March Madness is in the air and for most of you that means fantasy league playoffs start in just a few short weeks. That being said, the chaotic mayhem known as “jockeying for position” has taken over the lands. Leashes are the shortest ever as drastic times call for drastic measures. Do you need one last miracle acquisition to push you into the post-season? Do you need one more piece of trade bait in order to land the big fish you’ve been seeking all year?

Well, before you go out and make those outrageous trade proposals, please look over my Rules of Engagement for winning the goaltending battle down the stretch. Hey, if you’re like me, it’s all

about just trying not to be last place in the Dobber Elite League (at least my goalies rule!). But this is Dobber Nation, where nobody loses and everyone wins.

And of course with the trade deadline only a few days away, I'm also going to bring some insight on a few goalies that could be wearing different colors on Wednesday. Make no mistake about it, decisions are huge right now, so post this up on the big board at work and prepare for battle!

**1.  NOTHING IS GUARANTEED**
Miikka Kiprusoff can allow five goals on 19 Tampa Bay shots and Colorado could sweep Detroit in the regular season for the first time in Avalanche history on Wednesday night. Enough said. It's not WHO you are in net, it's WHAT you just did in the last game. Who knows, maybe Antti Niemi takes over the crease in Chicago and leads them deep into the playoffs. Hey, you never know. That's the point. Keep those eyes open and never underestimate an NHL goalie.

**2.  THE INJURY BUG IS ALWAYS BUZZING**
If Ryan Miller and Nikolai Khabibulin can go down in the final quarter of the season, it can happen to any goalie at any given moment. Did you know that Tomas Vokoun missed three games with an inner-ear infection and both Evgeni Nabokov and Alex Auld missed a game because of the flu?! Your trigger finger must be ready for the next nagging injury…because compensating for it with another goalie can make all the difference come Sunday night.

**3.  SCOUTING FOR THE FUTURE**
If you are in a keeper league, getting a chance to soak in the play of all these young prospects is like money in the bank for next year. There are a number of potential acquisitions to be made that will set you up for great success down the line. Keep an eye on HOW they play, not how their statistics look. Goalies like Yan Danis, Karri Ramo and Michal Neuvirth are taking advantage of their chance to see some solid NHL action and raising their stocks.

**4.  TRADE DEADLINE DEALS**
I don't see many goalies having a new address come Wednesday afternoon, but then again this is clearly not my best area (rumors) when it comes to goalie analysis. But I do have to say that the economy will obviously have a bigger impact on the trading scene than most people expect. It's very hard for a GM to make a big splash right now because of the impact it could have next season. Also realize that some goalies may seem to have little value, but they will actually carry more weight because of their short-term affordability.

**5.  FOCUS ON THE FUTURE**
A lot of teams that are looking to move goalies before the trade deadline are focused on their future. Keep an eye on prized prospects that could push another NHL'er out of the way in order for the team to see what they drafted. Tuukka Rask is the obvious one, because soon Boston will have to put him through waivers in order to send him to the AHL…and we all know that's never going to happen. Simeon Varlamov, Ondrej Pavelec, Chet Pickard, Cory Schneider and Jonathan Bernier are all lurking in the shadows just waiting for their chance to secure one of their elusive spots on their respective teams. That in turn could force one of the other goalies on the team to move.

***SOME POSSIBLE TRADES THAT PROBABLY WON'T HAPPEN BECAUSE OF THE ECONOMIC WASTELAND***

**SCOTT CLEMMENSEN**
He has more value right now than at any other point in his career, so there has to be a market for a veteran that's capable of winning games. For teams that are worried more about the almighty dollar than the big W, Clemmensen is a steal. So a team like Colorado could easily pull him in for a low draft pick and "see what Jeff Hackett can do" for a third straight season. As far as his value is concerned, I don't see him bringing in more than a 3rd or 4th rounder.

**MARTIN GERBER**
Gerber was recalled for one game and then sent back down to Binghamton, so he wasn't even displayed for trade purposes. It's tough to say if Ottawa will trade him because of perceived value, as he has barely been mediocre in Binghamton and similarly for the Senators. Gerber is 34 years old and not getting any younger, but still might have a few seasons left in him. His trade value is higher than first glance because he won't demand much and he didn't get enough chances to redeem himself.

**KARI LEHTONEN**
Dobber gave him a 25% chance of being traded but to me, the odds are higher. A few reasons – one, his value is high right now, but one more injury and that all comes crashing down. Atlanta is looking to trade him because it's obvious they need big-time help in other places. Secondly, it looks like the team wants to make room for Ondrej Pavelec. We heard about his public issues with the team not giving him a chance to play, and since he's a bona-fide prospect, it could be a real possibility Lehtonen is moved before the deadline.

**YANN DANIS**
Danis is another great young goaltender whose value has blown up over the last 4-6 weeks. I think he's a perfect candidate to be moved in a package deal. His value is still considered low because he's "unproven and young" but that doesn't take into consideration the fact that he's just now getting a chance to play consistently in New York. It's kind of like what Pekka Rinne went through – started slowly but once he was able to play a handful of games in a row, the timing and positioning clicked and he went on a tear.

**ERIK ERSBERG**
An unrestricted free agent at the end of the year on a team laden with prized goalie prospects, Ersberg could easily attract another team by the trade deadline. I think the perception is that his value is high because of his age and the great job he did coming in to carry the workload earlier in the season. He might be perceived as "losing the job" to Jonathan Quick, but that couldn't be further from the truth. Quick played well enough to warrant more starts, so Ersberg is by all means still a prized prospect. But when you have a kid by the name of Bernier, it gets tough trying to keep all those tasty cookies in the jar.

There are many other goalies that have been a part of trade rumors (Mike Smith for example), but the key is to recognize what their real value is compared to their perceived value. The youth movement is in effect all over the league, so the older, mediocre goalies are used more as

sutures and short-term gap fillers for teams that just need some consistency at the backup position or someone that can push the starting goalie to perform at a higher level.