CARDINAL POINT
ATHLETE ADVISORS | FOCUS PARTNERS CANADA

NHL PRIMER

2026-27

2026-27
KEY DATES

Sept. 16, 2026
New CBA term begins

Sept. 29, 2026
NHL regular season opens

Oct. 13, 2026
Frozen Frenzy (All 32 NHL Teams playing)

Oct. 25, 2026
Heritage Classic - Montreal at Winnipeg

Nov. 7-9, 2026
Hockey Hall of Fame Induction Weekend

Nov. 12 and 14, 2026
Global Series Finland - Carolina vs. Seattle, Helsinki

Dec. 18 and 20, 2026
Global Series Germany - Ottawa vs. Chicago, Düsseldorf

Dec. 20 to 27, 2026
Holiday roster freeze

Dec. 31, 2026
Winter Classic - Utah vs. Colorado, University of Utah

Feb. 5-6, 2027
NHL All-Star Weekend UBS Arena, Long Island

Feb. 20, 2027
Stadium Series, Dallas vs. Vegas, AT&T Stadium

March 1, 2027
NHL trade deadline

Apr. 10, 2027
Regular season concludes

June 25, 2027
NHL Draft

July 1, 2027
Free agency opening

PAYROLL STATS

1st working day: **29-Sep-26**
Last working day: 10-Apr-27
Length of season: **194 days**
Playoff Fund: **$34M**
Medicare (U.S.): **No limit (1.45%)**
Social Security (U.S.): **$11,439**
CPP (Canada): **$4,646**
EI (Canada): **$895**
QPP (Quebec): **$4,895**
EI (Quebec): $1,123

TOP 10 SALARIES

PLAYER	SALARY	TEAM
Leo Carlsson	$18,000,000	Anaheim Ducks
Kirill Kaprizov	$17,000,000	Minnesota Wild
Connor Bedard	$15,000,000	Chicago Blackhawks
Leon Draisaitl	$14,000,000	Edmonton Oilers
Adam Fantilli	$13,750,000	Columbus Blue Jackets
Jack Eichel	$13,500,000	Vegas Golden Knights
Cutter Gauthier	$13,500,000	Anaheim Ducks
Auston Matthews	$13,250,000	Toronto Maple Leafs
Nathan MacKinnon	$12,604,000	Colorado Avalanche
Connor McDavid	$12,500,000	Edmonton Oilers

FINANCIAL QUICK HITS

NHL Cap	**$104M**	Per Diem (AHL)	**~US$94**
NHL Floor	**$76.9M**	401k (pre)	**$24,500**
Max Salary	**$20.8M**	401k (post)	**$47,500**
Min Salary	**$850k**	RRSP	**$33,810**
NHL Union Dues	**$30 per day**	TFSA	**$7,000**
AHL Union Dues	**$6.50 per day**	FHSA	**$8,000**
Per Diem (NHL)	**~US$145**		

2026-27 PAYROLL SCHEDULE





NHL DISABILITY

Career Ending Injury: **$1M of coverage**
Career Ending Sickness: **$2M of coverage**
Disability >41 Games: **$500k of coverage**

LIFE INSURANCE

Player life insurance: **US$1,000,000 death benefit per player.**

Player accidental death coverage (AD&D): **equal to 1× the player's current annual base salary, capped at US$15,000,000.**

Spouse life insurance: **US$250,000.**

Spouse AD&D**: US$100,000.**

UNSIGNED FREE AGENTS

In the year of the players final NHL season, life and disability insurance shall continue until **December 1st.**

RETIRED PLAYERS

Starting with the 2026-27 season, retired NHL players who continue their NHL group benefits coverage will receive a **$10,000 annual subsidy** toward the cost of that coverage.



WHAT HAS CHANGED?

84 regular-season games
Preseason reduced - Regular season increases from 82 to 84 games

Contract term
Seven years to re-sign; six years with a new club

Playoff cap
Postseason dressed lineup must comply with a cap mechanism

LTIR relief
Clubs cannot continue to receive the same LTIR flexibility once a player's return becomes imminent; new rules are intended to reduce the ability to use LTIR as a cap-management tool during the playoffs.

Minimum salary
$850,000 NHL minimum salary
Up from $775,000

Entry-level contracts
Maximum ELC salary rises from $975,000 to $1,000,000 for those players drafted in 2026.

Signing bonuses
Signing/roster/reporting bonuses capped at 60% of contract value

Contract AAV
Maximum year-to-year AAV variance reduced from 25% to 20%.

Escrow system
New formula-based escrow process. Less reliance on fixed withholding percentages

Player Playoff Fund
Increased from $24M to $34M total.

Hotel accommodations
All players entitled to single rooms on road trips

Bye week
Guaranteed 8-day All-Star break period

Fitness testing
Eliminated Clubs can no longer conduct fitness tests

Health plan enhancements
Major increase in limits for Vision, hearing, massage, dental and specialty treatment.

Hockey-related death protection
Remaining contract paid upon hockey-related death, receives remaining salary and signing bonuses.

Recall rule
Previously at four, teams are now permitted to have five non-emergency recalls following the NHL trade deadline.

Mid-season PTOs
Formal NHL in-season PTO created new tryout mechanism

AHL loans for CHL players
NHL teams are permitted to loan one 19-year-old CHL player per year to their AHL affiliate without the mandatory requirement of returning the player to major junior

EBUGs
Formal emergency backup goalie system established. Standardized league-wide rules

Neck protection
Mandatory cut-resistant neck protection for NHL rookies Applies to players with zero NHL games experience

Pension plan
Extended through 2030 with COLA indexing Funding increased to approximately $46.4M annually

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