

NHLPA Files Grievance Against NHL Over Kovalchuk Deal

Written by Matthew Coller
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[The Associated Press](#) is reporting that the NHL Players Association has filed a grievance over the league's rejection of a 17-year, \$102 million contract between the New Jersey Devils and superstar winger Ilya Kovalchuk.

The deal was rejected by the league because it circumvented cap rules, which commissioner Gary Bettman had warned against after several other long-term front-loaded deals ([see the complete breakdown of Kovalchuk's deal here](#)). The NHLPA claims that the contract is legal under the collective bargaining agreement and should be allowed.

Agents predicted last week that the deal would likely be allowed since nothing in the [collective bargaining agreement](#) forbids front-loaded contracts. Front-loading the deal allows Kovalchuk's cap hit to be around \$6 million despite him earning \$11.5 million from 2012-2017.

The ruling on Kovalchuk's deal will be closely watched by several other big-name NHLers whose contracts come up next season. Brad Richards, Zdeno Chara and Joe Thornton are among the names who will likely end up with front-loaded deals if Kovalchuk's contract is allowed.

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