Before the season started, there was a faint buzz in Philadelphia about some kid out of college that *might* have a shot at making the team. The Flyers roster already had some pretty impressive names penciled in for the top-nine though, so the odds that some unknown collegiate graduate would make the team in an offensive role were low enough for the majority of the NHL community to completely ignore any stories out of Philadelphia on this Matt Read character. As the preseason games began, Read began to open the eyes of those who ignored him, leaving many to ask, “Just who is Matt Read?”

In 2006-07, the 20 year-old Read left Canada to join the Des Moines Buccaneers of the USHL. Read would impress, scoring 62 points in 58 games, ranking 14th overall in the league scoring, right on par with Max Pacioretty (63 points), Colby Cohen (60), Aaron Palushaj (67), and Andy Miele (57). After being courted by schools such as Maine and UNH, Read chose a small

division-one school in Minnesota that most had not heard of, Bemidji State.

Read led Bemidji in scoring each of the first three seasons, and finished second by only one point in his senior year, while serving as team captain. In his sophomore campaign, Read led Bemidji to a surprise NCAA Frozen Four appearance. It was Read's overtime goal in their division's championship game that sent Bemidji into the NCAA tournament, where they upset top-ranked Minnesota and third-ranked Cornell. Puck Daddy sat down to interview Read during the Cinderella run .

As Read concluded his collegiate career, he promptly signed a one-way deal with the Philadelphia Flyers, the front-runners among NHL teams looking courting the Bemidji star. Said head coach Tom Serratore after hearing of Read's contract, "He will be just fine in the NHL. Even though it's a big jump, he has the maturity, talent, and is an extremely competitive player. His game is going to transfer nice and he will be able to pick things up quickly. He has the intangibles other players don't have."

Read quickly left Minnesota and joined the struggling Adirondack Phantoms for the remainder of their season. In only 11 games, Read tallied 13 points and finished 15th overall on the team in points. His seven goals were tied for the eighth most on the team. Sure, the Phantoms were atrocious, but that type of output is rather impressive.

Read's strong play continued into the NHL's preseason, where he scored a team-leading seven

points. Slowly, the hockey community was beginning to open their eyes to the strong play of Matt Read. At the conclusion of the preseason, TSN's Bob McKenzie tweeted, "Nobody asked, but I am picking 25 year-old Matt Read of PHI to win this years Calder trophy as top rookie in the NHL."

While it is rather early in the season to be thinking about the Calder trophy, Read has already shown explosive speed and tenacity, and has seen time on both the power-play and the penalty-kill. Read has good hands around the net, often creating offense for his line whether his name shows on the scoresheet or not. In college, Read played 110 straight games, which hopefully eliminates the injury risk. He is also responsible in his own zone, evidenced by strong plus/minus numbers in college and a plus-three rating in the NHL. Among rookies, only fellow Flyer Sean Couturier has a higher rating (plus-five).

Consistency will be key to Matt Read's success this season as it is customary for most young players to require an adjustment period as they transition to the speed of NHL hockey. The positives in Read's situation are that he has shown great consistency in the past and that he is much older than most rookies are when they enter the NHL.

Read's seven points in 11 games have him on track to score 52 points this year, which would have tied him with Michael Grabner last year for third-most among rookies. Read has been used at both center and wing, skating well in both situations, and undoubtedly earning his coach's trust. It will take some time before we know if Read can consistently product at this level, but the early signs are very good. If Read continues to impress, coach Laviolette will give him the ice time to go with it, which is a luxury most rookies do not have.