Following Angus' lead, this week I'll offer eight players from the East that bear watching this season. The differences of opinion on how many points these players will produce are many. Here are eight nuggets for you to sift through (in order, lightest to heaviest), you decide whether or not they'll be fantasy gold or fools gold:

Nicklas Backstrom

Weighing in at a svelte 183 pounds is the favourite to win this year's Calder trophy as the NHL's top rookie. After recording 40 points in 45 Swedish Elite League games, Backstrom will be under pressure to perform in his first NHL season. The Caps have brought in a number one centre and fellow Swede in Nylander to help lessen the pressure on the young pivot. No question, the talent is there, but predictions of 55 to 75 points have been made for this season. He'll likely be closer to 55 than 75 this season, but will be golden for keeper league owners in the very near future.

Cory Murphy
Murphy has been drawing comparisons to Brian Rafalski. Both are undersized defencemen who played college hockey, followed by several years in Europe. In his final year in Finland, Rafalski scored 53 points in 53 games. Murphy's last year in Finland, 50 points in 45 games. Murphy played well on the Canadian World Championship team scoring seven points in nine games on a team loaded with NHL players. One thing to consider, in Rafalski's first NHL season, he had 32 points in 75 games. Don't expect more than 35 points from Murphy this season.

Sean Avery
And in this corner, weighing 185 pounds, the NHL's most despised hockey player and detriment to his team… That was basically what the Rangers said about Avery at his arbitration hearing this summer. Avery shouldn't have been too shocked, his comments prior to the playoff series against Buffalo may have actually motivated the Sabres. Avery gets under the skin of everyone, including his own team mates. The question is, can he improve upon seasons of 28, 39 and 48 points? He went 29-8-12-20 after the trade to the Rangers, good for 56 points over a full season. Will his attitude be a distraction? It should be fun watching this soap opera unfold.

Derek Roy
Uh Derek, no pressure but we decided to let our top two centres go and oh, here's a juicy six year contract, but like I said no pressure? Roy gets a shot at replacing another little big man in Briere. As long as he doesn't try and do it all himself, Roy should improve upon last year's 63 point season. The Sabres have plenty of depth up front and shouldn't drop too far offensively.

Petr Sykora
One can only imagine Sykora negotiating his contract with the Pens. “So, let me get this straight, I get to play with either Crosby or Malkin AND you’re going to pay me $2.5 million? Where do I sign?” Interesting fact, during the 2004-05 lockout, Sykora played on the same Russian team as Malkin and Gonchar. Pittsburgh will be Sykora’s fourth NHL city in five seasons, but chances are good that he’ll enjoy life in the Pitt.

Phil Kessel
Phil the Thrill couldn’t have been too thrilled with how last year unfolded. It was a trying season for the 19 year old rookie. He not only struggled to consistently put up points, but had to deal with a cancer scare. In his last 29 games, Kessel scored 17 points, a 48 point pace over a full season. He gained confidence at the World Championships where he was third in scoring on Team USA with seven points in seven games and led the team in shots. Kessel has reportedly put on a little muscle over the summer. A 45-50 point season is a distinct possibility this year.

Andy Greene
Last season, Greene showed flashes of being an effective offensive defenceman. He had six points in 23 games, good for only 21 points over a full season. His numbers in the AHL weren’t much better, scoring at a 33 point pace. Paul Martin and Karel Rachunek are likely to get first crack at manning the power play. If Greene does take advantage of his opportunities, he would be a dark horse pick if you’re looking for a defenceman late in a deep draft.

Marc-Andre Bergeron
Last season Bergeron scored 46 points. Not too bad, but in his 23 games with the Isles, he scored at an incredible 75 point pace. There’s no way he can do that over a full season, but he could get 55-60 points. How is that possible when the Isles lost two of their top offensive guys in Yashin and Jason Blake? Comrie will effectively replace Yashin’s 50 points. Bill Guerin will be responsible for replacing at least 30 of Blake’s 40 goals. I also have faith that the wily coach will

coax a few players to new heights this season.