DobberHockey introduces a new a feature column into the fold. *School of Block* will give you the fantasy spin on the latest goaltending news from around the league. Justin Goldman of the Hockey Guild will pen the piece.

**FOR THOSE ABOUT TO BLOCK, WE SALUTE YOU!**

Let's take a look at the Western Conference situation between the pipes...

**ANAHEIM: Three's a crowd for the champs.**

J.S. Giguere is a butterfly robot, so if he stays "oiled up", i.e. hydrated, he'll get close to 40 wins this year. Swiss native Jonas Hiller has a massive incentive-laden contract (up to $3.2 million) to backup Jiggy, but Ilya Bryzgalov is still lurking around. Expect Hiller to start in the AHL until "Bryz" goes bye-bye.

**CALGARY: Kipper's fine but who is next in line?**

Miikka Kiprusoff will play close to 70 games this year, but who will back him up? Right now it's

Brent Krahn's job to lose over Curtis McElhinny. Krahn is an absolute beast at 6-foot-5, 220 pounds and uses his size very well, so he should win this battle if he stays healthy.

**CHICAGO: The Bulin Wall is re-built!**

Nikolai Khabibulin will improve statistically this year and play a ton of minutes, so with names like Kipper, Luongo, Hasek and Brodeur, "The Bulin Wall" could be a real steal. Patrick Lalime and his infamous hero-to-zero story will keep him in a subterranean world of nearly non-existent playing time.

**COLORADO: Budaj gets more scoring support.**

Peter Budaj has an incredible work ethic and "athleticism" is no longer his only forte – now he has solid fundamentals to boot. He's strong enough to play 65-70 games, so he'll win close to 40 this season.

**COLUMBUS: Leclaire is on thin ice.**

Pascal Leclaire failed to take advantage of yet another season of opportunities after tearing the meniscus in his left knee, which begs the question of just how many more chances the Quebec native has until Fredrik Norrena takes over for good.

**DALLAS: Turco to continue regular season tyranny.**

Marty Turco will display more of his regular season dominance, especially since he is one of the most proficient shootout goaltenders in the league. Mike Smith is a stellar young backup with great size, poise and determination and will challenge the streaky Turco for minutes if the Stars start to slip.

**DETROIT: Hasek's back and Ozzie's ready.**

There's no reason to believe that Dominik Hasek will stay as healthy as he did last season. Coupled with veteran Chris Osgood, the tandem has more experience and career wins than any other duo in the league. Osgood will put up silent and strong numbers if Hasek gets hurt, so if your starter is The Dominator, go ahead and draft Ozzie.

**EDMONTON: Rollie aims for consistency.**

Dwayne Roloson's numbers will certainly drop this year, especially with the addition of Mathieu Garon. Garon never clicked with the Kings' coaching staff, but things will be different in Edmonton if Roloson doesn't fire it up early this season.

**LOS ANGELES: Is LaBarbera fit for a King?**

What a trainwreck for Kings goaltending last year. Garon led the team with a measly 13 wins, Dan Cloutier struggled all year behind a mask he hates to wear, Jason LaBarbera couldn't be called up from Manchester, Barry Brust was a bust and Yutaka Fukufuji faced total culture shock. Their only hope this season is LaBarbera's breakout or Cloutier's revival, while the addition of J.S. Aubin gives them some stability in case Cloutier goes off the deep end once again.

**MINNESOTA: Backstrom is the 'Minny Maelstrom'.**

Niklas Backstrom is the man in Minny and Josh Harding is an extremely talented backup with tremendous potential. Backstrom has never played more than a 51-game season in Finland, but plays such a calm and simple butterfly style that he'll play tons of minutes and win close to 35 games.

**NASHVILLE: Mason ready to carry the load.**

Chris Mason certainly has the strength to handle a 65-70 game workload, but his win-loss record won't be the greatest. Either Pekka Rinne or Dan Ellis will get a shot at a 15-20 game season as his backup.

**PHOENIX: A's the answer or are they a bunch of deuces?**

David Aebischer or Alex Auld? Who steps up to take the #1 job? Phoenix has more goalies than defensemen it seems, so don't take either of them, unless one steps up for good. Aebischer may seem to have the upper hand at the moment, but his attitude has always held him back.

**SAN JOSE: Nabby's happy in San Jose.**

Evgeni Nabokov will hit the 30-win mark while Dimitri Patzold will battle Thomas Greiss and Taylor Dakers for the backup job. Patzold seems to hold the inside track for now, seeing as he is another product of the late Warren Strelow and was born in Nabokov's hometown of Kamenogorsk, Kazakhstan.

**ST. LOUIS: A Legace is slowly fading.**

Manny Legace suffered a torn meniscus in February and despite his apt skills, it's only a matter of time before Hannu Toivonen and Jason Bacashihua grab the reigns for the Blues.

**VANCOUVER: Luongo's looking for revenge.**

Roberto Luongo will see his numbers slightly decline this season, along with his minutes. Although he's a shoe-in as your top pick in net, he will get more rest for the playoff run with the addition of culpable backup Curtis Sanford.

**PREDICTED RANKINGS FOR WESTERN CONFERENCE GOALIES (BY WINS)**

1. Roberto Luongo (43)
2. Dominik Hasek (42)
3. Peter Budaj (40)
4. Miikka Kiprusoff (37)
5. Marty Turco (36)
6. Evgeni Nabokov (35)
7. Jean-Sebastian Giguere (34)
8. Niklas Backstrom (33)
9. Nikolai Khabibulin (30)
10. Chris Mason (28)
11. Manny Legace (26)
12. Jason LaBarbera (25)
13. Dwayne Roloson (24)

14. Frederik Norrena (22)
15. Pascal Leclaire (18)
16. Alex Auld (17)
17. David Aebischer (16)
18. Chris Osgood (15)
19. Pekka Rinne (14)
20. J.S. Aubin (13)