A change of scenery can often be the catalyst for improved production among NHL players. There were several young forwards that changed addresses at the deadline this season, and a few of them in particular stand to benefit. Players coming up through the ranks with certain teams often get caught up in a numbers game, and can find it difficult, if not impossible, to break through to the NHL. As well, young forwards are often put into defensive, checking roles without ever being given the opportunity to play consistent minutes on a scoring line. It is tough to show what you can do with less than 10 minutes of ice time per night, and the following players can probably attest to that.

Luca Caputi

Luca Caputi has been something of an enigma in fantasy hockey circles for the past few seasons. He first started to gain serious attention after posting 111 points in 66 games with the

Niagara Ice Dogs of the OHL a few years ago. His rise with Niagara was quite remarkable, as his two previous seasons saw him record 66 points and three points, respectively. Hockey fans were salivating at the idea that the lanky Caputi would likely end up flanking the likes of Sidney Crosby and Evgeni Malkin very soon.

He joined the Wilkes-Barrie Scranton Penguins last year, and finished his first professional season with 18 goals in 66 games. He earned a brief call-up to the Penguins, and even scored his first NHL goal. He ended up playing five games with the big club in 2008-09. Although his AHL production was unspectacular, Caputi continued to receive heavy attention from the fantasy hockey world. Watching him play, it was obvious to see he was still a very raw player though. Because of his 6'3" frame, people assumed or expected him to develop into a power forward. However, physicality is not and has never been a part of Caputi's game. Think Eric Daze instead of Keith Tkachuk. He uses his size well to win puck battles, but he is not one to initiate contact. Additionally, he was having issues handling the strength of professional defensemen, and his skating was going to have to improve in a big way in order for him to make the Penguins as a top six winger.

Caputi improved off of his 2008-09 numbers this season, scoring more goals (23) in fewer games (54). He also improved on his play away from the puck, and his skating has gotten better as well. He plays a very safe two-way game, and likes to cycle the puck and play below and around the net. The move to Toronto may have Caputi owners everywhere running for the hills, but it could end up being a positive step in Caputi's career. Pittsburgh obviously did not view him as a viable long term answer to their constant winger dilemma, but the Crosby/Malkin factor continued to be so intriguing for Caputi owners that this obvious sign was largely ignored.

Caputi's short term value with the Leafs is entirely dependent on how they view him. He could be placed on the second line as a complementary winger, or in more of a depth role with the team. He will never be a big time point producer, and this would have been the case even if he

remained a Penguin. However, Caputi could become a solid 20-25 goal, 50-60 point second line winger.

The fact that Ray Shero was willing to trade Caputi, who is one of only a few wing prospects in the organization, says all you need to know about how they valued him. Conversely, the deal speaks to how the Leafs value him as well. They could have received a second round pick and a prospect for Ponikarovsky, but chose Caputi instead.

Dustin Boyd

Few understood what Darryl Sutter was thinking when he dealt Boyd to Nashville at the trade deadline. Why give up so early on a promising young forward? Calgary obviously viewed Boyd as a spare part, to the disagreement of many. He was a big time goal scorer in both junior and the AHL, with 48 goals in his final season with Moose Jaw, and 27 goals the next year in his first season of professional hockey. Instead of letting him develop as a scoring line forward, the Flames kept Boyd with the big club and played him on one of the bottom two lines with minimal power play time. He quickly earned himself a regular shift on the penalty kill, as he has great speed and is a very smart player in the defensive zone. After his professional debut back in 2006-07, he has floundered with the Flames for the past three seasons, scoring only 26 goals in 179 games.

Save for a few brief stints, Boyd has never seen top six minutes with the Flames. This season, he averaged 12 minute of ice time per game, with 1:30 on the penalty kill and under 30 seconds per game with the man advantage. Last season wasn't much better, as Boyd played just over 13 minutes per game. He did see closer to a minute of power play time per game, and played over two minutes per game shorthanded. Boyd has excelled on the penalty kill, but the same attributes that make him so effective there (speed, tenacity, hockey awareness) have not been given an opportunity to flourish at the other end of the ice. Darryl Sutter had this to say after moving Boyd, "We're not breaking up a dynasty here... we wanted to give [the] kids an opportunity to show that they could help us win, [and] consistently, [they] didn't do that." It is tough to play a big role in winning with 12 minutes of ice time per night.

Now with his new team, Boyd will get more offensive minutes. In the short term, the Predators have a glaring need at center behind Jason Arnott, who at 35 is no spring chicken. Colin Wilson is the center of the future for Nashville, but beyond him there isn't a whole lot. David Legwand is more suited for a checking role, even though his contract may say otherwise. Cal O'Reilly has put up big numbers in the AHL, but has yet to translate his playmaking wizardry to the NHL. Look for Boyd to see 15-16 minutes of ice time per night down the stretch, and bounce back and forth between the second and third lines. The big thing to watch for with him will be power play ice time.

Ted Purcell

Often times the best way to evaluate a trade is to see how the fans of each team react. When Los Angeles dealt Teddy Purcell and a third round pick to Tampa Bay for Jeff Halpern at the deadline, most fans of the Kings were more upset with losing the pick compared to losing Purcell. Once thought of as a lock to be a top six NHL forward, Purcell has taken a few giant steps back over the past two seasons. He fell out of favour with Los Angeles head coach Terry

Murray because of his lack of intensity and an unwillingness to get his nose dirty. He has a big frame, but plays a very soft, perimeter game, and unless that changes, he won't stick with the Lightning for long either. Purcell is the type of player that will either make it as a scoring line forward or head off to Europe or back to the AHL to continue his career. His game lacks the jam needed to play on a checking line.

Much like Caputi, Purcell first started to gain notoriety after a big offensive season at a lower level. After being signed as a college free agent by the Kings after the 2007 season, Purcell reported to Manchester of the AHL, where he scored 25 goals and added 58 assists in only 67 games. Last year, he had 38 points in 38 AHL games before being recalled by the Kings. He showed some flashes of his offensive talent down the stretch, recording 16 points in 40 games with Los Angeles in 2008-09. He was playing over 13 minutes per game, and seeing just less than three minutes per game on the power play. However, the Kings added offensive depth this summer, and Purcell was quickly pushed down the depth chart. He didn't put up much of a fight either, and only registered six points in 41 contests before being traded to Tampa Bay. His ice time dropped nearly two minutes per game, and he was seeing considerably less time with the man advantage as well.

Going from a contending team knee-deep in offensive talent to a non playoff team looking for some will help Purcell's short term value tremendously. The Lightning will want to see if they have something in Purcell, so expect him to be handed offensive minutes that he simply wasn't going to get with the Kings.