The playoff race is heating up and the trade deadline is just two weeks away. For us fantasy freaks, it's an exciting time where every morning is like your birthday. But for goaltenders, it's a much more ominous feeling, as the intensity level of games starts to rise and there's no longer any room for error. There's no time for mental mistakes. Every play is that much more important and it's all put on the line for a mere two points in the standings. On top of it all, many are constantly a part of trade rumors.

So which ten goalies are facing the most pressure as March approaches? Which goalies are the most important to their team's success? You can make a case for all 30 starting goalies, as every team has a legitimate chance to make it to the playoffs.

That makes compiling this list extremely easy. Ranking them, however, was nearly impossible for me. But here's a stab at trying to quantify pressure and a goalie's emotions. Go ahead and use this same list, rank these goalies in order of how much pressure they face and post them in my message board forum!

10. Chris Mason – There are many in Nashville that know he's capable of putting a huge streak together at the right time, which is why the organization let Tomas Vokoun go in the first place. But Dan Ellis has seen increasing time between the pipes and they continue to cling onto to a playoff spot, so there's plenty of pressure for Mason to perform at a much higher level.

9. Ray Emery - The man most likely to lose his job next is walking the tightrope with the Ottawa

front office. Antics and obnoxious behavior has no place in an organization that would sell their soul to claim that Stanley Cup. Whether or not Emery can play at the same level as last year will either perpetuate the rising controversy already surrounding him or help calm the storms…at least a little bit.

8. Miikka Kiprusoff – Coming off a huge contract extension earlier in the season, Miikka must perform at a higher level. Mike Keenan has his forwards playing more consistently, so if the Flames can't make the post-season fingers will start pointing towards the Finnish goaltender. They're only 5-5 in their last 10 games but will have to play much better than .500 to clinch a playoff spot.

7. Martin Biron – Philly is certainly poised to make the playoffs, so the expectations are more focused on Biron's play than any other player. He doesn't have playoff experience yet he's having a tremendous season, which only magnifies the pressure he's facing. He's doing exceptionally well as a full-time starter overall, but the last thing he wants is to become known as another Marty Turco.

6. Cam Ward – It has been an upsetting season of .500 hockey for Ward, struggling more and more as time goes on. He's letting in a ton of soft goals at inopportune times, turning the Hurricanes into a team that has to open the game up and score a bunch of goals. Ward is only 5-8-0 since his second shutout of the season in early-January and only has one win in four games in February.

5. Tomas Vokoun – The All-Star started off the season terribly but has since battled hard to actually give the Panthers a fighting chance. He's gone on a huge hot streak and struggled mightily at times as well, so whether he can obtain a level of consistency that has eluded him lately will be the main key in Florida's quest for the playoffs. There's no time for another cold streak in the Southeast, so the pressure is on.

4. Manny Legace – He's the silent leader of a team that has been completely rejuvenated and poised to make a run at the playoffs. Despite all of the troubles with the knee and how it has somewhat hindered him at times, Legace must prove to the Blues ownership that he is worthy of not only carrying the load of playing 65 or 70 games, but can actually drive the bus, not just ride it as he did in Detroit.

3. Pascal Leclaire – The Blue Jackets have never been so close to the playoffs, so the next two months are the biggest story in franchise history. Leclaire's tremendous season coupled with Ken Hitchcock's great coaching has set the bar pretty high, so the pressure is on for the entire organization, making Leclaire's job even more stressful. He's expected to do whatever it takes to stay consistent and steal a few points in the standings.

2. Marty Turco – Considering he's still yet to win a playoff series, what happens as the season comes to a close will certainly be in the spotlight. Turco is on a post All-Star break tear, but is he peaking at the right time and will he have enough in the gas tank to prepare for another grueling six or seven-game series?

1. Roberto Luongo – He's only 2-2-2 in his last six games and is coming off the heels of being pulled after two periods in a meltdown against the Colorado Avalanche. Only one road win since Dec. 12 proves the behemoth goaltender is struggling. Considering his size and talent, the expectations are much higher for Luongo than any other NHL goalie and anything less than perfection is almost considered a failure.