

Lachance shuts out Pickering for first Aurora Tigers win



By Jake Courtepatte

There is almost an audible sigh of relief resonating throughout the Tiger den.

Five games into the 2016-17 OJHL regular season, the Aurora Junior A club has secured its first victory, a 4 ? 0 shutout of the Pickering Panthers.

19-year-old Brayden Lachance, who last cut his teeth with the Fort Erie Meteors of the GOJHL, earned both his first career OJHL win and first career OJHL shutout while shutting the door on ten Pickering powerplays.

In a night chock full of rookie highlights, four new Tigers found the back of the net.

In what play-by-play announcer Joe Montesano called "the battle of the cats", Connor Rider struck first less than two minutes in on a rebound in close.

Just after the seven-minute mark, Tyler Davis capitalized on a sloppy outlet pass by a Pickering defenceman, intercepting the puck in the slot and sending home a heavy wrist shot.

One minute later, Louis Vlahakis sent a beautiful floating pass from blue line to blue line to spring Mel Melconian, who made no mistake on the breakaway. Melconian is yet to register a game without a point in his first season with the Tigers.

After a scoreless second period, Matthew Doucette put home his first of the year on a major powerplay following a check from behind. Stripping the puck from a Pickering defender in close, Doucette sent it short side to close out the 4 ? 0 win.

Lachance stopped 30 shots in the shutout.

After starting off the season at 0-3-1, including a loss to the Stouffville Spirit one night earlier that saw four straight Stouffville goals, the Tigers are looking to get back on track in the young season. Pickering and the Lindsay Muskies remain the only two winless teams in the OJHL's North division, while Aurora trails the Markham Royals (3-0-0), the Spirit (2-1-0), and the Newmarket Hurricanes (2-2-0).

Newmarket defeated the Tigers in the season's first Battle of Yonge Street, 6 ? 3, in Newmarket last Thursday.

What lies ahead is the greatest challenge yet to the young Tigers squad, on the road to visit Markham Friday night. The undefeated Royals were division champions in the 2015-16 season.

The Tigers will undoubtedly be hoping to save some energy for hosting the defending league champion Trenton Golden Hawks in Sunday night's home game.

Puck drop is at 7 p.m. at the Aurora Community Centre.

For stats, schedules, and more information, visit www.auroratigers.pointstreaksites.com.