I can't even begin to explain how tough it was to rank the final 25 keeper league goalie prospects in my first-ever "Top-50" list. I could have easily tossed in another 20-25 legitimate prospects, but cuts had to be made. Not every goalie prospect in the world can be considered a legitimate keeper, but almost every goalie on this list could be ranked higher or lower, depending on your own personal preference.

That's probably the only thing you should keep in mind as you read through my thoughts on these prospects. They are all very young and in the very early stages of their professional careers. Only a few of them are over 20 years old and that makes this all the more difficult.

Nevertheless, I think Dobber Nation now has a very solid list to work from when it comes to drafting your goaltenders. From a goalie analyst perspective (not a fantasy guru like Dobber), please be aware of my own personal influences on what makes a prospect so valuable and what trends result in success at the NHL level. Combined with Dobber's Prospects Guide (which is sheer gold, btw), this should be one of the best free sources available on the internet.

Also, please leave your comments and suggestions below, as this is my first real, hardcore attempt at ranking the Top-50 keeper league prospects. Plans for next year's list include

spacing it out over the course of four weeks, so that I have more time to compile information and I don't get overwhelmed with 25 prospects at a time.

But hey, when I'm asked by a Dobber follower to make something happen, you can always expect quality results from The Goalie Guild, so enjoy this list and keep those goalie questions coming! In fact, for those that are interested in talking a little bit of goaltending during the first round of the NHL Entry Draft, visit www.thegoalieguild.com/chat and join us on Friday night! Who knows, maybe Olivier Roy will end up being chosen in the first round!

Numbers 1-25

THE FINAL 25

26. OLIVIER ROY
Poised to be the first goalie chosen in the 2009 NHL Entry Draft, Roy has already exceeded most expectations laid before him. In two full seasons with Cape Breton, Roy continued to improve in all areas of the game, despite his already high talent level. He posted the fourth-longest shutout streak in QMJHL history this season, displaying some world-class consistency and poise. His desire to win is a major mental asset to his game. Look no further than his rookie year, where he won 27 games (four shutouts) and captured QMJHL Rookie of the Year Award honors.

27. NICOLA RIOPEL
Riopel set records for the QMJHL this season with a 2.01 goals-against average and also collected the QMJHL Player of the Year Award. A .931 save percentage in that league is almost unheard of, so this kid is poised to be a real difference-maker in the NHL. His combination of size and stature in the net along with the classic tight butterfly style makes him a formidable wall to penetrate, regardless of the shot's angle or his depth in the net. He's a big body that moves very well laterally and his transitioning from side to side is extremely quick.

28. ROBIN LEHNER
You can read my thoughts on Lehner here . The kid has a very interesting story that includes his father and Henrik Lundqvist. Don't get swallowed by the hype, however, as Lehner still has a lot to learn about the position and needs some international experience in order to round out his

game.

29. MIKE LEE
You know about his amazing season in the USHL and all of the accolades that trickled down from there. The USHL has churned out quality goaltenders for years, and the league will continue to do so as more U-S born goalies go the USHL to NCAA route. Lee is quite the character in net - acrobatic, dynamic and totally rock solid. Add a couple of seasons with St. Cloud State and Lee is poised to perform admirably over the next 3-4 years and will continue developing his knack for being clutch in big games. He saw a ton of shots with the expansion Fargo Force, which makes St. Cloud a perfect fit for him. This kid is quickly putting together a recipe for success and should be considered a legitimate NHL goalie in four to five more years.

30. MARC CHEVERIE
Cheverie soaked in a season under Peter Mannino before taking over the starting job for the University of Denver Pioneers. He was one of the best players for the Pioneers this past season but did not show much poise in the NCAA Tournament. I have been on the ice with Cheverie a handful of times and I can tell you that his understanding of the position is unique for his age. He obviously has a great knack for reading plays and his lateral movement and recovery from the butterfly is one of the fastest in all of college hockey. It looks like the Panthers have struck gold in the goalie department when you combine Cheverie with Markstrom and Salak.

31. RIKU HELENIUS
Riku is proof that stats hardly tell the story of overall prospect value. Helenius is a product of Ilves Tampere and transitioned very smoothly to the North American game with the WHL's Seattle Thunderbirds in 2007-08. This past season he somehow played for five different teams in three different leagues, including Augusta, Mississippi and Elmira of the ECHL along with 25 games for Norfolk in the AHL before playing just seven minutes for Tampa Bay. It was a wild season to say the least, but that type of adversity is what makes a goalie like Helenius stronger and more mentally tough. He is a fighter and a solid butterfly goalie with great reactions and agility, so he's poised to be a premier NHL puckstopper.

32. COREY CRAWFORD
His experience playing in the Western Conference Finals boosted his value a considerable amount, especially since he did show some great poise for that situation. He's another big goalie with great positioning and solid lateral movement, but it's not spectacular. He obviously has a step up on Antti Niemi, but in the long run I don't see Crawford making any big waves. To me, he's a solid backup netminder that could push a starter in certain markets.

33. SCOTT STAJCER
Another massive goaltender with great movement, Stajcer is one of the top-ranked goalies in the NHL Entry Draft and for good reason. Stajcer had an incredible playoff run with Owen Sound and the reason he was so successful was not just solid positioning and technique, but a extremely strong mental game. He's confident, calm and composed in dire moments and is very good at making the first save. He needs to work on the things that most big-bodied goalies need to improve upon, which is rebound control and recovery from the butterfly, along with stickhandling.

34. HARRI SATERI
The San Jose Sharks are pretty excited about Sateri's development over the last season and for good reason. One of the more flashy and "clutch" goalies currently developing in Sweden, Sateri's shtick is more about getting the job done and winning games then it is about being technically solid. But once he heads to North America and gets more experience playing on a smaller rink, he should develop nicely and end up pushing for time on the Sharks squad.

35. TYSON SEXSMITH
Sexsmith has flown under the radar, quite possibly because of the team he plays for. The Vancouver Giants are known to be a very strong defensive club, but Sexsmith is not just a product of his team. I'll point to a 42-save Game 7 shutout performance over the Spokane Chiefs in the second round of the WHL Playoffs as a major step in his development. Overall, Tyson has gained a lot of experience by playing in 165 regular season games in just three seasons. His glove hand could use some work, but it's nothing that will keep him from being a future NHL goalie.

36. BRAD THIESSEN
The Hobey Baker candidate has a chance to battle John Curry for the backup to Marc-Andre Fleury. Regardless of where he lands in the Penguins' system, Thiessen is riding a wave of confidence after being named a Hobey Baker Finalist after his third season in the NCAA with Northeastern. Similar to Curry, Thiessen is considered a smaller un-drafted collegiate goalie with tremendous potential. The Penguins are hoping that lightning will strike twice and Thiessen will thrive in the AHL next year and push Curry to perform well in Pittsburgh.

37. EDWARD PASQUALE
Was loaded up with games in his second OHL season and thanks to a full-time goalie coach, he was able to take it all in stride and continue improving his skill set. That helped keep him away from picking up bad habits while gaining confidence in every area of his game. His former GM Don Edwards would come on the ice with Pasquale and the former Vezina Trophy winner (Buffalo Sabres) has helped Pasquale understand the most important aspects of the game, mental toughness. Pasquale plays a tight butterfly style and likes to emulate Cristobal Huet

38. JEFF FRAZEE
A lot of you were wondering why I don't consider Jeff Frazee to be higher on this list. Well, without totally throwing him under the bus, let's just say he's a mental disaster and pretty inconsistent. He has good size and good technical understanding of the position, but he has never seemed to find a rhythm for very long. He often struggles with rebound control early in games and is said to tense up when trying to find the puck through traffic. To me, that screams a lack of confidence in the crease and those are a few reasons why I feel he won't ever really pan out at the NHL level. Even though he could play some games for the Devils next season, it doesn't necessarily make him a prized prospect.

39. IGOR BOBKOV
The top-ranked Russian goaltender prospect was lights out in the World Junior Championships, but still has a long way to go to make it to the NHL. Although he could come over to North America for 2009-10 season, Bobkov needs to work on his butterfly more and learn how to

improve his recovery speed. He's not a very efficient goalie when it comes to movement and he likes to stand up and take away space in a more traditional way. It is said that his glove hand needs a lot of work amongst other things, but his athleticism, size and strength will allow him to be an NHL-quality netminder.

40. MATT HACKETT
There has been so much published on this guy, especially regarding his relationship with Jeff Hackett. Matt still has a lot of work to do, but there's no reason why he won't round out as a quality backup or potential #1-A goalie in three or four years. He has a great set of skills that continues to be refined, but he needs to be more aggressive and better with his puck placemen if he expects to excel in the NHL. This season with Plymouth was impressive, as he went 34-15-3 overall.

41. JOACIM ERIKSSON
Was recently traded from Brynas (Jacob Markstrom's team) to Leksand, which is great news for his development. He's hardly mentioned in the realm of goalie prospects, but don't lose sight of his excellent butterfly, which for his age, proves his strong understanding of a style that dominates North America. He is also a right-handed catching goalie with a large frame at 6-foot-2. I like Eriksson because I feel that his transition to North America, when it happens, will be smoother than expected. And with that comes a nice shot of confidence and ultimately, opportunity.

42. JEFF WYER
Thanks to Matt Bugg's stellar sleuthing, I was able to learn about this hidden high school goalie gem in Dobber's Prospects Report. I was totally unaware of him for obvious reasons, but some video and a few smaller reports on his core strengths and I am on board with this kid. Learn more about him by reading the Prospect Report .

43. ANDERS LINDBACK
Drafted in the seventh round last year by Nashville, Lindback is currently a work in progress in Sweden. His size is monstrous at 6-foot-6 and like so many others, has formidable movement and agility. His issue right now seems to be consistency, but a great skill set is attached to Lindback, which means keep an eye on him. He is considered a combinational butterfly goalie, incorporating the hybrid style with the more traditional aspects as well. His statistics have improved drastically over the last three years and he's making the move from Brynas to Timra in the Elitserien.

44. MARK GUGGENBERGER
Guggenberger was absolutely sensational for the Kelowna Rockets in the WHL Playoffs, knocking out teams ranked above them while posting a 16-5-1 record along with a 2.02 goals-against average and a .916 save percentage. From mid-January, Mark went 16-1-1-2 (32-6-2-2 overall) and silenced the critics throughout the season. If not for one bad outing in the Memorial Cup, Guggenberger would be a more recognizable name to the average goalie prospects fan. He will slip low in the Entry Draft, but his talent and winning abilities are legitimate for a future NHL goaltender.

45. NIKO HOVINEN
Hovinen is kind of like the leaning tower of Pizza. He's an absolute giant at 6-foot-7 inches, but does not have very good balance or stability in the net. He gets pushed around a lot and doesn't have a stable presence in the net. Although he's extremely large in the butterfly, recovering from that and then being able to stay square to shooters for rebounds is where he really seems to struggle. It's also noted that he has issues with durability and stamina.

46. JONI ORTIO
In five games for Finland in the U-18 World Championships, Ortio played extremely well and posted a 2.91 goals against average and .903 save percentage. Ortio is not one of the bigger goalies you've seen on our list, but regardless the kid has talent and potential. Extremely smooth side-to-side, Ortio has the flexibility to make marvelous glove saves, but also has the positioning to swallow pucks whole and not give up rebounds. He'll need to learn how to play bigger in his crease if he expects to succeed in North America.

47. MATT CLIMIE
Had a tremendous ride to end his season, as he went from the ECHL straight to backing up Marty Turco for a few games to close out the NHL season. Then he dropped down to the AHL in time to get some great experience in the playoffs. Now with Dallas bringing in their new AHL team (Texas Stars), Climie has a great opportunity to build on his recent success and push Richard Bachman to start in the capitol of Texas.

48. ANTON KHUDOBIN
Although the Russian prospect is only 5-foot-10, Khudobin is a hard worker with great reflexes and positioning. In 2007-08 he was a standout for the ECHL's Texas Wildcatters before posting decent numbers in five games (2-2-1 with .911 save percentage) with the Houston Aeros. This year he didn't play at the top of his game when it mattered most for Houston, but he did post a shutout in the AHL Playoffs, making 30 saves on April 16 against Peoria to help tie the series at 2-2. Sure, Khudobin is a small goalie, but depending on what happens with Josh Harding over the summer, he could still be Minnesota's next backup and really thrive in that situation.

49. MATTIAS MODIG
Anaheim has their sights set on Modig, who performed admirably well in the shadows of some great Swedish players this season. His entire career has been spent with club Lulea (minus a few games for Team Kiruna) and posted excellent numbers in 40 games played this past season. But it has been a roller-coaster season for the kid, as his 2007-08 season was atrocious. He not only lost his starting job, but Lulea also failed to make the playoffs. This season was a much-needed rebound for Modig, which happens to mean "brave" in Swedish. Modig is considered the top goalie prospect for the Ducks and could be signed to an entry-level contract shortly, which would bring him over to North America.

50. TIMO PIELMEIER
Another German goaltender drafted by the San Jose Sharks, Timo was excellent in his second QMJHL season. In 42 games with Shawinigan, Pielmeier went 30-9-2 with a .913 save percentage. His rights were traded to Anaheim in the deal that sent Kent Huskins and Travis Moen to San Jose. The 2006-07 season was a breakout year for Pielmeier because of his

performances in the U-18 and U-20 World Championships for Germany. He also made waves for his play with the Cologne Junior Sharks as he led the team to the DNL (German Elite League) Championship. Combined with Modig, Anaheim controls the final two spots in The Goalie Guild's Top-50 Goalie Prospects to Ponder!