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NHL teams suffer from delayed season

NEW YORK (AP) - At least one team has laid off employees. Another is slowing its seasonticket campaign. And still another says "everything is on hold.

Many NHL teams are in the same boat these days, waiting with great uncertainty for the hockey season to start.

Negotiators for the NHL and the NHL Players Association continued talks in New York on Wednesday in an attempt to reach a new collective bargaining agreement and begin the season. Through Wednesday, 26 games have been postponed.

"At the present time, our ticket sales are stagnant," said Jean Martineau, public relations direc-

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tor for the Quebec Nordiques. "When you delay the season, there is a conflict. It's slowing down our season-ticket campaign."

Martineau also has seen a difference in the way the Nordiques are covered in the press. "Usually, we get two pages a day," he said.

"Now there's more coverage on amateur hockey." Martineau said the biggest impact so far in Quebec City has been "the people working around the game" such as arena workers and restaurants

"We think about 500 people are affected by this," he said.

Like many other teams, the Nordiques would have had a virtual sellout at their home opener, which was scheduled for last Saturday against Buffalo.

That was certainly true of the New York Rangers, who have reported a sellout for virtually the entire season. "It's a strong year for us," said Kevin Kennedy,

the marketing director for the defending Stanley the marketing director for the defending staney Cup champions. "That's why we have a real con-cern in the event of a long delay. "It's frustrating for me. I've been working at Madison Square Garden for 17 years and this is the first time I've ever been associated

with a team that's been sold out for an entire season. We're very concerned about (the stalemated negotiations.)"

Thursday • October 6, 1994

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So are the Winnipeg Jets, who Rvan reported that they have laid off phone dia, s

Winnipeg fans are sitting tight along with many of the other fans in the league.

to be pro-management," said Mike O'Hearn, public relations director for the Jets. "Our fans are prepared to wait.

In Chicago, the Blackhawks re-ported that "very, very few" fans wasn't but we have asked for refunds on tickets. He's a "Everyone seems comfortable to

hold onto their tickets at this point," said Jim Bare, in charge of ticket sales for the Blackhawks. Barbara Davidson, a Black-

hawks spokesman, said the team had "basically come to a standstill," as far as ticket sales were concerned.

Like many teams, the Blackhawks had to cancel opening night ceremonies. Owner Bill Wirtz had a party planned to christen their new 20,500-seat United Center last Sunday against the St. Louis Blues.

Russ Gregory, in charge of marketing for the Hartford Whalers, said "sales have come to a standstill.

"We've pulled our advertising until there's a clarification of our situation. You can't waste money on advertising if you don't know when the game is going to be played. Everything's wait and see."

Tarpley returns to pro career

DALLAS (AP) — Roy Tarpley says he considered committing suicide after he was being kicked out of the NBA three years ago for violating the league drug policy.

He also said in an interview with the Fort Worth Star-Telegram Wednesday that he thought that his wife would leave him and that he'd thrown away his professional basketball career.

But the 7-foot forward is coming back the NBA, most likely with the Mavericks, certified drug free by the league and ready to resume his career after a three-year exile.

Tarpley spent more than an hour at the Dallas Mavericks' practice facility in Addison

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Wednesday, talking with Coach Dick Motta and player personnel director Keith Grant, and getting acquainted with other Mavericks.

He said he expects to sign a three-year, \$10 million contract Thursday in order to be on the court for the start of training camp. The Mavericks preseason

training camp opens Friday at Moody Coliseum on the Southern Methodist University campus in Dallas.

Although he is not expected to sign a contract until Thursday or Friday, Tarpley admitted he already feels like a Maverick again.

"It feels a little weird," he told The Dallas Morning News. "It's kind of a trip. But I just thank God for giving me another chance to prove myself.'

Tarpley said his past troubles resulted from being "young and dumb and living on the edge.

Tarpley, 29, spent the past two seasons playing profession-ally in Greece. He and his wife, Dawn, have had a daughter since his banishment. Tarpley also said he has remained clean of drugs.

"This was not easy," Tarpley said. "That's what people need to realize and understand. It was not easy to go through all the adversity and turmoil and embarrassment and humiliation, and be able to suck it up and come back. The NBA would not have reinstated me if they did not feel I deserved another chance," he told The News.

The presence of the 7-foot forward has raised hopes and expectations for the Mavericks, who have gone 24-140 the past two seasons.

"He's accepted the fact that he's got to do it here, and I think that's a real positive," Motta said. "We didn't put any pressure on him, either.

But that does not mean the pressure is not there, Tarpley said.

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