It boils down to optimal playing time. A top-line player will get the best of everything, while a top-six player will receive decent even strength/second unit power-play ice-time. A bottom feeder will most likely receive checking line ice-time and thus less optimal ice-time, which will hamper their scoring ability during the season. Their big break will only come if there are injuries or big slumps from their team's top-six.

There really isn't a sense in projecting 80 points for a player who isn't even on a team's top-line let alone top-six.

Note: Take the line combos with a grain of salt. They are just arbitrary and are used primarily to separate a team's top-six from the bottom-six. I really don't want to get into arguments about how Bobby Ryan is going to line up alongside Ryan Getzlaf and Corey Perry instead of Joffrey Lupul. Anyways, onto the good stuff.

Dallas - Top six solid, but faces stiff competition
Loui Eriksson – Mike Ribeiro – Brendan Morrow
James Neal – Brad Richards – Steve Ott

Bottom Feeders
Fabian Brunnstrom, Mike Modano, Jere Lehtinen, Brian Sutherby, Krys Barch, Toby Petersen, and Jamie Benn.
With the return of Morrow, the Stars' forwards look pretty deep. Neal and Eriksson both had solid seasons last year, but with the depth of this year's talent plus the additional pressure coming from the bottom six (Brunnstrom and Lehtinen), there will be plenty of opportunities for them to lose their top-six spots if they falter throughout the season. With the talent on the top-nine, it probably means that the highly touted Jamie Benn won't get a fair shake of the sauce bottle this season.

Detroit – Top-six relatively set, faces some competition from bottom-six
Henrik Zetterberg – Pavel Datsyuk – Tomas Holmstrom
Valtteri Filppula – Johan Franzen – Jiri Hudler (RFA)

Bottom Feeders
Ville Leino, Dan Cleary, Kris Draper, Kirk Maltby, Darren Helm, and Justin Abdelkader.
Detroit's line up doesn't look as strong as the start of last season with Marian Hossa and Mikael Samuelsson both fleeing. It still bolsters plenty of depth, just not of the superstar variety. Zetterberg spent about a 70/30 ratio of without/with Datsyuk, this season I think it creeps up towards the 50/50 mark. Once split, look for Cleary to line up alongside Datsyuk. Leino could see a boost in responsibility if Hudler walks.

Edmonton- Top-six uncertain, faces shallow competition
Dustin Penner – Shawn Horcoff - Ales Hemsky
Patrick O'Sullivan – Sam Gagner – Andrew Cogliano

Bottom Feeders
Ethan Moreau, Robert Nilsson, Fernado Pisani, M.A. Pouliot, Zach Stortini, J.F. Jacques, Rob Schremp, Jordan Eberle, Ryan Potulny, and Gilbert Brule.
The Edmonton line up bolsters plenty of cooks, but not very many chefs. What I mean by that statement is that they have plenty of mid-ranged guys that can produce around the 50 point range, but not very many that are of the superstar variety that can flirt with the century mark. I temporarily placed Penner in the top-line left spot, but they are desperate to find a replacement, so that position is openly up for grabs. Heatley seems to be a perfect fit, but we all know about what's going on with that situation... If nothing happens, O'Sully could find himself on the top-line spot beside Horcoff and Hemsky. Nilsson could also make a run at a top-six spot alongside Gagner and Cogliano. Either way there's plenty of movement available on the Oilers' top-six. This might be the final year for Schremp to make his mark in the NHL, but don't expect a top-six role. Eberle will probably spend another year in juniors.

Los Angeles – Pretty Certain, but faces shallow competition
Ryan Smyth – Anze Kopitar – Dustin Brown
Alex Frolov – Jarrett Stoll – Justin Williams

Bottom Feeders
Michael Handzus, Oscar Moller, Wayne Simmonds, Brad Richardson, John Zeiler, Raitis Ivanans, Trevor Lewis and Teddy Purcell(RFA).
The Kings really solidified their top-six with the addition of Smyth. Kopitar and Brown are both adamant shooters and with Smyth lurking around in the front of the net, they might produce a very productive fantasy season this year. Moller, Purcell and Handzus could provide a few speed bumps for the top-six, but generally speaking the top-six for the Kings are sitting pretty comfortable at the moment. Moller and Purcell should enjoy plenty of ice-time on the second power-play unit.

Minnesota – Top-line locked, plenty of competition for rest of the lineup
P.M. Bouchard – Mikko Koivu – Martin Havlat
Andrew Brunette – Eric Belanger – Owen Nolan
Bottom Feeders
James Sheppard, Colton Gillies, Antti Miettinen, Cal Clutterbuck, Derek Boogard, Peter Kalus and Benoit Pouliot.
The top-line of the Wild is locked. There won't be much competition coming from the rest of the team for those spots. The rest of the spots however are completely up for grabs. Nolan, Brunette and Belanger form a temporary second line, but with Lemaire leaving town, Sheppard, Gillies, Miettinen, Kalus, Pouliot and even Clutterbuck could see themselves in a top-six roles throughout the season.
Next week we finish off the remaining top-six for the Predators, Coyotes, Blues, Sharks and Canucks. Questions or comments? Like always I'll be ready and willing to discuss them in the comments section below.