While Detroit was consistently winning, they were paying the physical price for it. Many of their top players have taken a beating throughout the season. The repeated hits have taken its toll on the team. The latest injury was to Tomas Holmstrom, who is reported to be out indefinitely. At the trade deadline, the Red Wings added the infamous power forward Todd Bertuzzi in the hopes that he adds the much needed muscle to fight back.

A few seasons ago Bertuzzi had great power and scoring ability. He and Markus Naslund were a force to be reckoned with. Since the suspension and the recurring back problems, Bertuzzi has barely showed glimpse of his old self. My opinion is that Bertuzzi is another Eric Lindros; meaning they were both big, great scoring talents, but they have since slipped into mediocrity.

Bertuzzi's value will continue to drop. The health of Dominik Hasek is the real factor, not the presence of Bertuzzi. The tightness in Hasek's thigh is a problem. Chris Osgood is getting the starts in goal. Jimmy Howard was called up this week to backup Osgood. If Howard gets sent back down, that will be a good sign for all of you Hasek owners and Red Wings fans.

Michael Ryder has six goals in his last eight games for the Canadiens. Five of those goals came on the power play. All of those goals were assisted by either Saku Koivu and/or Sheldon Souray. If the Canadiens are going to make the playoffs, their special teams will have to continue to play strong. Ryder has always been one of those "dark horse" fantasy candidates with hero potential. A strong finish could be a good sign.

Although used on multiple lines, Nashville's J.P. Dumont is most productive when playing with Jason Arnott. Now that Arnott has healed, the Predators will have several strong lines with offensive potential. This will cause match-up problems for many teams. Look for Dumont to be an even bigger surprise goal scorer.

The Coyotes have certainly had their ups and downs this season. The recent injury to Ed Jovanovski does not help. Jovanovski's abdominal injury has him out indefinitely. Early evidence suggests defensemen Keith Ballard will be stepping up in his absence on the power play. He has seven points in his last 11 games, so look for him to continue with the increased production. The Coyotes are also experimenting with other players on the power play and are thinking more about next season that this season. A talented young Bill Thomas was recently called up at the end of January. Keep an eye on his progress. He has three points in his last three games.

I feel bad for Nikita Alexeev (not to mention his owners). Earlier this season he had a chance to play on a line with two of the top forwards in the NHL (Martin St. Louis and Vincent Lecavalier). During that brief stint his value skyrocketed. Since then it has declined just as fast. If he does not get to play with Martin Havlat in Chicago we may not hear much more about him for the rest of the season.

The Bruins are one of the hotter teams in the NHL right now. In the last month, Tim Thomas is tied for the second most wins with eight and he has posted two shutouts in that time. Boston has played strong ever since Brandon Bochenski joined the team. Bochenski is now playing on a line with Phil Kessel. It appears Kessel has overcome his health problems and can now re-focus on hockey. The strong finish will raise their value for next season. Teammate Marco Sturm is having resurgence as well. In the last month he has eight goals and five assists.

This week I wanted to comment on Bill Guerin and his affect on the Sharks. Unfortunately the recent injury to Patrick Marleau and the demotion of Jonathan Cheechoo to the fourth line has blurred everything. On St. Louis, Guerin was a veteran player on a roster with not a lot of talent. When Guerin took lots of shots there, no one questioned it. San Jose however is a different story. They have several players with talent and scoring ability. The presence of Guerin may thwart the further development of their young talented players, forcing them to potentially play checking and fourth line roles.

In Minnesota, Manny Fernandez has recovered from his knee sprain. It will be interesting to see what happens to goalie Niklas Backstrom. Minnesota currently sits in the eight and final spot in the Western Conference.

The Avs trail the Wild by six points. Colorado is playing very strong right now thanks to rookie Paul Stastny and the sizzling hot Milan Hejduk. Stastny could easily be out-playing Evgeni Malkin for the top rookie honors. In the last month Stastny has eight goals and 14 assists. In the same span, Hejduk has 10 goals (5 on the power play) and 12 assists.

From last season to this season the Flyers have done a complete 180-degree turn. Kyle Calder was a huge disaster. He never lived up to any potential. The team completely flopped from the bench to the management. In hopes to change things, the Flyers recently acquired goalie Martin Biron. Biron was surprisingly excited about going to the last place Flyers. Not only will he now get to start regularly, but he knows the Flyers are one team that does not take the time to rebuild. Next season they will have the cash to re-tool their team pretty quickly. It has been rumored that his former Buffalo teammate, Daniel Briere may end up there.

Florida is a team that poolies do not pay much attention to. Nathan Horton's nine goals in the last month are worth noting. He and Stephen Weiss are starting to click. The departure of Gary Roberts has to hurt in the locker room, but will allow some of the younger guys to get more playing time.