The fearless goalie voyager sets sail across the seven seas in search of more playing time. Sacrificing time and companions, he fights for nothing but his own beliefs and well-being. This mysterious man will fight through malicious maelstroms and deep, rigid mountain passes in search of a better land. Yes, the voyagers are always on the move, always ready to find a new team that will offer plenty of wealth and opportunity.

The Voyagers often break free from short leashes and move through the league with ease.

Some are banished after one gigantic failure in one gigantic game, while others are released after a few displays of inadequacy or insubordination. Those moments turn up in scouting reports for years, acting as stigmas that unfairly judge them on a few select moments in time. Coincidentally, their fantasy value is often analyzed unfairly as well.

This becomes quite frustrating for all of us here at Dobber Nation. And I'll be the first to say, when it comes to gauging the long-term value of voyagers and prospects, I'm in the exact same boat. Why is it so hard to gauge a less-talented goalie's future? Why are there so many unknowns?

The answer really depends on who the goalie is and what type of character they have. It's an amorphic, personal answer that can only be deciphered by looking at the history and adventures of others. Like an almanac and a compass, the paths traveled by one voyager can in turn provide incredible insight into the path of another.

So let's look at four goalies that traveled to new lands last week and see what the stars have mapped out for their future. These guys are well-traveled and have seen their patience wear thin over the last few seasons, but never once wavered in their search for more playing time. Don't underestimate their fantasy value – their time could come at any moment in, in a number of different ways.

**TY CONKLIN** – *From Edmonton to Buffalo to Columbus to Pittsburgh to Detroit to St. Louis*
Conklin is remembered more for his blunder in the final minute of Game 1 of the 2006 Stanley Cup Finals than anything else. It was his big chance to snag a bigger role in the NHL, but it was Jussi Markkanen that played the rest of the way. That was the first of a few turning points in his career, but if the Alaska native can continue to play strong when called upon, he'll get that chance sooner rather than later.

He's had a few runs worth noting in his career, but none was more important than when Marc-Andre Fleury went down with an injury and he was called up (Dec. 7, 2007) on an emergency basis. On December 11, Dany Sabourin was pulled in an 8-2 loss to the Flyers. In the next game, Conklin launched the best streak of his life.

He would win his first nine starts in a Penguins uniform and start every game in January except for one. He play the rest of the season collected a number of compliments from his teammates as being one of the most influential players in their season. As such, he was rightfully nominated as the team's Masterton Trophy candidate.

Yes, Conklin has posted great stats over the last few years and has legitimate value behind

Chris Mason. But realize that he has been nothing more than a gap-stop since leaving Edmonton and is treated as such. He's only started more than five games in a row a few times, so it remains to be seen how he would thrive in a full-fledged starting role.

**JASON LABARBERA** – *From New York to Los Angeles to Vancouver to Phoenix*
I'm not a big fan of LaBarbera's style or situational awareness around the net, but that doesn't mean he's not worth drafting. He was one of the first "bigger" goalies coming into the league when the Rangers drafted him in 1998 (#66 overall), so his stay in Phoenix could be the point where he really starts rounding into form.

His tenure with the Kings was his best opportunity to take control of a starting job, but after playing 45 games in the '07-08 season, he struggled mightily. He had a weak start to last season and was traded after starting 16 games. In Vancouver, he was brought in to give Luongo a rare break and posted better stats in nine games. Now in Phoenix, the opportunity to play will increase, but not necessarily the quality starts.

LaBarbera is labeled as a quality backup with "experience" so it's not surprised to see him sign in Phoenix for a few years. This is a good opportunity for him to push Ilya Bryzgalov from time to time, but I don't see him doing great things on a young team like Phoenix. **Click here** to learn more about the LaBarbera signing.

**SCOTT CLEMMENSEN** – *From New Jersey to Toronto back to New Jersey to Florida*
All you need to know about Clemmensen is found **right here** . He's a voyager with an opportunity and he's poised to take advantage of it sooner rather than later. Tomas Vokoun is notorious for starting the season slowly, so there's no reason to believe Clemmensen can't have another strong streak like he did in New Jersey last year.

**Click here** to read more about his upcoming season in Florida.

**MATHIEU GARON** – *From Montreal to Los Angeles to Edmonton to Pittsburgh to Columbus*
How big of an impact did his play in the Stanley Cup Finals have on his value? Quantify it however you'd like, it was obviously a big boost. I know now, more than ever before, that Mathieu Garon's time as a true starter will come. He was wrongfully exiled in Edmonton last year after a slow start, as he never played more than three games in a row. He was much better than his stats show in L.A. and actually played a vital silent role behind Marc-Andre Fleury.

It's not a matter of if he's good enough to handle the starting role - it's a matter of when he's good enough to show an organization he deserves the chance. The timing of the whole thing is the biggest hitch in Garon's career right now, so I like the choice to sign with Columbus, a solid team that is coming off the best year in history.

**Click here** to read more about why I feel he's extremely underrated.

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This week's lesson wouldn't be complete without mentioning Tim Thomas, who I consider to be

the epitome of the voyager. Wherever he played, he brought the same attitude, work ethic and passion along with him. He never once wavered in his determination to find a niche in the league. And even though it took many years until he finally stuck with the Bruins, now he has a chance to write a new chapter by leading Team USA in the 2010 Olympics.

The same could be said for so many others as well. Sometimes it's not about talent, but about sheer will. Would you rather sign a goalie that was 80% will and 20% skill or a goalie that was 75% skill and 25% will? For many teams in both the NHL and for the Olympics, that is a legitimate question to ask.

Patience for goaltenders, especially prospects (see Ondrej Pavelec) is a headstrong virtue in every sense of the word. Character and a good attitude play an important role in the ups and downs of a prosperous career. For the goalies willing to travel the distance, work the hardest and wait the longest, the path will ultimately end in some kind of success. And for those that fail along the way, well, they probably just weren't good enough when it mattered most.

*"To be blessed by an ocean takes its pains and sacrifice. To reach where I am destined takes an old man's life. With blood I soak my idols, with pride I set my sails. I scan the furthest horizon for the shores I am aimed to find."* -Thyrfing