We have a new guest columnist today - Gus Katsaros, McKeen's Hockey - Fantasy Hockey Expert.

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It takes a special personality, character and mental make-up of an individual to willfully allow someone to blast a piece of galvanized rubber directly at them.

It takes an even more special person to keep coming up with ways to keep the disk from getting passed them.

Goaltending can make or break a hockey team, witnessed by such performances by tenders as Calgary's Miikka Kiprusoff, and Buffalo's Ryan Miller. The inverse sees twine-minders struggling with soft goals and inferior stats, such as Toronto's Andrew Raycroft.

Martin Gerber lost his starting role in Ottawa.

But really, who cares? This is fantasy, show me the numbers and I'll activate you, it's as simple as that. Potential doesn't win fantasy leagues.

Those in keeper leagues within reach of the pinnacle of fantasy, the

Championships, could see their hopes die if a heavy weighting in the goaltending category.

GOALTENDERS
Revolving Doors

Johan Holmqvist has 15 wins in 25 games, while **prized** acquisition Marc Denis hasn't fared as well, with 11 wins in 29 games.

The number of games alone indicates the dissatisfaction of the revolving door approach of Lightning coach John Tortorella

.

Neither goaltender has run away with the title in Tampa Bay – Holmqvist won five straight starts in November and again in January, and struggled at other times.

This indicates trouble for fantasy owners

with either tender and wanting to make a run.

If they are splitting games, neither can catch fire.

As soon as one has a bad game, he is replaced.

Fantasy owners could look at trying to get some trade value or suffer through mediocrity down the stretch.

A team like the San Jose Sharks who don't have actual problems with goaltending, but the revolving door effect wreaks havoc on fantasy owners of either of their two world-class goaltenders, Vesa Toskala and

Evgeni Nabokov. With 20 wins in 27 games played, Toskala (2.25 GAA, .915 SV%) seems like a no-brainer.
When the $5 million back-up that has virtually identical numbers like Nabakov (2.27 GAA, .916 SV%) is pulling off 12 wins in 24 games, it frustrates owners of Toskala.

Two factors will determine both netminders fates this season.

One of them is traded, most likely Nabby. Whichever is traded is likely to assume the number one position with their new team, and ease owner's minds – unless the

trading partner lacks the available peripheral talent and leaves the goalies to fend for themselves.

Owners of either goaltender will be watching the trade deadline to see the action unfold.

The other factor will be if neither is traded and the Sharks use the talent as insurance for a Cup run.

Their fantasy value will dip for both goaltenders due to the revolving door effect and trading either of them could potentially reduce the asset coming back the other way. Owners need to act on these possibilities. If a more stable

goaltender is available, see what a Toskala could fetch, set his demand across owners.

Owners don't need to pull the trigger on a deal, but they could gauge the value on the open market.

Lost Jobs

We've already seen it happen in Ottawa where Martin Gerber played himself out of a starting position, and the same may be said about the tenders in Toronto. Andrew Raycroft (40 GP, 20 W, 3.10 GAA, .892 SV%) has had serious consistency issues and is not a

viable choice at the moment for any categories.

Should he falter after the All-Star break, it is quite conceivable to see back-up J.S. Aubin (14 GP, 2W, 3.63 GAA, .874 SV%) get a chance at a string of games.

Surprises?

Think Ray Emery got the number one position by default due to the horrendous

start by Martin Gerber? Think again.

Most recollections of the 24-year-old are from last season's playoffs, a questionable performance overall.

There were pockets of brilliance last season, which has carried over to the 2006-07 season.

The Senators play a new grinding style better with Emery as their backstop, a situation that is not likely to change.

They’re picking up steam for a stretch drive after fighting to tweak their system this season, which has seen them flounder out of the gate, to shine as of late.

Gerber is the odd man out

and will see limited duty.

Ottawa's $3.75 million mistake.

The tale of the two Minnesota keepers, one still there, one traded away, could explain some of the inconsistency plaguing the former, and allowing the other to excel. E

xcept for when the Oilers take on the Avalanche, Dwayne Roloson
(43 GP, 20 W, 2.69 GAA, .908 SV%)
has been stellar for the Stanley Cup Finalists this season.

Edmonton is in the perennial eighth spot mode heading down the stretch and will need to tighten up defensively to make Roloson's efforts

worthwhile on the fantasy scene.

Manny Fernandez (41GP, 21W, 2.58 GAA, .911SV%, 2SO) has struggled with consistency and injuries all season.

It’s possible he needs a Roloson type back-up that will

challenge to usurp his number one status.

Perhaps the trade to Edmonton was not as good for him, as it was for Roloson.

Niklas Backstrom (14 GP, 4W, 2.10 GAA, .927 SV%, 1SO) has pushed Fernandez, but is unlikely to challenge as much as Roloson did.

Fernandez now has more

offensive support with Marian Gaborik back in the lineup, but is a question mark due to his injury situation.

Tread with caution.

New Digs

Who is happier, the Phoenix Coyotes, or the

tender to who they have offered a contract extension? Pushed to third on the depth chart behind struggling Raycroft – and apparently not good enough to back him up – Mikael Tellqvist (16GP, 9W, 2.87 GAA, .905 SV%, 1SO) was dispensed to the Desert Dogs for Toronto

Marlies candidate, Tyson Nash.

Looking for depth?

Look no further.

His performance has suggested that Cujo may be on the move as the Yotes try to bolster a stretch drive, and prepare

the roster for next season.

If you have a spot deep on your roster to tuck away a potential gem, Telly is your bet.

This is what you get for 15 years?

The over/under for how long it would take the Islanders to realize they made a mistake with DiPietro was a year at the ICE League draft. Tsk, tsk. First Yashin, now this.

In the early part of the

season, a rejuvenated Alexei Yashin and a smoking hot Jason Blake powered the Isles to flirt with first place in their division, even for a brief moment.

DiPietro, prior to the injury to Yashin – who

Dobber traded to me in the ICE League for defenseman Dan Boyle (I put a hole in the wall from banging my head over that one) – looked like he was proving his critics wrong, winning more starts than losses.

Then the bottom fell out, and so too did his numbers.

He is now the default future of the Islanders, sharing the mantle of goaltender with names like Billy Smith and Roland Melanson, but he isn’t worth a 15

year deal.

Coach Ted Nolan had them running like a well oiled machine at the start of the season.

If Yashin doesn’t get it back on track (c’mon, man, I need POINTS!) DiPietro may become

a permanent reserve on some rosters.

I think the over/under was 1 year? Maybe half a season should have been better.

Have great fantasies, poolies!

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