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Export date: Fri Mar 29 0:48:06 2024 / +0000 GMT

Aurora Panthers searching for PWHL playoff spot



By Jake Courtepatte

The Aurora Panthers are on the outside looking in at the midway point of the Provincial Women's Hockey League season.
A pair of losses over the weekend has the Panthers sitting one point out of the sixteenth and final playoff position, having come out on the wrong side of lopsided scores against the Brampton Canadettes and Leaside Wildcats.
Saturday's game at Century Gardens in Brampton saw the Canadettes take a quick 2 ? 0 lead, both off rebounds with little chance for goaltender Carmen Lasis. An unlucky bounce off the backboards led to the only goal of the second period for Brampton, who added two more in the third for a final score of 5 ? 1.
Emerson Elliott, the Panthers' leading scorer, notched her eighth of the year for Aurora's only goal late in the third.
Sunday's home matchup against the Wildcats at the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex was much of the same, with the streaking Wildcats taking a 1 ? 0 lead less than one minute into the game.
Four straight goals had Leaside taking a sizable lead by the second intermission, before Julia Mitchell, in her first game as a call-up for the Panthers, scored her first PWHL goal.
Leaside responded with three more for an eventual 7 ? 1 win.
Kristen Caporusso stopped 25 shots in the loss.
Falling to 2-4-4 at home this season, the Panthers slipped to a record of 4-11-4 to sit in seventeenth place in Ontario's elite amateur women's hockey league.
Sitting one point back of Burlington and Barrie, who occupy the final two playoff spots, the Panthers will be looking to return to the PWHL postseason for the first time in two years.
Friday marks the beginning of a five-game road trip for the Panthers, visiting the Cambridge Rivulettes (6-16-1) followed by the Bluewater Hawks (10-9-2) on Saturday and the Southwest Wildcats (3-16-3) on Sunday.
For stats and schedules, visit www.pwhl.pointstreaksites.com.