://www.rotowire.com/hockey/player.htm?id=2793>

¹¹ Ibid

¹² <http://www.tsn.ca/nhl/teams/players/bio/?id=6418>

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ http://www.brainline.org/multimedia/video/transcripts/Jeff_Barth-Multiple_Concussions.pdf at p.2

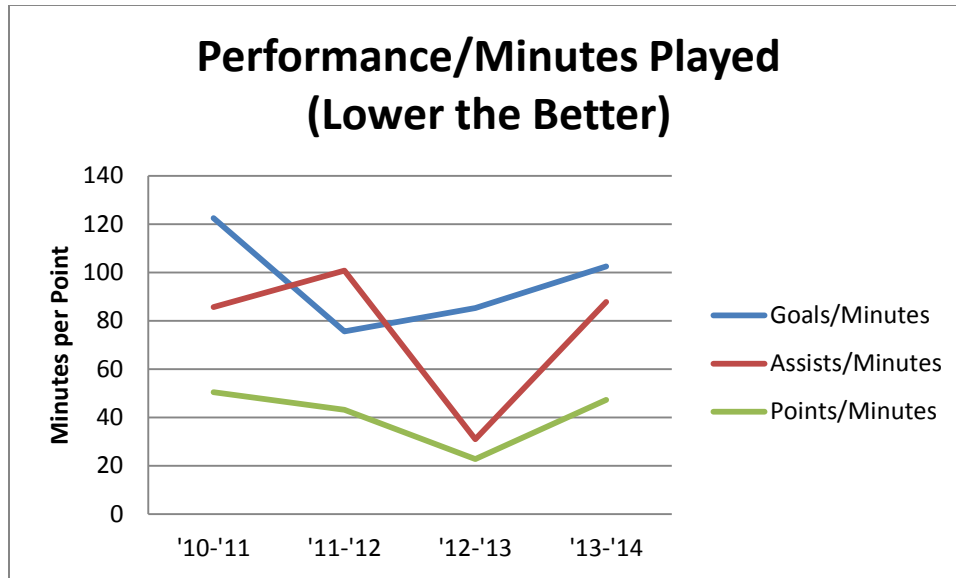
When looking at Mr. Eller's statistics overall, it is clear that he has not performed on a consistent basis. In fact, his third, and sometimes fourth line role on the team over the past two seasons is indicative of this inconsistency. In Mr. Eller's platform year, he went more than five straight games without registering a point on five separate occasions¹⁶. On four of those occasions, he went more than eight straight games without registering a single point, with one occasion stretching as long as 14 games¹⁷.

In addition to long stretches of futility, Mr. Eller's overall point production in 2013-2014 was well below the standard for players in a similar situation, who received an award of \$3,300,000 or more. He totaled only 26 points in 77 games which amounts to a meager 0.34 points per game. In fact, it took Mr. Eller an average of 47 minutes and 20 seconds of ice-time to register one point, 102 minutes and 27 seconds to register a goal, and 87 minutes and 49 seconds to register an assist. Each of his totals has gone down significantly since the previous season (2012-2013) despite an increase in average playing time. Mr. Eller's lack of offensive production was reflected in the coach's decision to limit his power play time to an average of 1 minute and 13 seconds per game¹⁸.

¹⁶ <http://www.hockey-reference.com/players/e/ellerla01/gamelog/2014/> → Games 13-17 (5 games), 30-37 (8 games), 43-56 (14 games), 58-66 (9 games), and 68-75 (8 games).

¹⁷ Ibid → See above game spans for details

¹⁸ <http://www.rotowire.com/hockey/player.htm?id=2793>



The Montreal Canadiens cannot entirely discredit the fact that on its face, Mr. Eller had a good playoff run in his platform season, scoring 13 points in 17 games (5 goals, 8 assists)¹⁹. However, similar to the regular season, it is important to note that his production was inconsistent, and lacked when needed most. In both the Eastern Conference semi-finals, and finals, Mr. Eller had 4 games where he was completely held off the score-sheet, and had a combined plus/minus of minus 6²⁰. Two of these games were elimination games²¹. Although Mr. Eller did have some measure of success in the post-season, there is a clear pattern of inconsistency that continued to manifest itself in the latter portion of his playoff performance. The fact of the matter is that Mr. Eller faded as the importance of the games increased. His inconsistency meant that his team could not rely on him in the most critical situations, where playoff series are won or lost. Therefore, we ask that the arbitrator read Mr. Eller's playoff stats in light of the above information when determining a final valuation.

¹⁹ http://espn.go.com/nhl/player/stats/_id/3946/lars-eller

²⁰ <http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8474189&season=20132014&view=log>

²¹ Ibid → Game 7 versus the Boston Bruins and Game 6 versus the New York Rangers

Overall, Mr. Eller has failed to demonstrate a measure of consistency for an NHL forward that merits an award of more than \$3,500,000. His past two seasons have been indicative of this inconsistency when looking at his point production. His performance will now be compared to 3 valid players who will help situate an appropriate valuation for a player of Mr. Eller's caliber.

Comparables

Chris Kreider

It is the club's position that Mr. Kreider has outperformed Mr. Eller in the 2013-2014 season by a substantial margin, despite the former's 2 year valuation at only \$2,475,000 per season. For starters, it took Mr. Eller 47 minutes and 29 seconds to score a point²². In contrast, Mr. Kreider scored a point for every 28 minutes and 6 seconds on ice²³. Further, Mr. Kreider scored 11 points more than Mr. Eller, despite playing in 11 fewer games²⁴. Mr. Kreider's performance on the ice is also superior to Mr. Eller's when you take into account that each had equal opportunities to score, with 136 and 137 shots on goal respectively²⁵. Mr. Kreider also registered an impressive +14 as a +/- rating²⁶. This is juxtaposed sharply to Mr. Eller's rating of -15²⁷. These statistics indicate that Mr. Kreider is a far more valuable offensive player than Mr. Eller. Mr. Kreider's ability to drive the puck up the ice was critical to his team's success in the 2013-2014 season. Mr. Eller on the other hand performed inconsistently throughout the season by scoring few goals against the opposing team and by doing little to prevent the opposing team

²² http://espn.go.com/nhl/player/stats/_/id/3946/lars-eller

²³ http://espn.go.com/nhl/player/stats/_/id/5833/chris-kreider

²⁴ Ibid (Kreider & Eller Stats)

²⁵ Ibid (Kreider & Eller Stats)

²⁶ Ibid

²⁷ http://espn.go.com/nhl/player/stats/_/id/3946/lars-eller

from scoring. The volatility in Mr. Eller's performance was detrimental to his team overall and therefore deserves to be paid less than the \$3,500,000 midpoint currently being contested.

The club would also like to draw attention to Mr. Kreider's comparable playoff performance. He outperformed Mr. Eller with 0.33 to 0.29 goals-per-playoff-game respectively²⁸. Further to this, Mr. Kreider managed to score 0.87 points-per-playoff-match relative to Mr. Eller's 0.76²⁹. It follows that Mr. Kreider outperformed Mr. Eller on the ice during the playoff season. Although these statistics are narrow, it demonstrates the reality that even when Mr. Eller is performing at his peak, Mr. Kreider outperforms him despite a valuation that is a million dollars less than the midpoint salary contested. The club therefore concludes that Mr. Eller is not worth the one million dollar premium on account of his playoff performance. The club would therefore ask the arbitrator to consider Mr. Kreider's valuation as a bottom line when placing a valuation on Mr. Eller's contract.

Mikkel Boedker – 2.55 million/year

It is the club's position that Mr. Boedker has outperformed Mr. Eller in the 2013-2014 despite the fact that Mr. Boedker was valued at only \$2,550,000. For starters, Mr. Boedker was a more efficient player, netting his team one point for every 28 minutes of ice time³⁰. As result of his performance, Mr. Boedker earned his team 51 goals in the 2013-2014 season³¹. This is in contrast to Mr. Eller, who only produced a point every 49 minutes and 12 seconds of ice time for a total of 26 points³². Mr. Boedker's efficiency on the ice is further exemplified by the number of shots on goal he produced throughout the season. Mr. Boedker had 29 extra shots on goal

²⁸ <http://rangers.nhl.com/club/player.htm?id=8475184> & <http://canadiens.nhl.com/club/player.htm?id=8474189>

²⁹ Ibid

³⁰ http://espn.go.com/nhl/player/stats/_id/3976/mikkel-boedker

³¹ Ibid

³² http://espn.go.com/nhl/player/stats/_id/3946/lars-eller

relative to Mr. Eller³³. This is despite the fact that each player played in a similar number of games: 82 and 77 respectively³⁴. These statistics indicate that Mr. Boedker is a cheaper yet more effective player than Mr. Eller on the ice. Mr. Eller's inconsistency on the ice, as well as his relatively weaker point production, indicates that he would be overvalued at any price beyond the \$3,500,000 threshold. The truth of the matter is that the market provides for similar talent for much cheaper. The club is therefore asking the arbitrator to reduce the value being placed on Mr. Eller's contract.

Brandon Sutter

It is the club's position that Brandon Sutter's statistics are comparable to those of Mr. Eller despite the fact that former was awarded a contract of only \$3,300,000. For starters, each player took a similar amount of time on ice in order to produce a single point. Mr. Sutter produced a point for every 49 minutes and 12 seconds of ice time and Mr. Eller took 47 minutes and 29 seconds³⁵. Furthermore, each player registered a relatively weak +/- with Mr. Sutter tallying a score of -9³⁶.

There is little to justify the \$200,000 dollar premium between Mr. Sutter's contract and the midpoint salary being contested. Even if the club moves beyond the core statistics in terms of point production, each player is evenly matched in terms of shots on goal as well as the fact that each player is 25 years old. In light of this analysis, the club contends that Mr. Sutter's contract should serve as an upper limit on Mr. Eller's valuation.

³³ Ibid & http://espn.go.com/nhl/player/stats/_/id/3976/mikkel-boedker

³⁴ Ibid

³⁵ http://espn.go.com/nhl/player/stats/_/id/3791/brandon-sutter

³⁶ Ibid

Conclusion

It is the club's position that Mr. Eller's contract is worth \$3,200,00 when judged on his overall performance relative to comparable players. Although Mr. Eller has delighted fans with intense hot streaks, the volatility in his underlying performance weakens his overall valuation. The \$3,200,000 valuation is posited on 3 points. The first is that Mr. Eller's performance was more in line with players such as Chris Kreider and Mikkel Broeder. Each of these players proved themselves to be cheaper and more effective players on the ice. This indicates to the club that other players have greater intrinsic value to their respective clubs than what Mr. Eller has to presently offer. Thus, these 2 players bring Mr. Eller's minimum valuation to \$2,500,000 dollars a year. The club does however feel that this is downplaying Mr. Eller's age and experience. Mr. Sutter's contract gives credence to the fact that the league is willing to place a premium on age and experience. Both Mr. Sutter, and Mr. Eller have performed similarly in their platform years and thus the ceiling point must be at \$3,300,000 dollars. Although they have played similarly, the club maintains that a slight discount should apply, owing to Eller's inconsistency in both the regular season as well as the playoffs. Thus, the club submits to the arbitrator a valuation of \$3,200,000 per year.