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McDavid's new contract built to weather a work stoppage

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LABOR & AGENTS
LIZ MULLEN

If there is an NHL lockout or any other kind of work stoppage in the next eight years, Edmonton Oilers center **Connor McDavid** will not lose much of his new \$100 million contract.

His eight-year deal includes \$86 million in signing bonuses, and those yearly bonuses, as much as \$13 million, will be paid in July, under the terms of his contract, according to **Jeff Jackson**, a partner in **Orr Hockey Group** and McDavid's agent.

"There is potentially two, three years, during the next five years where there could be a lockout," Jackson said. "So having the signing bonus avoids the fact he wouldn't get paid for a season. He will receive the money the year of the lockout prior to the lockout happening."

McDavid, 20, was the leading scorer, league MVP and winner of the NHL Players' Association's highest honor, the Ted Lindsay Award, for last season, his second in the league.

If there were a lockout, McDavid would lose a "small percentage," because he is required to take some of his compensation in salary, Jackson said. "Both years, I think we have \$1 million base salary."

The NHL CBA expires on Sept. 15, 2022, and the players can't strike and the owners can't lock out until it expires. But both sides have the option to end it early, on Sept. 15, 2020. The NHL must inform the players by Sept. 1, 2019, and the NHLPA must inform the league by Sept. 15, 2019, if they wish to do so.

McDavid's deal begins for the 2018-19 NHL season and ends after the 2025-26 season. He'll be 29 then and, Jackson hopes, in the prime of his career as an unrestricted free agent.

The NHL has a limit on individual salaries, so no single player's salary can exceed 20 percent of his team's salary cap. The maximum any one player could be paid for the coming season, for example, is \$15 million, based on the salary cap of \$75 million. But McDavid was happy with the deal, which pays him an average of \$12.5 million a year, because he likes the city and the team management, Jackson said.

McDavid's endorsements include **CCM Hockey**, **Adidas**, **Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce**, **Canadian Tire** and **Rogers Communications**, the naming-rights sponsor of Rogers Place, where the Oilers play.

Jackson is not necessarily looking for more endorsements for McDavid. "His marketing portfolio is in a really good place," Jackson said. "The biggest thing with these things is time. You don't want to take up too much of his time off the ice."

> CAA SPORTS SIGNS CONGER: CAA Sports has signed Olympic gold-medal-winning swimmer **Jack Conger** for representation.

CAA agents **Lowell Taub** and **Lis Moss** are representing him. Conger was not previously represented.

Conger won a gold medal as part of the U.S. team in the 800-meter freestyle relay in Rio. He was one of three swimmers who received four-month suspensions imposed by USA Swimming and the U.S. Olympic Committee last year over a late-night incident in Rio. Swimmer **Ryan Lochte** originally said the swimmers were robbed, but local authorities disputed that account and Lochte received a 10-month suspension.

Since then, Conger broke the U.S. record for the 200-yard butterfly and won an NCAA championship for the University of Texas, where he was a senior. He secured a spot on the U.S. team headed to the world championships in Budapest next month. He is training to earn a spot in four events in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

> **SWERDLOW JOINS GERARD FOX:** **Aaron Swerdlow**, an attorney and agent to coaches and front office executives, including new Milwaukee Bucks general manager **Jon Horst**, has joined **Gerard Fox Law's** sports group as outside general counsel.

Swerdlow, who was general counsel and managing director of the college division of **Kauffman Sports Management**, also represents NBA and college basketball coaches.

Liz Mullen can be reached at lmullen@sportsbusinessjournal.com. Follow her on Twitter [@SBJLizMullen](https://twitter.com/SBJLizMullen).

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