There's quite a thin line between heaven and hell for NHL players and teams right now. One day you're your sittin' pretty nestled in the playoffs and the next you're buried in the trenches digging for air. As a result, you can almost feel the level of intensity on your skin like a thick London fog. Instead of just casually looking to see where your favorite team is in the standings, you're actually taking the time to look at where they could sit at the end of the night.

This is the time of year when you're forced to battle internally on whether to root for your favorite team or betray yourself and go for the fantasy points. And don't deny it – you often fall victim to the merciless torture of being both the betrayer and the betrayed.

Nevertheless, it sure is fun. Not so much for three of the league's best goalies this year

however, as they have all but nosedived, crashed and burned in the last week. Yet sure enough, there's a steadfast set of goalies that have done just the opposite – raised their level of play and helped their team to catch fire. So here's my list of three goalies on the downfall and three that are skyrocketing.

DOWNFALLS:

1. Chris Osgood – It's not hard to put up pretty stats when you backstop the Detroit Red Wings, but somehow in the last week he's been pulled three times, has an inflated goals-against average that would disgust you and on top of it all, he's stuck right in the middle of the team's six-game losing streak. He didn't start against Dallas - a team he's completely dominated in his career - on Sunday (I dare you to find a goalie who is more successful than Osgood is against Dallas) so he's fully aware of the expectations to rebound against Colorado on Monday and showcase that so-called veteran leadership. If he doesn't, things could get ugly in Motown.

2. Ryan Miller – By far the hottest goalie in February with an 8-3-1 record in his last 12 games, Miller totally gave up the ghost over the weekend. He allowed four goals on just 11 shots against the Rangers on Saturday and followed it up by allowing two goals on two shots against the Penguins en route to a 4-1 loss. Although it's only a pair of weekend games, there's no room to duplicate that kind of output again, so Miller must bounce back quickly. It's going to be a tough task though, because he's struggling mentally more than anything else. He's totally over-committing on plays and he's getting caught out of position when forced to move side-to-side.

3. Martin Biron – It was smooth sailing for Biron all season long leading up to February. But since a 27-save shutout against the Anaheim Ducks on the 2nd, Biron has lost four straight games and allowed 15 goals against in that span. The Flyers are in a free-all and it continued to spiral out of control with a set of crucial losses to the Montreal Canadiens on Saturday and Sunday. Biron watched from the bench as Carey Price notched his first-career shutout and Antero Niittymaki start both back-to-back games. Although he's developed a great reputation so far as a solid starting goaltender, that could all change if he isn't more consistent during crunch time.

UPSWINGS:

1. Olaf Kolzig – The monster in Washington has bided his time for years and years and this time it looks like his best chance to make some noise in the playoffs. He's 3-0-1 in his last four games including an amazing display of leadership and poise in a 39-save performance against the Tampa Bay Lightning on Saturday. For a goalie who is known for wearing down physically as the season progresses, his recent surge has coupled with Alex Ovechkin's offensive power to give the Caps a fighting chance to win their division and have a sweet spot in the playoffs.

2. Manny Legace – Although he's played great all season long, Legace has obviously turned it up a notch since the All-Star break and he's continuing to crank it up and play tremendous

stalwart hockey for the Blues. It has been an up and down month for his team, but he's 3-0-2 in his last four games and was named a star of the game in OT losses to Minnesota and Nashville. He also kept his stellar numbers against the Avs in check by bouncing back from a 4-6 loss on Feb. 2 by making 40 saves on 41 shots in a huge 4-1 victory in Colorado.

3. Patrick Lalime – Whether you consider him an awesome backup or a mediocre revived starter, either way you look at it Lalime is 6-2-0 in his last eight games and will continue to see all of the playing time between the pipes so long as the Blackhawks are without Nikolai Khabibulin due to an injury. Sure, he's had some great goal support in the final two games of their seven game road trip with 6-1 and 7-2 wins, but he was a huge factor in the 2-1 win over the Avalanche on Sunday. He only has 10 wins on the season but he could easily double that by the end of March if Chicago continues to gain momentum thanks to Jonathan Toews' return and Martin Havlat's health.

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