

2023-24 NHL PA Brotherhood Survey

Survey Responses: 20 (2022: 17)

Hey everyone! I apparently missed last year, which I'll chalk up to being perpetually busy with my day job / my startup / Hurricanes / playing on two teams / wrestling announcing / college hockey / family!

Many thanks to everyone who took the time to answer the survey. The idea is that this is a way for all of us to understand how the overall state of having this job looks. It's pretty easy to just get locked into our own team, but knowledge is power, and this should either be interesting data, something that will help you next time you negotiate with your employer, or just some peace from understanding that other people deal with the same frustrations that you do.

Now, on to the questions:

Q1: How many years (as of 2023-24) have you been an NHL PA Announcer?

Most Common Answer: 7-10 years (2022: 11-15 years)

Tenures are still pretty evenly distributed, but 7-10 years had four answers, followed by 11-15 (3). Two answers for every other group except 31 - 35 (0) and 40+ (1).

Q2: What is your employment status with your team?

Employee: 8 (2022: 7)

Independent Contractor: 12 (2022: 11)

Independent Contractor (1099, no taxes withheld) continues to be about 1/3 more common than being a team employee (W-2, taxes withheld), which has basically been the case since I started doing these surveys. You love to see some consistency in a crazy world, right?

Q3: Do you have a formal employment contract with your team?

Yes: 6 (2022: 5)

No: 14 (2022: 12)

The trend continues to be that the bulk of us work outside of a formal employment contract, which has been the case over several years. One person said that they did during their first year, but haven't had one since, implying that the team has just forgotten to do one from year 2 onward. I put that in the "No" bucket.

Q4: Do you get paid per-game-worked, or per-season?

Per-Game: 18 (2022: 16)

Per-Season: 1 (2022: 1)

Other: 1

We're still all by and large getting paid by the game in this gig. One person has switched to hourly rates, so I put them in Per-Game (this is where I fall as well - a couple years ago they took my game rate and turned it into a rough hourly equivalent). One is paid every two weeks over the course of a year (put that in Per-Season), and one has their PA rate baked into the salary for a different position (Other).

Q5: What is your average per-game pay rate in USD?

Mean (average): \$361 (2022: \$275)

Median (middle value in order): \$400 (2022: \$250)

Mode (most common value): \$400/\$450 (2022: \$250).

18 out of 20 respondents answered this question.

Pay still ranges from \$150/gm at the low end, to \$500/gm at the high end, as it has in years past. But new for this season: only three answers came in below \$250 a game: one \$150, one \$165, and one \$200. 10 out of 18 people are making \$400 - \$500/gm. Guess **somebody's** got some inflation raises! This is a big jump from two years ago and probably the largest I've seen since doing these surveys.

Median pay, where half is above and half is below, jumped to \$400/gm. The most common answer (Mode) was tied between \$450 (3) and \$400 (3).

As seen in this distribution, a bunch of folks have broken the \$400/game barrier since 2021-22. Nice work, give your agents a pat on the back!

Quick distribution:

\$100-\$249: 3

\$250-\$300: 2

\$300-\$399: 3

\$400-\$499: 7

\$500+: 3

Q6: What sort of perks do you get as PA Announcer for your team?

In order, here's what people get:

1. Free food/dinner (18/20)
2. Team Store Discount (16/20)
3. Free staff parking (13/20)
4. Opportunities for additional paid work with the team (9/20)
5. Free tickets to each game (8/20)
6. Additional comp game tickets upon request (6/20)
7. Free premium parking (5/20)
8. Free tickets to other arena events (4/20)
9. Discounted tickets to other arena events (4/20)
10. Discounted prices on additional tickets (1/20)
11. A bulk allotment of free tickets over the course of the season (1/17)

When getting free hockey tickets, 2-4 tickets seems to be the standard.

In 2022, the perks looked like:

1. Team Store Discount (16/17)
2. Free food/dinner (13/17)
3. Free staff parking (11/17)
4. Opportunities for additional paid work with the team (10/17)
5. Free tickets to each game (8/17)
6. Free premium parking (6/17)
7. Additional comp game tickets upon request (5/17)
8. Free tickets to other arena events (4/17)
9. Discounted tickets to other arena events (4/17)
10. Discounted prices on additional tickets (2/17)
11. A bulk allotment of free tickets over the course of the season (1/17)

Q7: If your team won the Cup, would you receive a ring?

Yes: 8 (2022: 8)

No: 0 (2022: 0)

Unsure: 12 (2022: 9)

This is generally pretty even, but the Unsure's are pulling ahead over the years. One person has requested one but hasn't gotten a confirmation.

Q8: Do you appear in any of your team's promotional materials?

TV/Online/Video ads: 5 (2022: 1)
Radio/audio ads: 4 (2022: 4)
Website: 3 (2022: 4)
Gameday program: 1 (2022: 2)
Shop merchandise: 0 (2022: 1)
Nothing: 4

A bunch more people are now appearing in video ads, which is interesting to see. I know I sure as hell ain't, but good on you! Other categories held steady or dropped, which I think is part of the continuing trend of teams not promoting anyone/anything that's not Hockey Ops or full-time staff.

A couple of folks responded that their name is on the website (no photo), occasional online video promos, and getting the occasional shout-out when hosting watch parties.

Q9: How early before puck drop do you need to arrive for a game?

30 minutes: 1 (2022: 0)
1 hour: 0 (2022: 0)
90 minutes: 3 (2022: 4)
2 hours: 8 (2022: 8)
2 1/2 hours: 3 (2022: 1)
3 hours: 4 (2022: 4)

The call times seem to continue getting earlier, meaning longer days at the arena. Although one person only has a 30 minute call time, which I assume means that they walk into the building, go to the mic, and start talking immediately.

Q10: We all love our job, but what is your biggest frustration?

The biggest issue (which I feel on a personal level) is being out of the boxes (for those of us who were still there pre-COVID). This has side effects around a lack of communication with officials, which leads to slow/incorrect calls. Other common threads include a lack of visibility to the team/fans, game ops staff that don't bother to include or listen to you, and generally being treated poorly or ignored because you're not full-time staff.

Here's the verbatim feedback (edited lightly for clarity):

I really miss being in the penalty boxes, where I could get information from on/off-ice officials. I'm at media level post-COVID, and don't have any comms at all with the officials. I'm literally watching NHL.com on my laptop to figure out what to announce.

Being forced from the penalty box by covid and not being able to return.

Lack of recognition on website, scoreboard, etc.

Communication from the ice to my booth continues to be a massive issue.

Complacency... not driving to be the best in sports, let alone the league. Too much interference for upper management.

First and foremost the league mandate that announcers may not sit at the scorers table it's annoying as hell. Take us out of the rules book if we don't matter! Secondly, I can be "out of sight, out of mind" sometimes with the team's Entertainment staff.

I'm still in the honeymoon phase, but I wouldn't mind being more involved with creative. They certainly have enough chefs in the kitchen though!

Get us back in the penalty box

Not at ice level anymore

Not knowing if I'd get a ring or not.

That new game ops directors come in, don't care to know what your talents are and give all of your best bits to new young hosts, turning the arena into karaoke night. Is that too specific?

Lack of visibility and engagement opportunities with the fans

Not really in the loop on many production decisions/strategies compared to other teams/leagues...it would be fantastic to be more in the loop!

Now...being away from ice level...and having little interaction with players and coaches. Also, being a game night employee makes one feel like an outsider compared to the full-time employees.

I feel fortunate to have a Director who values my input and opinion. That said, I feel the role of NHL PA Announcers has diminished in recent years. The league removing us from center ice was a real blow, not just to confidence, but camaraderie. Being close to the on and off ice officials was a major benefit. Nowadays I find it's easier to be distracted, and I worry it's easier to miss calls and cues.

Lack of respect, not being paid market rate, no formal contract, always chasing information for finding out through social channels.

And finally...

Couldn't be more satisfied with my role.