By Darryl Dobbs - also posted by Dobber's affiliates. A month ago, the Blackhawks seemed to have everything under control again. Injured players were filing back into the lineup and the team was winning games. One 0-8-2 run later and the team seems to be in trouble.

Poolies – this may be the time to take a flyer on goaltender Patrick Lalime as your secondary or even reserve goaltender. Nikolai Khabibulin has played 21 of the last 22 games and has performed poorly of late. His record in his last 14 games is 3-9-2, but what is more concerning are the other numbers. A 4.06 goals against average in the last eight games. A .849 save percentage in that same span.

Chicago coach Denis Savard may decide that overworking the veteran is not working out so well. If this keeps up, he will have to. That will mean that either Brian Boucher or Patrick Lalime will see more action. Lalime, who missed the first half of the season due to back surgery, was recalled from his conditioning stint in Norfolk and is ready to go.

Lalime's numbers during his four-game AHL stint were impressive. He went 3-1, with a sparkling 2.49 GAA and .930 save percentage. It says here that Lalime gets a shot this week. If he impresses and gets the win, Savard is the type of coach that will stick with the hot hand.

That first game will be the key and it is something for poolies to keep an eye on…

Meanwhile…

Pittsburgh rearguard Ryan Whitney is taking full advantage of being Sidney Crosby's teammate. The 23-year-old is on a seven-game point streak (10 points) and has 15 points in his last 13 games. Whitney is now on pace for a 60-point season and if he does not get it, he certainly will in seasons to come…

Oilers pivot Shawn Horcoff is slowly turning his season around. After a dreadful start, which saw him tally just 15 points in 33 games, the 28-year-old has 17 in his last 17. The reason for the resurgence is simple: he has been reunited with Ryan Smyth and Ales Hemsky. The key has been Hemsky, who began the first half of the season on a different line with countryman Petr Sykora. On the other side of the coin, moving Hemsky off his line has not helped Sykora any. He is pointless in his last four games and has just two points in his last nine…

Vancouver blueliner Kevin Bieksa does not seem to want to slow down. The 25-year-old sophomore has 19 points in his last 20 games. It is looking more and more like the surprising Bieksa is the real deal and is almost a certainty to garner 50 points this season…