Remember in last week's School of Block when I mentioned that a legitimate talent rarely struggles for an entire season? From that standpoint, I focused mainly on Martin Brodeur – he was a true workhorse showing the signs needed to reverse his first-half misfortunes. This week's lesson will again discuss goalies changing their fantasy values, but with a focus on the shifting balance of opportunity and roles.

FANTASY MAILBAG – JANUARY 17

I don't know about you, but I can feel the chilling winds of change blowing through a few NHL cities. This has led to some interesting changes, including a few where coaches have suddenly adjusted their goaltending philosophies. So let's take a look at some of these situations currently taking place and what it could mean for a goalie's fantasy value.

As you read about the four situations below, realize that this is the point in the season where the league-wide intensity really starts to rise. Because of this, we will all start to learn a lot about a goalie's ability to log heavy minutes, to come off the bench and make timely saves, to instill confidence in their teammates and to display the skills needed to snag a full-time NHL job as a starter or a backup.

Alongside the four cities below, watch for Joey MacDonald to log some minutes for Detroit. Jimmy Howard took a serious shot off the inner knee and it's definitely a deep bruise, so he could miss more than just one game. I've always admired MacDonald for his ability to step in and play well in limited minutes. And his veteran presence is a perfect fit for the Red Wings, so he should play very well, albeit slightly below average numbers.

Last but not least, Mike Brodeur could see some playing time in Ottawa. I hate to state the obvious, but the Pascal Leclaire era simply has to end. He's the easiest goalie to project because it only takes two words – I and R. Not even I'm risky enough to take a chance on him. But how can you not like Brodeur? He plays with so much energy and has worked so hard to get these rare opportunities that you can expect nothing short of a very strong work ethic.

I'm also working hard to scout as many prospects as possible. Be sure to read our latest *audio/visual scouting report on Anton Khudobin*, as he could see a few more starts in Minnesota while Jose Theodore continues to recover from his hip issues. *Kevin Poulin is also getting more minutes* as Rick DiPietro works his way back into the lineup as well. We also scouted 19-year-old *Robin Lehner's first career start and win* over the Islanders.

Los Angeles - Kings head coach *Terry Murray was basically quoted as saying* that if a goalie wins, he's in. Last week, I made sure to add Jonathan Bernier as another one of the buy-low candidates last week (after Rask, Theodore and Brodeur) and it now looks like he's set up to continue starting games until he loses.

This is something I pointed to at the beginning of the season, as I said that it was "only a matter of time…" until he started to produce true fantasy points. I'm not saying Bernier is destined to steal the "starting job" from Jonathan Quick, but I have been saying it's important for you to realize that once he's given consistent minutes, anything is possible. I didn't expect it to take this long for Bernier to get this chance, so give credit to Quick for his stellar play.

But with Bernier's 5-2 win over Edmonton on Saturday, he single-handedly swung the window of opportunity wide open. How many could he win in a row, you ask? I won't project something like that, but heading into tonight's game, the Kings have already beaten Dallas twice this season. And if he wins, he will start Tuesday in St. Louis.

Remember, as soon as a goalie wins two in a row, they essentially wake from a slumber. Their confidence soars, the team gains more confidence in them and the potential to extend that streak to three or four is much greater. Keep in mind, however, that this decision has nothing to do with Quick's recent inability to win games. But as one goalie's value and opportunity goes up, their counterpart's value has to go down. It's a simple case of cause and effect.

Murray's decision to change the goalie landscape is all about his desperation for wins. At some point, this was going to happen. The Kings have two stellar goalies, and even though Bernier hasn't played nearly up to his potential yet, the truth is clear that, given the chance, he has the ability to win games. If he snaps into a rhythm, watch out. For those who have owned him and kept him on the roster leading up to this point, your time may have finally come.

Florida - This is easily the most interesting situation I've seen in a while. For any number of reasons, *Pete DeBoer has turned to Scott Clemmensen* and started him three out of the last four games. I won't speculate on the drama potentially happening behind the scenes, but I will say that there's clearly a sense of desperation for wins.

Clemmensen's 33-save effort in a 3-2 win over the Devils has allowed DeBoer to roll with him again on Monday night against Atlanta. It's steaming Vokoun something awful, which would lead a lot of media and fans to start blabbing about a trade. On that note, I can think of one team that would love an upgrade in net – Ottawa.

I'm not saying things are going to end with a trade, but Clemmensen has shown he can handle a heavy workload before (in a Devils uniform), so why wouldn’t DeBoer give him more minutes if the Panthers are winning games? It's all about taking advantage of opportunity, and right now, Clemmensen is getting the job done.

Washington - Although Semyon Varlamov has been stellar since the Winter Classic, he's not going to win every game he plays. That being said, he won’t be playing 80-percent of the games in the second half. Because of this, the wise poolie is a prepared poolie. The roles and opportunities for both goalies in Washington could change overnight.

Michal Neuvirth, who wasn’t overly tested against the Senators yesterday afternoon, came off the bench and was very timely in the 3-1 win. He had a couple of slick key saves to give the Caps a chance to win despite being down 1-0 early. That's exactly the kind of mental toughness that, in my opinion, makes him just a shade more valuable (long-term) than Varlamov.

Although the general fantasy value of each goalie has not been slighted in the least bit, the truth is that the coaching staff (including Ted Leonsis) is not happy with the way the team is playing in the first period. They need a stronger start, which ultimately means that both goalies need to make early saves and instill confidence in their teammates.

Again, because the Capitals are desperate for wins, the goalie that gets the job done will probably get the next start. Yes, Varlamov has drastically improved his technique over the past three months, but that doesn't always equal wins.

Colorado – Another thing I love about the "win and you're in" philosophy is that it can jump-start a struggling starter to regain their focus and intensity. Here in Denver, Peter Budaj has received a number of starts in the past two weeks that he normally would never have received last season. Why is this happening?

Because Craig Anderson has simply underachieved.

But on Friday night against the Wild, Anderson displayed the style that made him so successful last season. He was desperate, he was fierce and he was timely. He also scrambled very well, leading me to believe he's finally fully healthy for the first time since coming back from his knee and then groin injuries. He ended up with 32 saves on 33 shots and pushed his goals-against average below 3.00 for the first time in months.

With the Avalanche sitting just three points above three teams in the eighth and final playoff

spot, expect Joe Sacco to roll with the hot goaltender. If Anderson continues to feel the heat from losing games to Budaj, I expect him to continue to play very well. And remember, this is a massive contract season for Anderson. I can only speculate that the Avs, as of today, would most likely pass on re-signing Anderson.

That being said, the time is now for him to turn things around. On Tuesday against the Canucks, he’ll have to do everything he can to emulate last season’s viciousness, intensity and timeliness. And he clearly has no shortage of motivations, so don’t be surprised if he goes on a nice little roll this week. The Avs are also home against Nashville, Boston, St. Louis and Phoenix to round out their five-game home stand.