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NEW YORK (AP) — NBA owners and players are trying again to end the lockout before it can do further damage to an already-shortened schedule.

They resumed negotiations Saturday with federal mediator George Cohen, who faced a difficult task in trying to help the sides close the financial gap that derailed talks again last week.

The two sides met for more than six hours.

Hall of Famer and Charlotte owner Michael Jordan, plus Portland billionaire owner Paul Allen joined the bargaining, along with the usual owners' labor relations committee. Both are believed to be hardliners who want to offer the players an economic deal even worse than the proposal they already have rejected.

Owners are determined not to give players anything more than a 50-50 split of

basketball-related income. Players, who were guaranteed 57 percent under the old collective bargaining agreement, have proposed a reduction to 52.5 percent, leaving the sides about \$100 million apart annually based on last season's revenues.

Talks broke down last Friday when neither side would budge. Commissioner David Stern then canceled all games through November and warned that future owners' proposals could be made with their "extraordinary" losses from the missed games in mind.

A number of owners would favor that. A person briefed on the owners' position Friday told The Associated Press that there were many hardline owners who want a deal at 53-47 in their favor plus a hard cap, and that the rest wouldn't go beyond a 50-50 split.

Some issues related to the salary cap system remain, but the BRI split has emerged as a more significant obstacle. Talks have broken off each of the last two times the sides discussed it, including the previous time Cohen took part.

They met for three straight days with him last month before players said owners insisted they accept a "take it or leave it" 50-50 split before any further discussions of the system. Allen made a rare appearance that day, and union officials said they believed his presence served as a message from the hardliners that there would be no further economic compromise.

When talks broke down again last week, Stern and Deputy Commissioner Adam Silver said union executive director Billy Hunter told them he couldn't accept less than 52 percent because of pressure from agents. Some players have since taken part in conference calls to discuss the option of decertifying the union if they don't get what they consider a fair proposal.

But taking their fight to the courts with an antitrust lawsuit likely would mean missing the entire season, so both sides have said they believe bargaining is the best route to a deal.

Owners met earlier Saturday, the 128th day of the lockout, for an update on the negotiations and a discussion of the league's plans to expand revenue sharing among teams. Both sides then met individually with Cohen before the bargaining session began.