

NHL rejects Kovalchuk's deal with the Devils

By RAHUL VAIDYANATH
Epoch Times Staff

Just when we thought the Ilya Kovalchuk free agency saga was over, it isn't.

The New Jersey Devils brass including President and GM Lou Lamoriello held a press conference Tuesday afternoon to announce officially the signing of the Russian winger Kovalchuk.

The most coveted free agent in hockey intended on signing a 17-year, \$102 million deal with the Devils (an average salary cap hit of \$6 million per season.) The contract would pay him \$95 million over the first 10 years, dropping to \$7 million over the last seven years. Kovalchuk would have been 44 at the end of the contract.

"Seventeen is a really lucky number for me," said Kovalchuk, who wears No. 17, at the press conference.

Kovalchuk also said that the decision was ultimately made on July 17 and that exactly four years earlier his father had passed away on that date.

"Anything easy isn't worth it," said Lou Lamoriello, about locking up Kovalchuk for the rest of his career with the Devils. Lamoriello, who is known for his frugal spending, the chance to get a player like Kovalchuk was one to not be passed up. The Devils have not been able to get their hands on a player of his caliber through the draft.

On Tuesday night, the Associated Press broke the news that the NHL had rejected the contract.

On Wednesday, NHL Deputy Commissioner Bill Daly released a statement on NHL.com saying, "The contract has been rejected by the League as a circumvention of the Collective Bargaining Agreement."

"In the interim, the player is not entitled to play under the contract, nor is he entitled to any of the rights and benefits that are provided for thereunder."

Lamoriello, on behalf of the Devils, released the following statement on NHL.com in response: "We are extremely disappointed that the NHL has decided to reject the contract of Ilya Kovalchuk. The contract complies with the terms of the Collective Bargaining Agreement. We will have no further comment until the process outlined in the CBA is complete."

Now, the NHL Players Association has five days to file a grievance. Once that is done, an arbitrator has two days to say if the contract is valid.

QUESTIONABLE CONTRACT
This type of unusual contract provides NHL teams with a way

of achieving a desired salary cap charge per season while retaining top-notch talent with a big, lengthy contract. But the contract isn't intended on being played out until its end and the NHL realizes this.

The last five years of the contract artificially lower the salary cap hit to \$6 million per season by paying only \$550,000 per season.

In accounting terms, the asset (the player) is on the company's books for much longer than its useful life. But the Devils can buy out the remainder of Kovalchuk's contract when it becomes cheap to do so (the last five years) so as to gain back some of the cap space to sign other players.

The Devils would thus be circumventing the NHL salary cap.

It was obvious that the contract did not "make sense" and the NHL had to put an end to this type of ultra-lengthy contract designed to circumvent the salary cap. The NHL



TOP FREE AGENT: The Ilya Kovalchuk free agency saga will drag on some more after the NHL rejected his 17-year contract. JIM MCISAAC/GETTY IMAGES

should be congratulated for putting an end to this type of contract.

What would have been the next contract—a 20-year deal that would

run until a player reached the age of 50? Hockey does not need these types of deals, which only reduced the credibility of the game.

Will Power wins again, this time at Honda Indy Toronto

By JAMES FISH
Epoch Times Staff

Penske's Will Power, coming off a win at Watkins Glen, made it two in a row at the Honda Indy Toronto last Sunday. The win was his fourth of the season, stretching his points lead.

"I'm just so happy to get the Verizon car a bigger points lead," Power told ABC. "The whole team worked really hard—man, I just love winning!"

"The tires went off so badly with pickup in those restarts. You saw what happened to Justin—I almost

lost it a couple times too.

"This whole team works so well together the stops were good today we struggled in practice, we worked really hard and this is the end result."

Power qualified second behind Dreyer & Reinbold's Justin Wilson, who had the fastest car in the race. Power took the lead from Wilson on a restart on Lap 70, going around the outside into Turn 1. It was a bold, alert move, taking advantage of Wilson's poor traction.

Wilson spun on the next lap after pushing too hard, dropping to 14th. He made a heroic effort to get back

'This whole team works so well together'

— Will Power

to seventh by the end, proving that he well could have won the race had he not made the error.

The Toronto course is extremely challenging, narrow and slippery, demanding a balance of control and

courage.

Canadian hero Paul Tracy, much to the delight of the fans, had taken the lead by staying out on the first yellow, but was forced to pit on Lap 32. Refueling problems then dropped him to the back of the pack.

The race got to run a few laps starting on Lap 35, with defending winner Dario Franchitti, who advanced on pit strategy, leading Will Power and Justin Wilson. Wilson soon regained the lead as the first two had to pit.

Lap 65 saw a spate of action: first, Paul Tracy, battling Simona

de Silvestro for 14th, over braked badly into Turn 3, nearly wrecking both cars. Tracy saved it and continued on, finally finishing 13th.

While that was happening, Danica Patrick made a brave outside move on teammate Marco Andretti for eighth. Rafa Matos spun trying to force his way past as well, skidding backward into the tire wall. Matos bounced back into the path of EJ Viso, hitting head-on.

Lap 70 saw another collision, as Ryan Hunter-Reay forced his way inside Scott Dixon rounding Turn 3, then pushed the hapless Ganassi driver off the course on the exit.

Lap 72 saw the next full-course caution, as Tomas Scheckter pushed Canadian Alex Tagliani into the tires in Turn 1, fighting for seventh place.

The race went green on Lap 76, and the next nine laps saw fierce racing but no more wrecks. Justin Wilson made a huge effort to get back to the front, gaining five places in nine laps, but he ran out of time.

Will Power held off Dario Franchitti for his fourth win. Ryan Hunter-Reay finished in a welcome and well-deserved third (his misjudgment passing Dixon notwithstanding.)

The 2010 VW CC Sport

'Designed to stir souls. Engineered to stop hearts.'

By DURHL CAUSSEY

Each spring the Texas Auto Writers has an event, held this year the first week in May, called the Spring Challenge. About 70 to 80 new cars are presented for the association's members to drive and critique. Everything from design and new technology to the best economy of drive is used as part of the judging criteria. This year's event was held at the Texas Motor Speedway and surrounding areas in North Tarrant County.

Volkswagen was one of the auto companies that had vehicles represented at the Spring Challenge. I drove their Golf and was impressed by the European styling, quickness, and the way it glided down the narrowest of residential streets as well as the track. I drove the diesel model



The interior of the CC Sport COURTESY OF VW MEDIA

and was surprised at the torque and dozens of other safety features. Even the optional touchscreen navigation helped manoeuvre even in the most confusing suburban and metro area.

Last week I got to drive the new Volkswagen CC Sport. It was different from the Golf but in a manner pleasing to me. It provided VIP treatment for four passengers and was available in 200-horsepower performance and 207-lbs-ft torque turbo-charged with an inline four-cylinder direct-injection engine.

Multi-link fully independent sport rear suspension, antilock braking system, electronic differential lock, and anti-slip regulation allowed you to travel safely in comfort whether on roads running through your local city park or the Rocky Mountain National Park. I got about 11.8 L/100 km in the city and 7.8 L/100 km on the highway.

Safety and dependability are keystone words in describing the CC Sport. Front and rear side-curtain protection head airbags, along with a driver and front passenger side-tho-



2010 Volkswagen CC Sport COURTESY OF VW MEDIA

rax airbag supplementary restraint system take care of the safety part. Front and rear power-assisted disc brakes, fog lamps, a tire pressure monitoring system, and daytime running lights are features you can depend on allowing you a sense of understanding that all is well.

In addition, 17" alloy wheels, rear-seat arm rests with storage and pass through, cruise control, Sirius Satellite Radio, and a leather-wrapped,

multifunctional steering wheel provide a look-good, feel-good type of environment that makes the driving experience more fun and thrilling.

My CC Sport had a shadow blue metallic exterior and a black leatherette interior propelled along by a six-speed DSG automatic transmission with tiptronic.

Volkswagen Canada's new vehicle limited warranty is 4 years/80,000 km, whichever comes first. Pow-

ertrain limited warranty is 5 years/100,000 km, whichever comes first, and roadside assistance is for 4 years or 80,000 km, whichever comes first.

The manufacturer's suggested retail price is \$33,075..

Durhl Caussey writes a car column read around the world. He may be reached at this paper or dcaussey@sbcglobal.net.

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