All poolies are aware of the dreaded sophomore slump. Talented second year players for whatever reason cannot rekindle the magic of their rookie seasons. They struggle with consistency, and over the years have killed many fantasy teams. Many second year players are often overlooked because of this perceived slump, which may allow some talented youngsters to slip down the depth chart.

As I am sure you already guessed, the reason for writing this article is of course Paul Stastny. Most magazines predicted a similar season or a slight drop from the Colorado pivot, for no reason other then the dreaded slump. Stastny seemed to have reached his peak already, as his lack of flash hurt him in the eyes of many experts out there. In my own predictions, I pegged him at a modest 81 points, only a three-point increase from his stellar rookie campaign.

Stastny's hockey IQ is off the charts. He doesn't possess blazing speed or a lethal shot, but he makes the right play all the time. His lack of one distinctive trait is what enabled the Avalanche to scoop him up in the second round of the 2004 entry draft. Stastny's early success has many hockey fans changing their opinion of him. What is his upside? Is he for real?

Stastny is definitely for real, and he looks to be poised to approach 100 points – this season. While it is often stupid to jump the gun, once in a while a player comes along that blows away everyone's expectations. Number 26 in the Avalanche sweater is doing that now, and I do not see that changing any time soon...

The Vancouver/Calgary game on Saturday was the best game I have watched of the early season. Stellar goaltending at both ends complemented the physical and speedy affair between the Canucks and the Flames. Dion Phaneuf logged over 30 minutes and was the best player on the ice. Expect a huge season from him as it looks like Keenan is going to ride him hard. Daymond Langkow continues to prove why he is a legitimate number one center.

On the Vancouver side of things, the Sedins' look poised to take another step forward in their development. Henrik could have had three or four assists if the Canuck wingers finished his plays off. Ryan Shannon buried a gift from the Sedins, and as long as he can score more than he misses, he has a spot on the top powerplay unit. A sleeper to keep in mind is Lukas Krajicek, who has been arguably the best Canuck defenseman so far. His shot selection and confidence have skyrocketed from last season; so don't be surprised if he breaks 30 points.

Three to watch:

David Backes – St. Louis. Backes has been great so far for the Blues. He has been going to the net hard and if he gets the ice-time will score 20 this season. The skill level is also there – many remember him for his deft no-look pass to Keith Tkachuk last season.

Matt Niskanen – Dallas. The Stars top prospect has made a seamless transition to the NHL. His smarts with the puck will solidify him a spot in the line-up (and on one of the power play units to boot). Dallas is grooming him to replace Sergei Zubov, so if you need a keeper league defenseman he is a guy to watch.

Valtteri Filppula – Detroit. With Johan Franzen out for up to a month, Filppula moves back into a scoring role in Detroit. It also looks like Datsyuk and Zetterberg are back together, so he may find himself centering the second line. Time to show why he deserves to stay there.