With the end of the regular season in sight, it's time to take a look back at how your Eastern Conference fantasy players have fared this season and hand out some April flowers.

Eastern Conference Goaltending

Most Valuable Goaltender

Winner: Ryan Miller

Buffalo's saviour has the fourth most wins, only three back of NHL leader Martin Brodeur. Miller's save percentage (0.928) is bettered only by Tuukka Rask (0.930) and his 2.23 goals-against-average is the third best in the NHL (tops in the East). He has the fourth most saves in the NHL and is tied for seventh in shutouts.

Runner Up: Martin Brodeur

The NHL's equivalent of the energizer bunny, he just keeps going and going. Brodeur once again leads the league with 43 Wins and nine shutouts. His 2.26 goals-against-average places him fourth in the league. He is seventh in the saves category and his save percentage is a decent 0.916.

Winning is the Only Thing Award

This award goes to the best goalie who wins at the expense of all else.

Winner: Marc-Andre Fleury

Pittsburgh's flower has the eighth most wins in the NHL (36) against 20 losses. His lone shutout is less than the expected four to five he's had over each of the last three seasons. Fleury's 2.67 goals-against average is 11th in the East and the 0.904 save percentage puts him in a 19th place tie in the Eastern Conference. The only saving grace would be his 1551 saves, which puts him fifth amongst Eastern goaltenders.

Runner-up: Jose Theodore

Three or more is living up to his nickname with a bottom third ranking in the Conference with a 2.83 goals-against-average. At least he has 29 wins for those of you in wins only leagues and he does have only seven losses (plus seven overtime losses) on his record. That's a nice ratio, but if you are in a roto league, The Odore is of limited use.

Hardy Astrom Commemorative Award:

Awarded to the Eastern Conference goaltender determined to be the most detrimental to a fantasy team.

Winner: Carey Price

His 13 wins place him 20th in the Eastern Conference, behind such budding netminders as Michael Leighton and both Atlanta goalies, Johan Hedberg AND Ondrej Pavelec!? Price's 2.77 goals-against-average is 14th and 0.912 save percentage 11th in the Conference,

Who is the number one goaltender in Montreal when the playoffs start? That's easy:

Age

GS

Min

W

L

OTL

GAA

SV%

SO

Price

22

39

2358

13

20

5

2.77

0.912

0

Halak

24

41

2508

26

12

4

2.32

0.927

5

Price has started only three of Montreal's last 14 games and was pulled in one of those starts. Halak has started 12 of the last 15 games for Montreal. It's going to be an interesting off-season for the Canadiens.

Runner up: Tim Thomas

The Tool Man has definitely been a tool for his fantasy owners this season. This year he sits 15th in wins in the Eastern Conference, the 2.55 goals-against-average is 7th best in the Conference and his 0.915 save percentage puts him in a tie for eighth in the East. Last year, Thomas was first in both goals-against-average and save percentage and finished sixth in wins. That was in the entire NHL, not just the Conference. Maybe it's the team this year? Uh, no, the evidence does not bear that out:

	Age	GS	Min	W	L	OTL	GAA

SV%

SO

Thomas

35

42

2377

16

18

8

2.55

0.915

5

Rask

23

37

2442

20

12

5

1.99

0.930

5

This is a similar dynamic to the Price/Halak situation (other than the obvious age difference) in that one was supposed to be the clear starter and the other the clear back up. Tim Thomas has started only three of Boston's last 14 games and finished only one of those (a 5-0 shutout of Calgary). Obviously, Tuukka Rask has taken over the starter's role on the Bruins. It's clear that the torch has been passed in Boston.

Best Late Round Pick:

Winner: Tuukka Rask

He is hands down the winner here. Rask has come of age about a year before most thought possible. Both his 1.99 goals-against-average and 0.930 save percentage lead the NHL. He has 20 wins and five shutouts in 37 starts. Toronto fans have good reason to be unhappy.

Runner-up: Brian Elliott

Elliott's play mirrors the Senators season. He has run hot and cold this year, recording two winning streaks, nine and six games respectively. He has 29 wins, good for a fifth place tie in the East with Theodore. Elliott has the third most shutouts and seventh most saves in the Conference. His 2.56 goals-against-average is only middle of the road.

Most Likely Not to be on Your Fantasy Roster Next Season Award:

The only reason you would have either of these two guys on your fantasy roster next season is that you are in a very deep league or are very desperate.

Winner: Pascal Leclaire

Granted he played well on Tuesday night, recording a 5-2 victory against the wicked offense of the mighty Florida Panthers, but his overall numbers are downright scary. Leclaire has started 30 games and has a 12-13-0 record. That's relatively average, but he has the fourth worst goals-against-average (3.13) and the worst save percentage (0.889) in the entire NHL.

Runner-up: Ray Emery

Razor should be cut loose from your fantasy roster. While his 16-11-1 record seems decent enough, the 2.64 goals-against-average and low 0.905 save percentage does not instill any confidence. That and the season ending hip surgery that has the potential to put an early end the 27-year-olds playing career.

Eastern Conference Defensemen

Most Valuable Fantasy Defensemen

Winner: Mike Green

This isn't even close, at least in the Eastern Conference. Green is the most dominant offensive

defenseman the NHL has seen since Paul Coffey. He has 19 goals and 74 points in 73 games so far this year. Green is lethal with the man advantage, recording 35 power play points. His plus/minus (plus-35) is second only to team mate Jeff Schultz's plus-44.

Runner-up: Chris Pronger

Even if you don't like Pronger the player, it's hard not to like the numbers this season. He has 54 points, 26 via the power play, is a very solid plus-21 and has 79 penalty minutes.

Best Late Round Pick:

Winner: Tyler Myers

Future NHL Rookie-of-the-Year winner. Many people had relatively low expectations points-wise this season from Myers. Many thought it would take several seasons to be able to excel at the NHL level, ala fellow big man Zdeno Chara's development. Not many expected 47 points and a plus-15 in his rookie season. The future is very bright.

Runners-up: Kurtis Foster

It finally looks like Foster has come all the way back and then some from a devastating broken leg that happened late in the 2007-08 season. He is a fixture on the Tampa Bay power play and has recorded 39 points in 68 games, 24 with the man advantage.

Runners-up: Andy Greene

The Devils needed someone on the back end to step up in the absence of injured Paul Martin. Greene elevated his offensive game and has had a breakout campaign in his fourth NHL season. He has 35 points in 76 games, including 14 power play points.

Rookie Defender Not 6'8" Tall With the Biggest Upside Next Year:

Winner: Erik Karlsson

While Karlsson has 25 points in 58 games this year, he has been smoking hot of late. He has 11 points in his last eight games. He will be the uncontested power play quarterback on the team next season. Check that, the 19-year-old Swede is already the Sens top offensive defenseman.

Runners-up: Jamie McBain

Now that veteran ice hog Joe Corvo has been shipped out of town, the team can now give the 22-year-old rookie all the ice time he can handle. McBain is doing more than holding his own. He has eight points in 12 games, is a respectable plus-4 and logs over 25 minutes per game, second only on the team to that fabulous Finn Joni Pitkanen.

Runners-up: Michael Del Zotto

MDZ started his rookie season with a big 12 points in 12 games bang. He followed that up with 14 points in his next 49 games. Since the beginning of March, Del Zotto has 11 points in 16 games. Although his ice time has been scaled back to around 15-16 minutes per game, Coach Tortorella is using Del Zotto a little more judiciously and it seems to be working out pretty well.

Most Disappointing Defenseman

Winner: Dion Phaneuf

Talk about a fall from grace. This is a guy who had 49, 50 and 60 point seasons to start his NHL career. He only has 30 points so far this season. It’s unimaginable that he won’t regain most or all of his rookie swagger.

Runners-up: Dennis Wideman

I know at least some of you never fully trusted Wideman's 50 points last year, but he should still have been good for at least 40 points this season. Boston only lost Phil Kessel and Steve Montador in the off-season and Wideman continues to get top power play time, so how does he go from 50 to 27 points? He's a candidate to rebound next season.

Runners-up: Victor Hedman

So the rookie didn't live up to the hype. Big deal. He still has 20 points in 73 games (only one coming on the power play) and can chalk up this year as a learning experience. Hedman has been brought along slowly and he has the tools to be an excellent offensive NHL defenseman.

One Hit Wonders, One Track Mind

Winner: Jeff Schultz

Schultz leads the entire NHL in the plus/minus category. He may be single-handedly

responsible for putting many fantasy squads over the top. Schultz has 22 points, but his other numbers are unspectacular to say the least.

Runner-up: Matt Carkner

The 29-year-old defenseman is playing in his first full NHL season. He has been a 20-30 point, 200 penalty minute guy in the AHL. Coach Clouston has given the tough as nails Carkner a chance to play in the big leagues and he has acquitted himself well. From a fantasy standpoint, Carkner is only valuable in the penalty minute department. His 183 penalty minutes are miles ahead of the next NHL defenseman, team mate Andy Sutton (107).

Eastern Conference Forwards

Most Valuable Fantasy Forward

Winner: Alex Ovechkin

While there is a debate going on about whether Ovechkin should be the NHL's Most Valuable Player, there is no doubt that in the world of fantasy hockey, his numbers are superior to any other skater. He's currently tied with arch-rival Sidney Crosby for the NHL goal scoring lead, but don't be surprised if Ovechkin ends up winning the Rocket Richard race. Apart from the usual goals, OV is only one point back of Henrik Sedin for the Art Ross trophy and leads the plus/minus race by nine (plus-43). He has 35 power play points (fifth in the NHL) and also helps out in the penalty minute category with 85 minutes.

Runner-up: Sidney Crosby

Crosby has hit the century mark four of his five NHL seasons. The only blemish is a 72 point in 53 game season, although had he been able to play the entire season, he would have recorded 111 points. While he's having a very good season, Crosby's overall fantasy numbers are simply inferior to Ovechkin's.

Biggest Surprise

Winner: Steven Stamkos

We all knew Stamkos was going to be good, but I'm not sure anyone expected him to be Rocket Richard good as early as this season. Of course there were signs of what was to come this season when he scored 13 goals and 21 points over the final 22 games last year and followed that up by scoring seven goals and 11 points in nine World Championship games. His 38 power play points rank second in the NHL and his 21 power play goals are tops in the league.

Loser: Evgeni Malkin

Typically drafted no later than third overall in any draft format, Malkin may have single-handedly been responsible for destroying many fantasy-leaguers seasons, including one of yours truly's teams. Last year, Malkin won the Art Ross with 113 points and yet only has 72 points this season. Granted he's just played 64 games, but that's still just a 92 point pace.

Best Late Pick

Winner: Steve Downie

Very few people expected Downie to keep it together long enough to record 20 points, let alone 20 goals. The controversial winger has 22 goals and 206 penalty minutes so far this season. He has been brought along perfectly by Coach Rick Tocchet and was the first player since 2000-01 (Theo Fleury) to hit 20 goals and 200 penalty minutes, something that is especially valuable in roto leagues.

Runners-up: Jussi Jokinen

The Juice's 30 goals and 64 points (both career highs) came as a huge surprise after last year's 27 points and 42 points he had the season before that. The 30 goals were especially shocking as his previous career high was 17.

Runners-up: Tomas Plekanec

I managed to scoop Plekanec in the 22nd round of the Dobber Experts League draft. It's not like he was devoid of talent, but after last season's 39 points, he was sort of a sleeper because very few people trusted that he could get back to the 69 points he garnered the year before last.

Least Likely to Repeat Next Season

Winner: Maxim Afinogenov

Since the Kovalchuk deal, he's been playing mostly with Nikolai Antropov and Nicklas Bergfors. Afinogenov has scored at a 56 point pace without Kovalchuk. He scored at a 66 point clip prior to the Kovalchuk trade. Afinogenov is an unrestricted free agent after the season, so he may not even end up back with the Thrashers. Last season, Afinogenov scored 20 points and the season before 28 points, so a repeat of this season is anything but a lock.

Runners-up: Jussi Jokinen

Anyone who goes from 27 points to 64 points is a candidate to revert back to their 27 point form. Do I think Jokinen is going to be a consistent 60-65 point scorer? Not a chance. I'd count on 40-45 until proven otherwise.

Runners-up: Rich Peverley

It's obvious that Peverley misses Kovalchuk. He scored at a 63 point pace when Kovalchuk was on the team and only at a 43 point clip since the trade. If you own the Pev Dispenser, be prepared for a steady diet of 45-50 point seasons.

One Hit Wonder

With a first name that sounds like it could be at home in Greek mythology, Zenon Konopka leads the league with 260 penalty minutes, 42 more than then next skating sinner (Colton Orr).

Did I miss anyone you thought should have been included in the Eastern Conference Fantasy Awards? Let me know!