



THE GOALIE GUILD

BY INDEPENDENT GOALIE SCOUT JUSTIN GOLDMAN



UPDATED: FEBRUARY 1, 2012

I'm proud to publish the fifth release of *The Graduates*, a special monthly ranking that only includes those goalies that have graduated from my original *Top-150 Prospects Rankings*. In this release, there are no new additions, but I have added the same Alteration Marks that you find in my NHL Depth Charts release.

This release includes some substantial movement, as I feel like Devan Dubnyk, Sergei Bobrovsky, and Jonas Gustavsson continue to progress and trend up. On

the other end, a lack of playing time in January did some damage to James Reimer and Jonathan Bernier's current value. The same could be said for Al Montoya, but he was suffering from a concussion for most of the month.

The Top-5 graduates stand pat, but now we get a better idea of their progression with the Alteration Marks. Semyon Varlamov continues to struggle here in Denver, while Dubnyk gained a lot of momentum in late-January. ~ Justin Goldman

RK GOALIE TEAM GRADUATE +/- ALT

1 SCHNEIDER VAN APR. 2012 (1st) 0 ↗

Although he only played in three games in January, it was a huge win in Boston on 1/7 and at home against Chicago on 1/31 that epitomized his elite long-term value. He stopped 36 of 39 shots in Boston and 37 of 39 against Chicago, showing tons of poise in playoff-type games. He not only makes saves when it really matters most, he makes them in a very efficient manner.

2 NIEMI SJS FEB. 2010 (15th) 0 ↗

January was another month that reminded me just how good and bad Niemi can be. He went 7-3-1 with three shutouts (two in a row) and a solid .930 SV%, but his losses were downright ugly, adding 17 total goals in those four games (0-3-1). Nevertheless, Niemi finished the month of January with 2 straight shutouts, so he's rounding into form very nicely heading into February.

3 RASK BOS JAN. 2010 (1st) 0 ↗

Rask entered the NHL All-Star break with more confidence than ever before after going 3-1-1 with a 2.33 GAA and .921 SV% in January. There's a lot of drama surrounding Tim Thomas right now due to his snub of the White House, so February could be another month where Rask sees more playing time and thrives due to his focus and lack of "attention" surrounding his game.

4 VARLAMOV COL MAR. 2010 (5th) 0 ↘

Varlamov had a disappointing month of January, going just 2-3-0 with a 2.77 GAA and .901 SV%. Although he did have a 27-save shutout in Chicago on 1/6, he quickly hit rock bottom by allowing 10 goals on just 59 shots in two losses on 1/10 and 1/16. After the 6-1 blowout loss to Phoenix, his frustration boiled over when he ignored a post-game interview from a local Denver reporter.

5 CRAWFORD CHI JAN. 2011 (10th) 0 ↘

Not unlike a wave, Crawford's season suffered another swell of the dreaded sophomore slump. Leaky goals, bad rebounds and insufficiency mired his play in January, as he went just 3-4-3 with a 3.08 GAA and .894 SV%. He pushed back thanks to a strong work ethic in December, so I'll be waiting to see if he used rest as a weapon during the All-Star break to fight back in February.

6 DUBNYK EDM JAN. 2011 (31st) 0 ↗

Due to Nikolai Khabibulin's dreary 0-5-1 run in January, windows of opportunity opened for Dubnyk. As a result, he generated some momentum and then put together his finest three games of the season on either side of the All-Star break. He stopped 44 of 45 shots in a 2-1 SO win over San Jose (1/23), then 24 hours later, he stopped 33 of 35 shots in a SO loss to Vancouver.

7 GUSTAVSSON TOR DEC. 2009 (5th) +1 ↗

By going 7-3-1 with a 2.08 GAA, a .926 SV% and three shutouts in January, Gustavsson finally proved to many of his pundits that he has what it takes to be a starter in the NHL. It is crucial to keep in mind that every goalie travels a different path through time, and some take longer to transition to the smaller ice and faster speed than others. But clearly, Jonas is now on the rise.

RK GOALIE TEAM GRADUATE +/- ALT

8 NEUVIRTH WSH NOV. 2011 (2nd) -1 →

The Great Deceiver only played in three games in January, and all three came on the road. His biggest accomplishment of the season has to be the 31-save shutout (3-0 win) he had in Montreal on 1/18, as it proved he could come off the bench and play a really focused game on the road. He finished the month 1-0-1 with 61 saves on 66 shots, good enough for a .924 SV%.

9 BOBROVSKY PHI JAN. 2011 (10th) +4 ↻

When I watched Bobrovsky very closely in two straight starts on 1/10 and 1/12, I came away with the opinion that those were his two best games in the NHL. He is easily one of the most improved goaltenders this season, and the only thing keeping him from breaking out is the fact that the Flyers have to get Ilya Bryzgalov going and legitimize the \$10 million he's making this season.

10 REIMER TOR APR. 2011 (9th) -2 ↘

Since it was the Gustavsson show in January for the Leafs, Reimer's only appearance last month was a 3-2 loss at home to the Senators. In that game, he only stopped 18 of 21 shots, and the game-winner was another goal that proved to me he still has a lot to learn about reading plays and challenging shooters. He did finally earn a start on 2/1, but his last win was back on 12/23.

11 BERNIER LAK APR. 2011 (2nd) 0 →

It's one thing if Jonathan Quick continues to shine and soak up all of the minutes for the Kings, but it's quite another when the #3 goalie, Jeff Zatkoff, continues to rise and gain interest as well. Yep, Bernier is feeling the squeeze, but give him credit for making the most of his limited opportunities. In his only game in January, he defeated the Capitals by stopping 20 of 22 shots.

12 MONTOYA NYI OCT. 2011 (9th) -2 ↘

Monty missed just over a month of action with a concerning concussion, and that really damaged his current value with the Islanders. That's because Evgeni Nabokov took off with the starting role, and doesn't appear to be giving it back anytime soon. Al did return to the lineup before the All-Star break, just in time to lose 4-3 in OT to Toronto on 1/24, stopping just 17 of 21 shots.

13 ENROTH BUF DEC. 2011 (6th) -1 ↘

January was another rough month for Enroth, as he only appeared in four games behind Miller and went 0-2-1 with a 3.06 GAA and .912 SV%. His last win came back on 11/26 against the Capitals, so he's over two months without earning two points for the Sabres. Nevertheless, his season as a whole is positive, as he holds an 8-9-3 record, a .919 SV% and a 2.59 GAA.

14 MCELHINNEY PHX DEC. 2010 (60th) 0 →

Going nowhere fast, McElhinney remains as "pretty decent" depth for the Coyotes. He went just 1-2-0 in January for the Portland Pirates, stopping only 81 of 91 shots, which was good enough for a .890 SV% and 3.73 GAA. To be honest though, considering he graduated 60th overall more than a year ago, he is playing up to expectations as his AHL journey continues into 2012.