With yesterday's release of NHL Central Scouting's midterm rankings, I wanted to drop some fantasy-related insight on who I consider to be "long-term gems" for deep keeper leagues. Even if you only play in a standard one-year fantasy league, there is plenty to learn by understanding how to project the potential value of 17-and-18-year-old goaltender. If you play in a dynasty league, keeping an eye on draft-eligible goalies is even more important, as you're always on the hunt for the next Marc-Andre Fleury or Pekka Rinne.

I feel two prospects are "head and shoulders" above the rest right now, not only in terms of their draft value, but their long-term fantasy value as well. That starts with Andrei Vasilevski and ends with Malcolm Subban. Vasilevski is only 17 years old, but plays and presents himself like a 23-year-old. He has every single attribute you want in a keeper prospect, and the only thing hindering his fantasy value right now is his personal motivations in terms of playing in Russia, or eventually coming over to North America.

Subban is earning way more hype and exposure due to his bloodlines and lineage, but it is legitimately combined with a brilliant skill set. He's a dynamic goaltender that has great athleticism, anticipation and an intimate understanding of how to read plays (at the junior level). The few nagging injuries he has sustained this year might raise some red flags, but most goalies that have his level of quickness and agility are prone to pulling a groin every once in a while.

Both of these goalies could be drafted in the first round, and I do find that quite surprising. I'm the first one to say that no team should draft a goalie that early – it just puts too much pressure on the goalie and the team to develop into a long-term stud. That being said, I wouldn't hesitate to snag either guy with my first pick in the 2012 NHL Entry Draft. They are just too good to pass up.

Maybe Montreal looks at snagging Subban for obvious reasons, while Tampa Bay or Washington could snag Vasilevski. Don't forget, the Caps lost Semyon Varlamov to the Avalanche, so how interesting would it be if the Capitals replenished their goalie depth chart with another valuable young Russian?

After those two, you'll want to focus on Matthew Murray, Oscar Dansk, Andrey Makarov and Jon Gillies. These guys create a cash crop of prospects that could be drafted in the second or third-round. They all bring their own unique combination of form and function to the crease, and they all have awesome upside. Murray doesn't have good stats for the Greyhounds (OHL) this

year, but his massive frame (6-foot-5) and calm blocking butterfly style gives him an edge of efficiency that will entice every NHL team.

Dansk is one of my favorite prospects in this summer's draft, as the goalie for Brynas' (SWE) junior team is having an excellent season in his native land. But it is important for readers to realize he actually has two years of experience playing in North America; he posted good numbers for Shattuck St. Mary's from 2007 to 2009 and gained a wealth of knowledge about playing on the smaller rink.

Makarov is another brilliant prospect, one that is ranked in the North American realm, but hails from Kazan, Russia. I would probably take him over Vasilevski in a dynasty or keeper league due to the fact he is already playing in North America and has the calmness and economical mindset of Evgeni Nabokov. Vasilevski is the younger, more aggressive and raw-skilled prospect, so I like Makarov better as a fantasy asset.

As you can see from *my inaugural monthly Draft Eligibles Report* , I have Richard Ullberg, Michael Houser, Anthony Stolarz, Maxime Lagace, Alex Dubeau, and the 19-year-old Ty Rimmer listed as my Darkhorses. If I had to choose one of these goalies to tout as the next hidden star, it would be Ullberg. He almost made Team Finland for the World Juniors and reminds me a lot of Kari Lehtonen.

I really hope you all enjoy my first-ever ***Draft Eligibles Report***, and keep in mind that this is a

premium release for Goalie Post and The Goalie Guild members only! I'll probably drop the first page on the website for free every month, but if you want updates on all 25 goalies, consider becoming a member today.

The Second Time Around

On the topic of evaluating young goaltenders and prospects from a poolies point of view, one dynamic that is crucial to understand is the element of the second time around.

When a goaltender first enters the NHL, *they are a true dynamic entity* . None of his opponents know of his tendencies, nor do they have an understanding of his true skill-set, potential or methodologies. Furthermore, his teammates and coaches have very low expectations, so the team is expected to work much harder in front of him. As a result, it is often much easier for a rookie goalie, or a goalie making his NHL debut, to post valuable fantasy stats.

But the second time around is always much more difficult, and very few goalies escape this inevitable struggle.

Not only are the expectations much higher, but after a goalie crosses a certain threshold in terms of exposure and games played, they are no longer a dynamic entity. A goalie must work ten times harder in his second season in order to continue honing his skills, while also working on his weaknesses. It's also much more difficult to maintain a high level of confidence and consistency, so managing emotions and work ethic becomes an obstacle as well.

This is happening right now with James Reimer, Michal Neuvirth, Corey Crawford, Jhonas Enroth, and even still with Jonas Hiller and Devan Dubnyk. It's very early, but I am confident in saying this will most likely happen next year with Richard Bachman, Anders Lindback, Al Montoya, Sergei Bobrovsky and a few other inexperienced goalies as well.

Everyone considers the sophomore jinx a phenomenon, but if you understand the idea behind the dynamic entity and the second time around, you will understand how to moderate and manage your expectations for many second and third-year NHL goaltenders. There are many more reasons why the sophomore jinx is a very real and tangible thing for goaltenders to overcome, but I'll save that insight for another time.

Tomas Vokoun Looks Sharp

I just wanted to point out that Tomas Vokoun looks really sharp right now, and aside from his

stretch of wins in October, this is the best hockey he has played in a Capitals uniform. He has certainly benefitted from the recent string of starts, but more importantly, he has instilled confidence in his head coach. Dale Hunter elected to go back with Vokoun in last night's game against Pittsburgh despite two tough losses in California.

That was a really keen move by Washington's coaching staff, and it will certainly pay off for them and all of you poolies who have stayed the course with Vokoun. I think he'll continue to have a strong second half, and although it is tough for Michal Neuvirth owners in any one-year leagues, learning from and watching Vokoun will pay off in the future. But for now, Vokoun deserves to steer the ship for the time being.

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