How much longer do the Steelers have Le’Veon Bell?

Even though the spring and winter lack any regulated NFL games, there is still a lot of activity going on in the NFL over the summer. Players are in mandatory training camp, retirements are announced, college players get drafted, or players either have their contracts renewed or terminated. Le’Veon Bell landed a one year, $14.5 million contract with the Steelers. However, that was not part of his vision during his time in Pittsburgh.

This past season, Le’Veon Bell was put on a franchise tag, meaning that they had until July 16th to agree to a multi-year contract, and he will spend next season on the franchise tag as well. The Steelers offered him a five-year contract, however Bell wanted to finish out the rest of his career in Pittsburgh. He tweeted on the night of July 16th about his feelings towards the contract, stating, “(his) desire always has been to retire a Steeler…both sides worked extremely hard today to make that happen, but the NFL is a hard business at times”. Bell felt that he had the talent to receive a franchise player’s contract. GM Kevin Colbert is still in the hopes of landing a long term contract with Bell next season, “After the 2018 season is completed, we again will attempt to work out a long-term contract with Le’Veon in the hope that he will continue his career with the Pittsburgh Steelers”.

The Steelers offense is based on the successes of the Killer B’s: Ben Roethlisberger, Le’Veon Bell, and Antonio Brown. Ben Roethlisberger has been a franchise Quarterback for the Steelers for the past 14 years, and Antonio Brown is the future of the Steelers organization. Where does that leave Bell? Most teams cannot win consistent football games without a strong running game. There are countless games that the Steelers have lost because of opponents locking down Antonio Brown and forcing Roethlisberger to throw to other receivers of a lower caliber. For the 2017 NFL season, Bell recorded 1,291 rushing yards, 655 receiving yards, nine rushing touchdowns, and two receiving touchdowns. He was ranked third in rushing yards in the NFL (only those above him are Kareem Hunt and Todd Gurley). He ranks fourth overall in rushing in Steelers history.

Next summer, the Steelers have another chance to attain a long-term deal with Bell. Several teams are desperate for a star running back, especially one like Le’Veon Bell. Bell means a lot to the Steelers community and fan base, and losing him would hurt more to their organization outside of those on the roster.