It finally happened. The moment thousands of poolies around the world waited for: Cristobal Huet pulled his groin and Carey Price had a chance to shine.

The 20-year-old phenom has given poolies plenty of reason to be optimistic. After all, just a few months ago he had trouble fitting all his hardware into his trophy case. The WHL and Canadian Hockey League goaltender of the year joined the Habs' minor league team in Hamilton just in time to win the AHL playoff MVP.

Price followed that up with a strong training camp that unseated Jaroslav Halak from his seemingly comfortable spot as Huet's backup. He then proceeded to post a 6-2-1 record when the team gave Huet a rest.

On Dec. 3, Huet sustained a groin injury in practice and Price was thrust into the spotlight. In three games since, the rookie lost two and when you factor in his loss on Dec. 1, he is just 1-3-0 in his past four starts, allowing 14 goals. He has also been pulled once.

It's not time to panic. While I would certainly bench him until he plays his way out of this funk and gets more comfortable in the spotlight, I haven't given up on him for this season. He is a star in the making and he could still become a successful starter as early as this season if the Habs decide to trade Huet before the deadline. Just remember – the guy's 20 years old…

Speaking of goaltender funks, it looks as if the Dominator may have gotten out of his. Hasek has won his last three starts and allowed just three goals in that span. But don't get too excited, Hasek owners. The Red Wings gave up just 17 shots to Carolina last game, and 19 and 16 to Montreal and Minnesota before that. The team has earned the wins for him. That will certainly help his confidence, but hasn't really proven he is back to his old self yet, so be cautious…

Shawn Horcoff has 24 points in his past 21 games and is proving to coach Craig MacTavish that he is a true No. 1 center. There was some question of that in the early going, but detractors are probably keeping their mouths shut now…

Injuries, from a fantasy league perspective: With injuries to Jiri Novotny (concussion – at least another week), Fredrik Modin (back spasms – at least another week) and David Vyborny (back injury – day-to-day), the Blue Jackets have tried Kris Beech at center on the top line with Rick Nash and Nikolai Zherdev, with positive results. The 26-year-old has five points in five games this season.

Farm Report: Florida prospect Michael Frolik is currently on a 12-game point streak for Rimouski of the Quebec League. The 19-year-old has four goals and 24 points in that span and is coming off a strong Panthers training camp. Look for him to take a run at an NHL job in September of 2008.

Originally posted at The Hockey News December 10