If the season ended today, Kari Lehtonen would probably win the Vezina Trophy. As crazy as that sounds, when you consider just how well he has played for the Stars, all poolies come to the realization that each and every year is totally unpredictable in the realm of goaltending. No matter how much research you do, you almost always end up drafting one fantasy killer and one fantasy gem.

While that might stem from strokes of good or bad luck, it's an aspect of fantasy hockey that you can't control. If you don't snag one of the Big 5 (Miller, Rinne, Lundqvist, Price, Ward), hang on

tight. Predicting is unpredictable; that's a lesson we all learn rather quickly, so we have to learn to focus on what we can control. With that in mind, now is the time to start determining which goalies are worthy of selling high and which ones are worthy of buying low.

At the top of the list you will find Blues goaltender Jaroslav Halak. I've personally been peppered by numerous poolies wondering whether they should buy or sell. *In my opinion, you need to hold on or try to buy low*. Brian Elliott isn't in a position to split the workload in St. Louis, so no matter how much Halak is struggling, he's still going to play 60 games. He's traditionally streaky, so it could be one big save or one timely win that turns everything around.

As for Lehtonen, I've seen a few outlets (ESPN) discuss how he's a perfect sell-high candidate right now. To me, that's crazy talk. Lehtonen is an elite goalie, more durable than ever before, and the team is confident in front of him. Sheldon Souray is contributing, Trevor Daley is improving and they can still score goals. Whether he faces 40 shots (which is great for volume categories) or 25, Lehtonen's focus and intensity is always at the forefront of his game. That's part of what makes him elite, and that's part of the reason why I'd cling to him like a winning lottery ticket.

There are many other good buy-low and sell-high candidates out there. Take Jacob Marksrom, for example. Even though he gave up two greasy goals in a 3-0 loss to the Capitals, *the Swedish beast still stopped 30-of-32 shots in his first NHL start*. If that's not a sign of things to come, nothing is. So what happens if Jose Theodore falls off the rails over the next 7-10 days? He's what I consider to be a rhythm goalie, and now that he sat on the bench for a game, that rhythm could be thrown akimbo. If I had a chance to snag Markstrom as a #3 or #4, I wouldn't think twice.

Ultimately, you'll come to find that just about every fantasy-worthy goalie is a buy-low or sell-high candidate. That's what makes playing fantasy hockey so darn enjoyable. You attempt to project their future, and you hope for the best. Projections can change at any given moment, but it's often what you least expect to happen that ultimately plays out.

Other Buy-Low Candidates: Mike Smith, Johan Hedberg, Michal Neuvirth and Dwayne Roloson. Aside from his first two periods in his season opener against San Jose, Smith has been beat twice in regulation (.917 SP%). Hedberg doesn't carry a big reputation, but with Brodeur out for 7-10 days, could see an elevated role all season long. Neuvirth is out with a bruised foot, but that's not the type of injury that will hinder his performance when he returns. Roloson is a second-half stud and clearly gets better as the season goes along.

Other Sell-High Candidates: Semyon Varlamov, James Reimer, Tomas Vokoun and Jose Theodore. Varlamov has been exceptional, but when the Avs begin to cool down, he could continue to be leaky, or get hurt. Reimer has been timely, but this isn't the first the Leafs have started off strong. Vokoun has adjusted to his new team very quickly, but Neuvirth's return could change everything. Theodore has had a great start, but his consistency is going to be tested.

THE WEEKLY WARRIOR

Jonathan Quick: Just five games into the season, Quick is already 3-0-1 with a 1.20 GAA, a .960 SP%, and one shutout. He has only allowed five goals on 124 shots and has stifled the Rangers, Flyers and Blues, while losing in a shootout to the Devils. With Phoenix on the docket tonight, and then the Stars on Saturday, Quick is poised to continue his strong play. Aiming for career win #100, he'll have no problem playing with motivation. The Kings don't have another back-to-back series until Oct. 29 and 30, so by this time next week, he could have four more starts under his belt. It's kind of funny, because as much as Terry Murray wants to play Jonathan Bernier more this year, no coach in their right mind would bench Quick right now.

THE HIDDEN NINJA

Nikolai Khabibulin: Like a rotten egg, Khabibulin's fantasy value during drafts stunk up the entire room. The jailbird was also expected to be caged on the bench by a budding Devan Dubnyk. But with a full-blown rotation taking place through the season's first week and a half, it is clear to see that The Bulin Wall is looking fairly strong. Through two games, he's 1-0-1 with a .96 GAA and .957 SP%. He's expected to start tonight against the Wild, a team he played very well against exactly one week ago. If he wins that game, he could start again on Saturday against the Rangers, a team that has struggled to score. If the rotation continues, projecting him to play in 40 games in a sharp and focused manner makes him a great hidden value, especially compared to what we all expected and projected before the season began.

THE UNDERACHIEVER

Tuukka Rask: It's obviously not a good sign when a young, talented goalie like Rask is already exhibiting visible frustration. But that is what happened when Tuukka lost his composure and made a beeline for Cam Ward against the Hurricanes on Tuesday night. But can you really blame him? In his two appearances, the Bruins have scored one goal in front of him, while he has stopped 54-of-59 shots for a .915 SP%. Sitting at 0-2-0 and playing every third game, this is not the way Rask wanted to kick his big season off. Furthermore, if this pattern of starts continues, he won't play again until next Thursday against the Canadiens.

TOP-150 PROSPECTS RANKINGS

My ***Top-150 Prospects Rankings*** has been released for October. Sorry for the delay, but it didn't make sense to publish a ranking just one week into the regular season since a ton of prospects were still being assigned to their actual club, or waiting to get their first start of the year. New additions include Andrei Makarov, Nathan Lieuwen, Michael Houser, Francois Brassard, Brandon Anderson, Jimmy Appleby, Leonardo Genoni, Andrei Vasilevski and Domenic Graham. To view the full ranking, *please join The Goalie Guild or GoaliePost*. Click here to view the ***Top-30 Prospects Rankings*** for free!

THE INJURY UPDATE

Rick DiPietro is traveling with the Islanders to Florida, but isn't expected to play anytime soon.
Michal Neuvirth
is suffering from a badly bruised foot and could be out for another week, maybe two.
Martin Brodeur
has a bone bruise in his right shoulder and is on the shelf for 7-10 days, which is a worrisome bit of news for Devils fans.
Curtis Sanford
has a groin injury, which forces Scott Arniel to keep playing the struggling Steve Mason.
Allen York
is expected to back up Mason tonight.

**This entire article was researched and constructed using GoaliePost as a resource. Please consider becoming a member for only $9.99 for the entire year and support the DobberHockey and The Goalie Guild alliance!*