

Keeper battle leads to scoreless draw for Aurora FC



By Brock Weir

With plenty of chances on both ends, Aurora FC and West Ottawa each had chances to put away their League1 matchup for good with just one strike.

Yet it was the goalkeeping that stole the show, pitting West Ottawa's keeper against the tandem of Aurora's Meghan Phillips and Quinn Josiah, resulting in a scoreless draw on Saturday.

Josiah opened up strong in the first half in stopping all four shots on target, before Phillips filled in for the final 45 minutes to earn Aurora its second clean sheet of the season.

The scoreless draw could not come at a more fitting time: Phillips and West Ottawa keeper Mollie Eriksson were named recently as the last line of defense for League1 when they take on Canada's Soccer Regional Excel (REX) program this week, pitting the best of the League1 women against Canada's cream-of-the-crop.

League1 Ontario Commissioner Dino Rossi said the matchup will be "a good test" to become an "annual fixture in the schedule." "This match provides a useful measuring stick for many of our best U20 women as the REX Ontario side that they will be squaring off against features many of the top young female players in the Canadian Youth National Team system, some of who just helped Canada qualify for the next U17 World Cup," said Rossi.

Phillips will be joined by teammates Chloe Chefero, Markela Beljeri, and Souyama Bouak on the pitch for League1.

"Introducing a "Young Stars" game is something we have been wanting to do for a while and we are happy to have this opportunity for our top U20 players in the women's division," he said, adding that he hopes to introduce a similar style event for the men's side in the future.

The Aurora men returned to the pitch for their regular season schedule on Sunday for the first time since earning their first win of the season in mid-June, yet returned to the losing end in a 1-3 effort against the Woodbridge Strikers.

Aurora goalkeeper Adam Scanlon was busy throughout the match, making a number of key diving stops to keep his team close, yet three goals in just over a half hour in the second half proved to be the sinker.

The road side's only goal of the match came in extra time when Dylan Rennie was taken down inside the box, resulting in a penalty kick he sent swiftly into the bottom corner of the Woodbridge net.

With losses in five of their last six dating back to mid-May, the Aurora men remain three points up on the Windsor TFC for the bottom of the League1 ladder.

They take on the 2-3-1 Darby FC on the road on Friday, before returning home to host North Mississauga on July 29.

The Aurora women next visit with North Mississauga at the Hershey Centre on the same date.