

## An Insiders Look at NHL Negotiations

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Ever wonder exactly what goes on behind closed doors at the NHL and NHLPA meetings during the lockout? It may seem as though they aren't accomplishing anything, but thanks to my intrepid reporting proficiency, I have managed to uncover a transcript which reveals all of the valuable work the players and owners do in their valiant efforts to resolve the NHL lockout, which now more than ever threatens to cancel the season.

### JANUARY 9<sup>th</sup>, 2005: NHLPA BOARD MEETING

**TREVOR LINDEN:** I would like to call this meeting to order.

**DANIEL ALFREDSSON:** Just a sec – Arturs hasn't set up his booster seat yet. Need some help there, little fella?

**ARTURS IRBE:** No, thanks. I've got it. Sorry, I'm from Latvia.

**LINDEN:** Good then. Now, we all know that the owners have set a meeting of the board for the 14<sup>th</sup>. What we need is a proposal to make us look good while demonizing them for being money grubbing whores.

**ALL:** Hear, hear! The leader is good! The leader is great!

**LINDEN:** Thank you. Now last time, as you all know, we offered a 24% rollback. This time, I think we'll suggest a 26% rollback.

**VINCENT DAMPHOUSSE:** But how will I make my Lexus payments? This is unacceptable! Players can't survive on that sort of system!

**LINDEN:** Don't you sit there and tell me what's going to give you a hard time. You're not the only one in that boat. Look at me, I'm an aging never-was whose income never allowed me to own more than four cars and a small country at the same time. I also had to captain the Vancouver Canucks back in '94, as well as the Islanders, and I had to play for Washington, too. I played for Montreal, too, but they rule so I can't complain about them.

**ALL:** (nod their assent to the fact that Montreal does indeed rule)

**DAMPHOUSSE:** You think you had it bad? Try being a French-Canadian captain in Montreal. It doesn't get any harder than that. And there's a team that's not exactly rolling in the Benjamins, so my salary wasn't great. I had to leave so I could get a Lexus to begin with.

**IRBE:** So? I'm a short, stocky, untalented and overpaid goalie.

**ALFREDSSON:** Is there any other kind?

**IRBE:** Oh yeah, and I'm from Latvia.

**LINDEN:** .....wow, that is bad.

**WAYNE GRETZKY:** I think it's a

great idea. Maybe the owners will finally bite, and we can all get this issue resolved. I think it's important for the state of the game that we resolve the lockout so we can focus on what really matters here – the kids. We think about the kids, so *you'll* think about a Ford.

**BOB GOODENOW, HEAD OF THE UNION:** How did you get in?

**GRETZKY:** I don't know. I always seem to get in on everything. Didn't you see me hand out the trophy at the World Juniors? I had absolutely no place there at all if Canada hadn't have won. I think about Canada, so *you'll* think about a Ford.

**DAMPHOUSSE:** I have a Lexus.

**LINDEN:** So what if we had have lost?

**GRETZKY:** George Laracque would have ripped Ovechkin's arms off. Looks like Phaneuf beat him to the punch.

**REPORTER:** Mr. Gretzky, your position on the lockout –

**GOODENOW:** How did *you* get in?

**GRETZKY:** I have no position on the NHL lockout. I believe compromise is the only viable solution.

**REPORTER:** What sort of compromise are you thinking about?

**GRETZKY:** I think about compromise, so *you'll* –

**LINDEN:** So, a 26% rollback, then?

**DAMPHOUSSE:** No. I need my Lexus.

**ALFREDSSON:** And I need to pay my hairdresser.

**IRBE:** And I need to pay for – who cares what I need to pay for? I'm from Latvia.

**GOODENOW:** Excellent. The union will stick firmly to it's guns. It's those hard-assed owners that never get anything done. Meeting adjourned.

### OWNER'S MEETING, SCHEDULED FOR JAN 14<sup>th</sup> BUT POSTPONED INDEFINITELY:

**GARY BETTMAN:** Ahem – salary cap, cost certainty. Any questions?

**VOICE IN BACK OF ROOM:** Do we still get fined one million dollars if we publicly speak out against you, you Nazi bastard?

**BETTMAN:** Yes.

**VOICE IN BACK OF ROOM:** Oh. Never mind, then.

**BETTMAN:** Excellent. Meeting adjourned.