Camps open up in 11 days and hockey poolies are very interested in the kids that will be in camp with a legitimate shot at a roster spot. This week and next, we'll analyze the odds of a rookie cracking the lineup and what kind of impact we can expect to see in the campaign ahead.

Atlanta Thrashers

There is a spot open up front, perhaps two, but it will be up to Brett Sterling and Bryan Little to seize them. If either of them stumbles in camp, you will see a tough guy (Eric Boulton) or a journeyman (Jesse Schultz, Chris Thorburn) step in. Sterling was an elite scorer in college and continued his ways in the AHL, notching 55 goals as a rookie (he was rookie of the year). At 5-7, he's a small winger, but the organization is high on him. That being said, try and name one small player who flourished under Bob Hartley (think of who coached Paul Kariya during his worst season, or the minimal minutes Darren Haydar received during cups of coffee last year).

Little is arguably the best prospect in the system. He owns top playmaking skills and could potentially post a pile of points if he lines up with a sniper. Hey – doesn't Ilya Kovalchuk need someone like that? If Little sticks, he will be one of the top rookie scorers in the league.

On the blue line, there are two roster spots open. It says here that Karel Pilar will take one of them, however he has had his share of injuries so even being the first rearguard called up from the minors will still mean lots of game action in the NHL. Tobias Enstrom will likely take the other spot, although Marc Popovic and Nathan Oystrick will have something to say about that. All three have the ability to post 45 or 50 points in the NHL in seven or eight years, but Enstrom is the only one that could even take a run at 60. This season, however, do not expect anything spectacular from any of them.

Boston Bruins

The B's have four forward lines that look to be set for training camp, although an injury would open up a spot for Martins Karsums or Ben Walter. Karsums has second-line sniper potential, but Walter will likely never be a fantasy factor.

On the point, Matt Lashoff should make the club full time and he'll even see some time on the second power-play unit. A 25-point rookie season is a fair estimate.

Buffalo Sabres

With Drew Stafford, Nathan Paetsch and Dan Paille all playing too many games last season to give them 'rookie' status this time around, the Sabres will likely not have a rookie in the lineup on opening night. However, Clarke MacArthur will be the first player called up. With Tim Connolly's concussion history, MacArthur could play 80 games – who knows? He was over a point-per-game in the AHL last season and he tallied seven points in 19 games in the NHL. He's

ready, he just needs the opportunity.

Carolina Hurricanes
Barring a whole slew of injuries, the ‘Canes will not have a rookie in their lineup to start the season up front. The recent surgery of Frantisek Kaberle and the questionable status of Brett Hedican may see Casey Borer crack the lineup as a depth defenseman, but he would be better served in the minors and the team would prefer to solve the problem via free agency or trade.

Florida Panthers
Winger Anthony Stewart (too many games in two preceding seasons – 10 and 10) and Cory Murphy (too old – 29) are ineligible for rookie status, so Drew Larman and Noah Welch are the only rookies who could possibly crack the lineup. Welch barely squeaks into eligibility under both criteria – a player can’t have played more than 25 games in a season (he played 24 last year) and a player cannot have played more than six games in any two seasons (he played five the year before last).

Welch will make the team as a No. 4 or No. 5 defenseman and will see some power-play time on the second unit, but it is looking more and more like he will grow into a steady 30-point player, which is a little lower than he was projected a year ago. Larman is a third or fourth-line pivot who does not stand out in any statistical category to warrant fantasy consideration.

Montreal Canadiens
The Habs have a few interesting ones, but let’s start in goal. Jaroslav Halak not only led the AHL in goals against last season, but he was more than impressive in most of his starts for Montreal. Sure, he could lose the job in camp, but I think you can expect him to win the backup role. The rookie that could take it away from him is Carey Price. Arguably the best goaltender prospect in the world, Price will be looking to become an NHL regular at the age of 20. He would be best served if he played one more year in the AHL and the Habs will be okay without

him, but standing on his head in camp would quickly change all of that.

Up front, it would seem that Finnish sniper Janne Lahti has a spot waiting for him as a third-line winger. He will also be a member of the second power-play unit and certainly has the ability to debut with 40 points in the NHL. Kyle Chipchura, a potential captain of the team, also has a shot to crack roster on the fourth line, but will not be fantasy factor.

New Jersey Devils
Jari Viuhkola, one of the better setup men in Finland last year, is too old for rookie status (27), but he should land on the team as a third liner. The recent signing of Arron Asham pretty much eliminates the hopes of agitator David Clarkson for making the squad this year – but he's not far off.

On the blue line, Andy Greene will have plenty of opportunity to make an impact. The Devils lost Brian Rafalski and replaced him with Karel Rachunek – that's quite the downgrade. Greene will log lots of time on the top power-play unit and you could see as much as 35 points out of him this year. He is one to watch.

New York Islanders
Defensive pivot Petteri Nokelainen is coming off a fairly weak AHL season, but there will be a spot for him with the big club if Shawn Bates gets hurt – which happens quite a bit. Top prospect Kyle Okposo will be back in college for one more year before he joins the club in 2008-09.

New York Rangers
Ryan Callahan, a hard-working winger with a decent scoring touch, is improving with every game that he plays and he already has a spot sewn up on the third line. Expect 30 points, but with dark horse capability that could see as many as 55.

Defenseman Marc Staal is all but assured a spot. He is a defensive rearguard who will never be a big point producer, but brings so many other things to the team.

There is a spot open at center on the third line and Brandon Dubinsky and Artem Anisimov (who you can see playing right now in the Super Series) will do battle for it. If Dubinsky wins, expect 25 points and a lot of penalty minutes. If Anisimov wins, expect 30 or 35 points.

Ottawa Senators
Defenseman Brian Lee will do battle with veteran Luke Richardson and journeyman Lawrence Nycholat for the No.6 spot. Nycholat is more of a depth guy, while Richardson will be a part time player, so the odds look pretty good for Lee.

Up front, Nick Foligno is eyeing a spot as a third-line winger. The hardworking energy player will be a 50-point player one day, perhaps sooner than you would think. The team could also use a third-line center, which is where Josh Hennessey, Alexander Nikulin and Ilya Zubov come in. Since the Russians have been short on patience with the NHL lately, look for Hennessey to be the odd man out even though he may be the most qualified. Zubov brings all offense to the table, while Nikulin brings a two-way game. It is possible that both could make the team, but Zubov could really use one year in the AHL at the very least. Both Russians have signed with the team (but again – that seems to mean little when there is no NHL-Russia transfer agreement).

Philadelphia Flyers
Last year the Flyers were going through rookies like they were candy. This time around, however, there is only one who will see NHL action this year: Steve Downie. He may not make the team out of training camp, but he will most assuredly receive a call up at some point. A skilled, agitating, hard-hitting winger with energy, Downie could one day post 65 or even 75 points. He'll be a few years seeing numbers like that, so for now expect a point for every four games that he plays. His penalty minutes, however, will be through the roof.

Pittsburgh Penguins
Kris Letang is pretty much a lock for a spot on the blue line and he will be a fixture on the second power-play unit. He should debut in the 30-point range, with much more to come in the future. Alex Goligoski is another talented power-play quarterback who will get a long look, but the numbers game will assure that he will spend a year in the AHL. His presence will keep Letang on his toes though.

Up front is of more interest though, for anyone who makes the team on the wing will immediately be dropped into the lottery box for the nightly draw over who gets to play with either Sidney Crosby or Evgeni Malkin. Jonathan Filewich has the inside track on a spot, but don't count out Ryan Stone. Whichever of the wingers make the team; they immediately become dark horses with a 20-point downside and a 60-point (or more) upside. Pay attention to that battle!

Angelo Esposito is almost certainly heading back to junior for one more year.

Tampa Bay Lightning
The only rookie of interest this year is Kari Ramo. The 21-year-old netminder will actually have a shot at the No.1 job, given the inconsistencies of Marc Denis and Johan Holmqvist last season. Ramo will be a wildcard in fantasy hockey in that he could play as many as 60 games this year…or as few as zero. You should have a pretty good idea of what he'll do by the end of this month.

Toronto Maple Leafs
The Leafs are pretty set up front, although Jeremy Williams has an outside shot at a job. If he makes it, the somewhat injury-prone winger will contribute occasional points on the third line and see some time on the power play.

On the blue line, Anton Stralman, who was brought over from Sweden this summer, will get a long look in camp. There is a logjam in that position, but Toronto could make a trade to free up some space if they feel that Stralman deserves it.

Washington Capitals
The Caps boast one of the best rookies out there in Nicklas Backstrom. Not only is the highly intelligent, smooth-skating pivot a talent on his own, but the tantalizing chance that he will line up with Alexander Ovechkin has poolies drooling. Expect a third-line role to start, but a quick ascension to the top line by midseason could be in the cards. Put him down for 60 points this year with plenty of upside.

Right wing Francois Bouchard, brother of Minnesota's Pierre-Marc, was dynamite in rookie camp. Absolutely dynamite. He wasn't expected to make the team for several years, but between that kind of camp – plus the fact that the team is in need of skilled wingers on the right side – and Bouchard could force things. Watch him, because if he makes the team it most assuredly will not be to shore up their penalty killing and checking units.