



Earlier this week, the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the NHL and the NHL Players Association was extended through 2011-12. Part of the deal is an increased salary cap, which we speculated to be in the \$58 million range. Turns out, and happily so for the Chicago Blackhawks and friends with cap problems, the cap will be set at **\$59.4** million according to [ProHockey Talk](#)

. The cap also has a salary floor, which will be set at **\$43.4** million.

The increased cap and floor can be a gift and a curse for NHL franchises. Some, like Chicago and Philadelphia, will be able to retain stars or even spend here and there, but franchises who had trouble making money will now have to spend more to reach the floor number. The cap is based on overall league revenue, not individual teams. So, if the league is thriving but some extraneous teams such as the Atlanta Thrashers or Florida Panthers are barely staying afloat with low salaries, this raise could potentially put their bottom line farther in the red.

[Joe Yerden](#) of ProHockey Talk notes that the league's cap was \$39 million just five years ago. This, along with TV ratings, web hits and general buzz all tell us the league as a whole is thriving. Yet, the struggles of the Phoenix Coyotes sale along with several other teams being sold or on the brink seem to constantly reaffirm the long-standing belief that expansion has and will continue to harm the NHL.

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