The passion for the game of hockey is passed down through some generations of families. We've seen success from the Howe, Dineen, Hextall, Sutter, and of course the Geoffrion lineages. The Geoffrion family is certainly one of the most successful families to play in the NHL, from Howie Morenz to Bernie "Boom Boom" Geoffrion to Dan Geoffrion. Both Howie (7) and Boom Boom (5) have their numbers retired side-by-side in Montreal, and the two Hall of Famers share nine Stanley Cups. While Dan's career was short-lived, he was still a heck of a hockey player and after his retirement, he moved to Nashville and raised four boys, one of which is Blake Geoffrion.

Growing up in Nashville was a bit of a challenge for an emerging hockey player, and Dan even admits now of trying to discourage the young boys from playing hockey by dressing them with extra equipment and large skates. It didn't work. As Blake grew, he became a stronger and more talented hockey player, all the while closely following his home town Nashville Predators. Through the game of hockey, Blake maintained an unbreakable bond with his grandfather, Boom Boom, a nickname which was given to him for his thunderous slap shot. Bernie also claims to have invented the slapper, but that's a story for another day. When Boom Boom died in 2006, his faint last words were "It's about time," spoken to Blake after he had called to tell of a

two-goal game, breaking a long goal drought. Blake still wears number five to honor his grandfather.

At age 16, Blake left the music city and began skating with the US National Development program, where he would play for two years. In the following summer, Nashville would draft Blake 56th overall, making Blake the first Nashville developed hockey player to be selected by the Predators. With many colleges offering scholarships, Blake eventually chose Wisconsin. In his senior year, Blake, now captain, led the team in style. While Geoffrion's 50 points in 40 games was an impressive career high, he also led the team to the NCAA Championship game in a losing effort to Boston College. Despite falling one win short of his goal, Geoffrion would capture the Hobey Baker Award, a first for any Wisconsin Badger.

After four years with the Badger program, Blake left the Wisconsin campus and joined the Milwaukee Admirals, just in time for three playoff games. Not missing a beat, Blake scored two goals in his limited preview of professional hockey. He would spend the offseason preparing for training camp and despite playing well, he would begin his season in Milwaukee. At the time, Admirals coach Lane Lambert praised the play of the young Geoffrion and mentioned that with a little work on his defensive game, he expected Blake to be a solid two-way hockey player that can be used in a lot of situations.

In February, 2011, Blake Geoffrion was called up to the NHL. "Boomer," as he's been nicknamed, remained with the Predators for the duration of the season and played in all 12 playoff games. On March 20th, he would score his first hat trick against the Buffalo Sabres. With his team trailing 3-1, Geoffrion's second goal of the night came with 2:27 left on the clock and the hat trick goal came just over a minute later. The team took the momentum into OT where Martin Erat notched the winner. In his short NHL career, he was already turning heads.

In one short year, Blake Geoffrion made the jump from college hockey to the NHL. In most situations, a player would need around two years of hockey in the AHL before playing consistently in the National league. Blake is one of the exceptions though, as he is fully capable of developing in the NHL from here on out. Geoffrion is a 6'1", 196 lb. center with good speed, a deadly shot, and a nose for the net. Blake's AHL coach, Lane Lambert, has since been named to the Predators coaching staff, so expect Lambert to push hard for Geoffrion to begin the year with the big team.

One of the biggest reasons Blake saw an extended call up was due to the injury of Cal O'Reilly. The Predators simply couldn't wait for O'Reilly to return and acquired center Mike Fisher as well as giving Geoffrion a cup of coffee. Now the Predators have $8.7 million tied up in two second-line centers (Fisher and Legwand), with Wilson, Geoffrion, and O'Reilly all looking to take over as the team's top center. Of all five centers, O'Reilly is the only one without a contract, so it will be interesting to see how the team moves forward. O'Reilly is a very talented forward who held down Nashville's top line remarkably well when healthy, but Nashville has had a tendency to abandon ship on players in this type of situation (Peverley, Santorelli, etc.). They have experimented with Wilson on wing, so if he stays there, O'Reilly, Fisher, and Legwand should be Nashville's top centers. To make room for Geoffrion, Legwand would be the best person for Nashville to move, but he carries a $4.5 million cap hit and a no-trade-clause.

If Blake plays a full season in Nashville next year, it will be an adjustment period. He'll have flashes of brilliance where he looks like one of the Predators' best players, followed by inconsistent zeroes in the point column of the scoresheet. The good news for fantasy poolies though, is that Geoffrion has no problem dropping the gloves, so odds are that when he's in a slump, he will still earn penalty minutes. After a full year in the NHL, Blake has the talent to start contributing to fantasy owners on a consistent basis in 2012-13. The only thing that would hold him back would be opportunity.

In his prime, the young Geoffrion has the talent to be a 75 point player with 60-80 penalty minutes, following a path similar to that of Ryan Kesler, but taking less time to reach his potential (likely one to two years sooner). While the odds of Blake reaching the level of success that his grandfather and great grandfather achieved are slim, he still has the tools to be a dominant player in the league. If the Predators make room for him this season, he should begin to produce consistently in 2012-13 and increase point production each year until he hits his prime.