

2013 HOCKEY ARBITRATION COMPETITION OF CANADA

Chris Stewart v. St. Louis Blues

Submission on Behalf of Chris Stewart

Midpoint: \$4.15 million

Submission by Team 17

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I. INTRODUCTION

This brief analyzes the performance and contributions of Chris Stewart (“Mr. Stewart”), a right-winger for the St. Louis Blues (the “Blues” or the “Club”). Mr. Stewart’s most recent contract was a Standard Player Contract for 1 year at \$3 million¹. Upon expiry of this contract, Mr. Stewart is a Restricted Free Agent and is eligible for arbitration under Article 12 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement. This brief will analyze the following relevant information in turn in order to determine the appropriate salary arbitration award: overall performance of the player, games played and injury history, length of service to the Club, overall contribution to the Club, special qualities of leadership or public appeal, and comparable players. It is clear that Mr. Stewart is a consistently key member of the Blues organization and should be awarded accordingly. Therefore, we believe that he should be entitled to a value above his midpoint salary of \$4.15 million. Mr. Stewart requests a salary arbitration award of \$4.3 million.

II. OVERALL PERFORMANCE OF THE PLAYER

A. Career Performance

Table 1: Career Statistics for Chris Stewart²

	GP	G	A	P	+/-	PIM	PP	SH	GWG	S	S%	TOI/g
2012-2013	48	18	18	36	0	40	6	0	3	97	18.6%	15:49
2011-2012	79	15	15	30	1	109	2	0	1	166	9.0%	15:26
2010-2011	62	28	25	53	-6	53	12	0	5	162	17.3%	17:29
2009-2010	77	28	36	64	4	73	3	0	5	221	12.7%	16:41
2008-2009	53	11	8	19	-18	54	1	1	1	98	11.2%	12:19
Total	319	100	102	202	-4 (avg)	329	24	1	15	744	13.4%	15:32 (avg)

Table 2: Points per Game for Chris Stewart³

¹ <http://capgeek.com/player/560>

² <http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8473485&view=splits>

³ Ibid.

	Goals/game	Assists/game	Points/game
2012-2013	0.375	0.375	0.750
2011-2012	0.190	0.190	0.380
2010-2011	0.452	0.403	0.855
2009-2010	0.364	0.468	0.831
2008-2009	0.208	0.151	0.358
Average	0.318	0.317	0.635
Ave. ex 11-12	0.343	0.343	0.686

Chris Stewart was drafted 18th overall to the Colorado Avalanche in the first round of the 2006 entry draft. Chris Stewart has proven himself to be a valuable forward since his start in the NHL, where he had 19 points in 53 games, with an 11.2% shooting percentage. Since he joined the Blues, he has continued to be a leader – he had the best start to a career as a Blue in franchise history with 6 goals in his first 5 games⁴. Last season, he led the Blues with 18 goals and 36 points and was tied for 4th overall with 13 goals at home last season⁵. At 6’2” and 231lbs, Mr. Stewart has the ability to be a strong power forward who can get to the net and score. With the exception of 2011-2012, Mr. Stewart has been steadily increasing his shooting percentage, and has also contributed significant penalty minutes – in 2011-2012, Mr. Stewart was 2nd on the team for penalty minutes⁶.

B. 2012-2013 Regular Season Performance

Chris Stewart had a strong rebound season in 2012-2013, where he led the Blues for points. Mr. Stewart had 22 points at home and led the team by a large margin, with the next closest player scoring only 15. With the highest shooting percentage since he started in the NHL, he was 2nd on the Blues and the highest percentage for a winger, solidifying his position as a leader on the team. Further, he had the most even strength as well as power play goals and points on the team. Mr. Stewart exhibited his strength through impressive point production while maintaining his position on the team as a tough power forward – during this year, Mr. Stewart still racked up

⁴ <http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8473485&view=notes>

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

40 penalty minutes and was 5th on the team. Although Mr. Stewart struggled to retain consistent point contributions in 2011-2012 with the hiring of a new, more defensive coach, he has had enough years of experience to prove his ability to be a 50+ point player going forward. Mr. Stewart has a record as a solid contributor to the team's offence through point production and strength, and at only 25 years old, will only continue to be a key member of the Blues.

III. NUMBER OF GAMES PLAYED AND INJURY HISTORY

Mr. Stewart played all 48 games of the 2012-2013 regular season and 79 of 82 games in 2011-2012, and was a valuable contributor on the ice. The three games that he missed in the 2011-2012 season were due to a three game suspension for a hit from behind on Niklas Kronwall in November 2011⁷. For the last two years, the Club has been able to consistently rely on him to play, and he has proven his point-producing ability by achieving impressive statistics with only an average of 15:32 minutes on the ice per game.

Mr. Stewart has not had a major injury since he joined the Blues in 2011. His only major injury in the NHL occurred in November 2010, when he suffered a broken left hand as a member of the Colorado Avalanche in a fight against Kyle Brodziak of the Minnesota Wild. At the time, Stewart was the Avalanche's leading scorer and a Hart Trophy candidate with 25 points – 11 goals and 14 assists⁸. He was widely regarded as a key member of the Avalanche club at the time, as the team's record with him in the line up was 13-9-1 and only 9-7-5 while he was injured⁹, which made it clear that he is not an easily replaceable player. He returned in January and was traded to the Blues in February. At only 25 years of age, Mr. Stewart is a healthy, strong forward who has many years to continue to improve his position on the team.

IV. LENGTH OF SERVICE

⁷ <http://www.nhl.com/ice/news.htm?id=601861>

⁸ <http://bleacherreport.com/articles/528623-chris-stewart-breaks-hand-in-fight-expected-to-be-out-until-2011>

⁹ Ibid.

Mr. Stewart was traded by the Avalanche in February 2011 in a trade involving himself, Kevin Shattenkirk and a conditional second-round draft pick in 2011 or 2012 to the St. Louis Blues for Erik Johnson, Jay McClement and a conditional first-round draft pick in 2011 or 2012¹⁰. Stewart made an immediate impact in his debut game with the team on February 19, 2011 where he scored two goals in a 9-3 victory over the Anaheim Ducks¹¹. He followed up with the best start in franchise history with the Blues with 6 goals in 5 games, and finished the season with 15 goals and 23 points in 26 games with the Blues that season¹². Stewart has remained with the Blues since 2011, but also played with the Eispiraten Crimmitschau of the 2nd Bundesliga in Germany during the 2012-2013 NHL lockout. As one of the most established players in Crimmitschau history, Stewart racked up 20 points in 15 games before returning to the NHL¹³.

V. SPECIAL QUALITIES OF LEADERSHIP OR PUBLIC APPEAL

Chris Stewart has been highly regarded in the public since his start in the NHL due to his exciting game play and point contributions. He was beloved by fans in Colorado and continues to have a strong following today. Mr. Stewart's injury caused much concern in Colorado due to his position as an integral member of the team and Hart Trophy contender. He made an explosive debut on the Blues when he became the 5th player in franchise history to score 2 goals in his first game as a Blue, which was followed by a franchise record of 6 goals in his first 5 games¹⁴. Mr. Stewart is known for his exciting point streaks, and has been a consistently high point scorer.

¹⁰ <http://www.tsn.ca/nhl/teams/players/bio/?id=5722#career>

¹¹ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chris_Stewart_\(ice_hockey\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chris_Stewart_(ice_hockey))

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ <http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8473485&view=notes>

Mr. Stewart also played with Team Canada at the 2011 IIHF World Championship in Slovakia, where he had two goals and four points in seven games¹⁵. He has a strong Canadian fan following and continues to be a player-to-watch at his young age.

VI. COMPARABLE PLAYERS

A. T.J. Oshie

Table 3: Career Statistics for T.J. Oshie¹⁶

	GP	G	A	P	+/-	PIM	PP	SH	GWG	S	S%	TOI/g
2012-2013	30	7	13	20	-5	15	2	1	1	65	10.8%	19:05
2011-2012	80	19	35	54	15	50	3	1	3	188	10.1%	19:31
2010-2011	49	12	22	34	10	15	3	1	3	103	11.7%	19:11
2009-2010	76	18	30	48	-1	36	1	1	3	158	11.4%	18:19
2008-2009	57	14	25	39	16	30	6	1	1	101	13.9%	16:34
Total	292	70	125	195	7 (avg)	146	15	5	11	615	11.4%	18:32 (avg)

Table 4: Points per Game for T.J. Oshie¹⁷

	Goals/game	Assists/game	Points/game
2012-2013	0.233	0.433	0.667
2011-2012	0.238	0.438	0.675
2010-2011	0.245	0.449	0.694
2009-2010	0.237	0.395	0.632
2008-2009	0.246	0.439	0.684
Average	0.240	0.431	0.670
Ave. pre-contract	0.241	0.430	0.671

T.J. Oshie is a 26-year old right-winger with the St. Louis Blues. He was drafted 24th overall by the Blues in the first round of the 2005 entry draft. On July 19, 2012, he signed a five-year contract with the Blues for \$20.875 million, with an average annual value of \$4.175 million¹⁸.

In his platform year, T.J. Oshie had 54 points in 80 games, for an average of 0.675 points per game. He has averaged around 0.67 points per game throughout his career, which is similar to Mr. Stewart's average statistics but well below his averages in his well-performing years, which range from 0.75-0.86 points per game. Further, Mr. Stewart averages around 0.1 goals per game

¹⁵ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chris_Stewart_\(ice_hockey\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chris_Stewart_(ice_hockey))

¹⁶ <http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8471698&view=splits>

¹⁷ <http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8471698&view=splits>

¹⁸ <http://capgeek.com/player/966>

higher than Mr. Oshie while also maintaining a similar assists / game ratio. Mr. Oshie, although consistent in his point-producing performance, has not been able to produce to the same level as Mr. Stewart when he is performing well. Mr. Stewart’s position as a power forward on the Blues should merit a salary above that of Mr. Oshie’s, considering that their age, position and experience in the NHL is similar. Mr. Stewart brings higher point-producing ability and room for growth – whereas Mr. Oshie has appeared to level off at 0.67 points per game – and provides toughness with significantly higher penalty minutes than Mr. Oshie.

B. Jakub Voracek

Table 5: Career Statistics for Jakub Voracek¹⁹

	GP	G	A	P	+/-	PIM	PP	SH	GWG	S	S%	TOI/g
2012-2013	48	22	24	46	-7	35	8	0	3	129	17.1%	17:14
2011-2012	78	18	31	49	11	32	0	0	2	190	9.5%	16:17
2010-2011	80	14	32	46	-3	26	2	0	2	183	7.7%	16:58
2009-2010	81	16	34	50	-7	26	4	0	1	154	10.4%	15:37
2008-2009	80	9	29	38	11	44	0	0	1	101	8.9%	12:39
Total	367	79	150	229	1 (avg)	163	14	0	9	757	10.4%	15:45 (avg)

Table 6: Points per Game for Jakub Voracek²⁰

	Goals/game	Assists/game	Points/game
2012-2013	0.458	0.500	0.958
2011-2012	0.231	0.397	0.628
2010-2011	0.175	0.400	0.575
2009-2010	0.198	0.420	0.617
2008-2009	0.113	0.363	0.475
Average	0.235	0.416	0.651
Ave. pre-contract	0.179	0.395	0.574

Jakub Voracek is a 24-year old right-winger with the Philadelphia Flyers. He was drafted 7th overall by the Columbus Blue Jackets in the first round of the 2007 entry draft. On July 26, 2012, he signed a four-year contract with the Flyers for \$17 million, with an average annual value of \$4.25 million²¹.

¹⁹ <http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8474161&view=splits&season=20082009&gameType=2#&navid=nhl-keymatch>

²⁰ <http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8474161&view=splits&season=20082009&gameType=2#&navid=nhl-keymatch>

²¹ <http://capgeek.com/player/589>

Mr. Voracek's highest scoring year was in 2009-2010, when he scored 16 goals and 50 points. Since then, he has maintained similar point-producing abilities but has failed to improve his scoring. Although Mr. Voracek had a high-performing year in 2012-2013, where he had 46 points in 48 games for an average of 0.958 points per game, but had a slightly lower shooting percentage than Mr. Stewart over the same year, this year should be excluded as it occurred after the signing of his contract. During the relevant period, Mr. Stewart has attained higher point totals and a materially higher average points per game. Mr. Stewart has a significantly higher goals per game career average of 0.343 compared with 0.179, a similar assists per game average, and significantly more penalty minutes than Mr. Voracek. He has also maintained a consistently higher shooting percentage than Mr. Voracek. For these reasons, we believe that Mr. Stewart should be paid slightly more than Mr. Voracek.

C. Patric Hornqvist

Table 7: Career Statistics for Patric Hornqvist²²

	GP	G	A	P	+/-	PIM	PP	SH	GWG	S	S%	TOI/g
2012-2013	24	4	10	14	-1	14	4	0	1	87	4.6%	16:13
2011-2012	76	27	16	43	9	28	8	0	3	230	11.7%	15:19
2010-2011	79	21	27	48	11	47	6	0	5	265	7.9%	15:43
2009-2010	80	30	21	51	18	40	10	0	8	275	10.9%	15:41
2008-2009	28	2	5	7	-3	16	0	0	0	54	3.7%	11:23
Total	287	84	79	163	7 (avg)	145	28	0	17	911	9.2%	14:51 (avg)

Table 8: Points per Game for Patric Hornqvist²³

	Goals/game	Assists/game	Points/game
2012-2013	0.167	0.417	0.583
2011-2012	0.355	0.211	0.566
2010-2011	0.266	0.342	0.608
2009-2010	0.375	0.263	0.638
2008-2009	0.071	0.179	0.250
Average	0.247	0.282	0.529

Patric Hornqvist is a 26-year old right-winger with the Nashville Predators. He was drafted 230th overall by the Predators in the seventh round of the 2005 entry draft. On April 30,

²² <http://www.nhl.com/ice/player.htm?id=8471887&view=splits#&navid=nhl-keymatch>

²³ Ibid.

2013, he signed a five-year contract with the Predators for \$21.25 million, with an average annual value of \$4.25 million²⁴.

Mr. Hornqvist's performance was limited in the last year due to injuries but has been a consistent point producer otherwise. In his most recent years, he has been averaging around 0.6 points per game, which is significantly below Mr. Stewart's averages when he is performing well. He has not been able to perform to the same point capacity as Mr. Stewart and has not achieved the same reputation for toughness, with fewer penalty minutes as well. Mr. Hornqvist also does not have the same shooting precision as Mr. Stewart, with shooting percentages well below his high of 18.6%. For these reasons, we believe that Mr. Stewart should be worth more than Mr. Hornqvist's salary, which was also negotiated this year.

VII. CONCLUSION

After reviewing Mr. Stewart's performance since his debut in the NHL as well as his performance against comparable players, we believe that Mr. Stewart has proven his ability to be a consistent high-scoring player who can be tough. At 25 years of age and a healthy record, he still has significant room for growth and we believe that he is worth \$4.3 million.

²⁴ <http://www.nhl.com/ice/news.htm?id=668484>