This month, I take a look at Kessel's improved play, a forgotten Jet, Edmonton's goalie of the future, and more.

1. It is too early to get a really solid read on what kind of player Alex Burmistrov may become, but he possesses several traits that are unique for a rookie or sophomore in the NHL. He's an incredibly slippery player (a word often used to describe a player's ability to avoid a check and to hold on to the puck, has a lot to do with poise and patience), and he's quite polished already in the defensive zone. He has a Datsyuk-like ability to make multiple defenders look foolish in a single shift. Until the Jets improve through development and roster acquisitions, he likely won't take that next step forward offensively. However, he is a name that often gets overlooked in conversations regarding young forwards with immense offensive upside.

2. It is still early into October, but I wonder how many Mike Smith stinkers it is going to take for Don Maloney to start calling around for a goaltender (like Cory Schneider, perhaps)?

3. Luke Adam is off to a terrific start for the Sabres. For now, he's pushed Derek Roy down the depth chart and is centering Vanek and Pominville on the top line. Adam is a slow skater and isn't an overly flashy player, which allowed him to fly under the radar for the past few years (he isn't exactly chopped liver, coming off of a tremendous junior career and a recently won AHL Rookie of the Year award).

I never got to see Adam play at the junior level, but seeing him now (and during his time in the AHL) you can see how and why he has been able to make such a quick transition – his hockey sense. Many times players dominate lower levels of competition with a singular physical asset (speed, shot, size, strength), but against competition who are just as fast, big, and strong, this comparative advantage is minimized or even negated. Adam is big and strong, but it is his positioning and awareness that allows him to make and finish plays in the offensive zone.

4. Carey Price is going to win a lot of games for the Habs this year that they may not deserve (especially if the defensive injuries continue to mount). The pressure he was under last season after the Halak trade was immense. This summer he didn’t face as much external motivation or criticism, but he looks to have taken another big step forward with his play. Cool as a cucumber sums him up.

5. I make no bones about not being a Phil Kessel fan, but he arguably played his best game as a pro on Saturday against Ottawa. I realize the Senators aren't exactly a measuring stick this year, but Kessel was more involved physically and in terms of compete level (cliche hockey term, I know) than I have seen from him before. He was all over the score sheet (three goals and an assist). If he can play like that more often, he'll be a lock for 40 goals. There are few players in the league who have that ability to score on every single shot they take, but Kessel is one. His release is one of the best in the league.

6. This is a make-or-break season for Cal O'Reilly in Nashville. The slick pivot has the skills to be a top six center at the NHL level, but the Predators have lots of depth up the middle (no real standouts, but many solid second or third line types). O'Reilly has been one of the best playmakers at the AHL level over the past few years, and he needs to seize the opportunity being given to him right now. Check out this fantastic analysis on him from the On the Forecheck crew.

7. Pittsburgh has a lot of talent on their roster, but the reason why so many are projecting them to be successful this year is that they are such a structured, disciplined, and balanced team. Dan Bylsma has done a great job of getting each player to buy in 100% to a specific role - be it an important penalty kill spot, or a defenseman counted on to block shots and move the puck. Marc-Andre Fleury used to get lots of flack for inconsistent play (from myself included, it was one of the main reasons why I traded him away two years ago), but he has matured a lot in recent years. The stingy defense in front of him helps level out the poor games a bit better than in the past, as well.

8. The Habs have quite a Swiss connection going on. Mark Streit is of course their most well-known find, and they have two Swiss defensemen playing on the team right now (and together on the power play as well) – Raphael Diaz, and Yannick Weber. Both are smooth-skating undersized defensemen with booming shots (sounds a lot like Streit). With the injuries to Markov, Spacek, and Campoli, it’s sink or swim for both of them.

9. Several Chicago players and reporters have commented on how much stronger, healthier, and more energized Marian Hossa looks compared to last October. Hossa has played a ton of hockey over the past few years (an average of 93 games each season, due to three straight trips to the Cup Final), and having a full summer to properly rest, recover, and train is likely going to be the catalyst for a strong offensive season. Hossa has posted superstar numbers before and is a dominant force on the ice (there are only a handful of players in the league who are harder to knock off the puck than he is). However, Chicago is a team deep in right wingers (one of Kane or Sharp will always be on the right side), and Hossa gets defensive minutes as well because he is such a responsible player.

Hossa has scored 40 goals or more three times at the NHL level, but in Chicago he has combined for only 49 goals in two seasons. Expect 30-35, and hope for more (if you own him in your pool).

10. The Coyotes remain adamant that they will not trade Kyle Turris. In his latest 30 Thoughts , Elliotte Friedman that Turris is hoping for a move to another team. At some point, the team or the player is going to cave. Turris should have signed a cheap one-year deal and prove himself to the Coyotes (and potential suitors) – his stance isn't going to help him all that much, as I don't see Phoenix getting pushed into making a move.

11. Devan Dubnyk is a goalie who I saw a few times at the WHL level. Aside from his massive frame, nothing really stood out to me. However, he has developed quite nicely into a competent NHL goaltender with some upside. Many in Edmonton are hopeful that the team gives him a long leash as the starter over Khabibulin this season (except those on the 'tank for Nail Yakupov' bandwagon). Dubnyk makes for great value in one-year leagues and intriguing value in keeper leagues. He may not become a star goaltender, but the Oilers are eventually going to be a really, really good team. He could be a part of something special, if he is able to improve and grow with the likes of Hall, Nugent-Hopkins, Eberle, and Paajarvi.

12. I've probably made this point a few times already, but I have no idea how the Rangers managed to steal Ryan McDonagh away from the Canadiens in the Scott Gomez trade. Gomez is a cap anchor – simply not acceptable for a player eating up more than $7 million to contribute less than 50 points playing in a prime offensive role. McDonagh is New York's number two defenseman right now with Staal injured, and he hasn't looked out of place.

Hey may never be a big point producer (he seems to be a 'do-it-all' defenseman who is steady, poised, and confident in all situations), but the jury is still out on his offensive upside. Young defensemen typically take a while to get going offensively, especially those playing important defensive minutes (like McDonagh). In general, take a two-way young defenseman over a

young offensive defenseman if you want to win in the short term. Defensemen who can play in their own end typically get ice time, and with ice time comes a chance to showcase one's offensive abilities.

13. When Bob McKenzie tweets and talks, most of us listen. He picked Matt Read as his Calder favourite a few days ago. Cody Hodgson has looked good in Vancouver, but his wingers have not. If he slides over to the wing when Kesler returns, he'll likely have a good season. If Read plays well enough to keep seeing ice time with good forwards (lots of those in Philadelphia), he could approach 45-50 points this season.

14. After watching Sergei Gonchar through three games this season…. Apologies to Ottawa fans everywhere. Lackadaisical, disinterested, nonchalant – all describe his play to a tee. Good thing he'll have another year in Ottawa (at a cap hit of $5.5 million) to redeem himself.

15. Sometimes in fantasy hockey, the best moves are the ones you don't make. Patience is a virtue, especially early on in the season. Remember, when evaluating a trade, what a player has done up to the present time is largely irrelevant (unless points and scoring transfer over in trades). What will he do in the future? Evaluate all players starting at zero and go from there.