

Young Guns Lightning It Up

Written by Andrew Schopp

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The Lightning have a number of young players building up their fantasy values in 2013.

With 41 points from rookies this season, the Tampa Bay Lightning rank second in rookie scoring. Take 23-year-old Calder Trophy candidate [Cory Conacher](#) and his 21 points out of the equation and the Lightning remain in the top 10, tied with Detroit at number nine.

Since Feb. 10, six rookie forwards have made their NHL debuts for Tampa, all getting the call from the American Hockey League's number one Syracuse Crunch. Averaging 45 points in the American League this season, these four Syracuse call-ups are a great display of the Lightning's depth at the forward position, filling holes left by injuries to Vincent Lecavalier, [Ryan](#)

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[n Malone](#)

and

[Benoit Pouliot](#)

, all placed on the injury reserve earlier this month.

4.) [Richard Panik](#) – Round 2, 52nd Overall 2008 NHL Entry Draft

Aside from scoring his first NHL goal Feb. 23 against the Islanders, [Richard Panik](#) was a silent one point, minus-two in nine NHL games before being sent back down to Syracuse. Noted by scouts as being highly skilled, Panik will benefit from seasoning in the AHL where he will need to build consistency. He could be a solid long-term option, who at 21-years-old has time to develop into a point-per-game player in due time.

3.) Ondrej Palat – Round 7, 208th Overall 2011 NHL Entry Draft

21-year-old left wing Ondrej Palat has contributed a decent four points in nine games since making his NHL debut March 12 against Florida. Palat carries Syracuse's offence along with line mate Johnson, scoring 44 points in 49 games in the AHL this season. The Czech is noted for his creativity in the offensive zone and with 33 assists in the AHL is an outstanding passer. However, standing at 5-11, 174 pounds, concerns of his size render Palat's NHL future uncertain.

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Filling in for injured [Benoit Pouliot](#), Palat's short-term value is limited. He will likely be sent down as the Lightning get healthier. Still, Palat has good long term upside and is a potential future linemate of [Tyler Johnson](#) with whom Palat has great chemistry in the AHL.

If he can continue to carry the offense of Syracuse and bulk up, Palat has the potential to contribute in the NHL on a third or fourth line in two to three years.

2.) Alex Killorn – Tampa Bay Lightning Round 3, 77th Overall 2007 NHL Entry Draft

Standing at 6-2, 205 pounds, 23-year-old center Alex Killorn leads all Tampa Bay rookies with 25 hits. He has been solid in his rookie campaign, notching 12 points in 20 games, seeing time on a line with Martin St. Louis and [Vincent Lecavalier](#). Of all the rookies on this list, Killorn is the most likely to stay in Tampa for the remainder of the season. Playing on the power play with St. Louis and [Steven Stamkos](#), Killorn should be on the radar of poolies looking for a boost in both points and defensive categories. Expect his numbers to improve when Lecavalier returns.

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1.) [Tyler Johnson](#) – Undrafted

Since making his NHL debut March 14 against the Islanders, 22-year-old Center [Tyler Johnson](#) is red hot, scoring four points, plus-five in four games. Johnson got the call to the big club while leading the American League in goals (32) and is second overall in points (58). Johnson has carried his scoring prowess over to The Show, where he is riding a three game point streak.

Noted by scouts as a two-way forward with great speed, Johnson was a steal for the Lightning who signed the undrafted prospect as a UFA in 2011. As the Lightning plummet down the Eastern Conference standings and edge further away from playoff contention, expect Johnson to get more ice time and contend for a permanent roster spot next season, eventually overtaking centers [Tom Pyatt](#) and [Nate Thompson](#) in the depth chart. Johnson has great fantasy upside and can make an impact as a secondary center as early as next season. Johnson is even worth picking up immediately for poolies looking to ride his hot streak.

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