Some people say I'm too optimistic, that I think every goalie will do amazing things if they simply get the chance. At times, this is true. It is my nature to see the best in pro-level goalies, so I tend to give them the benefit of the doubt. More often than not, they prove me right (Ray Emery, Brian Elliott, Al Montoya, Josh Harding, Kari Lehtonen).

But I can still clearly sense when things aren't quite right. If I read certain articles, learn of certain facts, or see certain goalies doing (or not doing) certain things, foreboding premonitions pierce my mind like a diamond-tipped nail. My intuition engages, I trust my instincts, I research, and then I have no problem warning poolies that storms approach.

I hate to say it, but I'm doubtful about a ton of goalies right now. So be warned – if I were you, I'd be very careful in how you manage these guys heading into the weekend. I'm not saying to drop or trade them or do anything drastic, I'm just saying that I don't really feel like they're in a situation to succeed.

I hated reading that James Reimer *told his mom he has no idea when he's coming back* and that he has a history of concussions. I hate how Steve Mason, after all this time, is still giving up early, untimely goals, and displaying a lack of readiness. I hate seeing Semyon Varlamov get absolutely no help here in Denver. I also can't handle trying to dissect the convoluted riddle known as Jack Capuano's goalie rotation. My list goes on and includes Corey Crawford, Jonas Hiller, and Craig Anderson, but I'll stop there for now.

In Toronto, the fans, the coach and the players have little or no confidence in Jonas Gustavsson. He's a man on an island, lacking his own confidence as well. This situation with him and Ben Scrivens *is a slippery slope just waiting to derail* . Brian Burke left himself exposed by not acquiring a veteran goalie over the summer, and he'll have to deal with this mess by eventually finding one. In my opinion, it's not a matter of if, but when.

That's where poolies should be preparing. Create *a short-list of potential replacements* like I did. Ready your free-agent queue, or stash a few on your roster, just in case the inevitable happens sooner than you think. If I had to choose a few, as I said on Tuesday, I'd consider Michael Leighton, Evgeni Nabokov or Scott Clemmensen.

What I dreaded most back in July about Varlamov's season is coming true. He has no support. *J-S Giguere is a great mentor* , but he's not a goalie coach, and he doesn't have the ability to go over video, or make minor tweaks to Varly's game. That's what he needs to play better right now, yet that's what he's missing.

I love almost everything about Varlamov's game. But without any offensive support, and without the instrumental daily work with a full-time goalie coach, it's only a matter of time before he gets frustrated and starts giving up softies. So proceed with caution; the captain-less Avs are slipping fast. Giguere starts tonight against the Islanders, but beware – it's his first game on home ice this season, in the dry, cold altitude.

It's not all doom and gloom, however. Jaroslav Halak owners struck gold now that Ken Hitchcock is in town. Antti Niemi is still a bit rusty, but he's getting better as time goes on. I also think Martin Brodeur is rising in terms of fantasy value as well. Al Montoya is back in the starter's seat (for the time being) and should play well against Colorado (1-5 at home so far) tonight. And Jimmy Howard's value moving forward is soaring, now that Detroit is back on track.

THE WEEKLY WARRIOR

Josh Harding: The NHL's First Star of the Week is a no-brainer for my Weekly Warrior. He's

one of the best case studies in terms of patience for poolies. The stats are impressive, *his play legitimizes those stats*, and he's getting help from a head coach that truly embraces his potential. Harding will continue to earn some steady starts this month, including this weekend in either LA or Anaheim. I also think he earns the start in Colorado next week, where he has had some historically impressive games. I still think Harding turns into Mike Smith 2.0; he'll earn an opportunity to be a starter somewhere next year. Poolies should keep that in mind, for his game is, remarkably, still improving.

THE HIDDEN NINJA

Jonathan Bernier: It took him three games and exactly one month, but Bernier finally notched his first win against the Predators on Tuesday night. The fantasy value has been extremely low to this point, so the reason he's this week's Hidden Ninja is due to the fact that I see a lot of frustration in Jon Quick's game right now. This could lead to Bernier finally earning some more playing time. Just like Tuukka Rask is expected to play more now that he finally earned his first win in a month (he was the first goalie off the ice this morning), Bernier could get similar opportunities. It won't happen tonight against Vancouver, but the Kings still have two back-to-back sets in the next 13 days.