Like the kickback on a gun, Charlie Coyle has gone and smacked the hockey world right in its face. Coyle didn't receive much hype leading up to last summer's draft coming out of the relatively unknown EJHL but he showed enough promise for the San Jose Sharks to pick him up in the first round (28th overall).

The Sharks prospect pool has grown shallow over the years as they have traded away quite a few high picks. We all know Sharks don't thrive in shallow water so they needed Coyle to be a good one. Coyle became the Sharks top prospect right after he was drafted, and his play to date has more than maintained that top spot.

Coyle, who just turned 19, has spent the year turning heads as a freshman playing for Boston University where his cousin, former NHL star Tony Amonte, once played. It's no surprise that Coyle is developing into a tremendous prospect. Several BU alumni, including Chris Drury, Scott Young and Keith Tkachuk, and more recently Matt Gilroy and Kevin Shattenkirk, have gone on to experience NHL success. The Terriers have a tremendous program under the leadership of legendary head coach Jack Parker who's been with the team since 1973. At BU, they know how to develop power forwards and NHL talent.

Coyle centers the top line for the Terriers where he is tied for third in scoring as well as first in freshman scoring. As impressive his play at BU has been it was his play for the US at the World Junior Hockey Championships that really stood out. Coyle was easily the Americans best forward and led the team in scoring with six points in six games. Beyond the production, Coyle impressed by making himself noticeable every shift wreaking havoc with his tremendous speed and power game.

At 6'2" and 205 lbs, Coyle is a physical specimen. He's not a big hitter but he knows how to use his size and strength in the tough areas along the boards and in front of the net. He also uses his frame to shield the puck very well. Coyle is an adept playmaker, with excellent vision. This has allowed him to play the point on the powerplay at times. Scouts and coaches alike would like to see him shoot the puck more but that's the only hole in his game as he's a very smart two-way player.

His defensive play led many to project him as a third liner during his draft year but he was also projected as something of a project pick. His speedy development and offensive production this season have blown away the projections. He definitely looks like he could be a top six forward and that's what Sharks brass had in mind when they drafted him.

Coyle's two-way game is his meal ticket to the NHL. With his size and defensive acumen Coyle could probably step into an NHL lineup right away. And considering the Sharks cap situation don't be surprised if they push for Coyle to leave school this summer and sign a pro contract,

and there were rumblings of this around the time of World Juniors. If he does sign we could see him in the league as soon as next year. The progression to fantasy relevance will be slow and he'll probably start out in the bottom six (much like Logan Couture).

His point upside isn't huge but he's a multi-category monster in the making. If you're looking for a sure thing Coyle is as foolproof as they come. There is almost no way he doesn't play in the NHL. Grab hold of him now and hold on tight before the kickback smacks you again.