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Junior A Tigers down a game to rival Hurricanes



By Jake Courtepatte

The Hockey Gods have shone down on the fans of the Aurora Tigers and Newmarket Hurricanes, giving those in attendance three tight-knit, action-packed games so far that sees the Hurricanes lead the series 2 ? 1.

Game One of the best-of-seven OJHL first round saw a whopping 110 shots split between the Yonge Street rivals in a quadruple overtime 3 - 2 Newmarket win last Thursday.

Dimello Smith played the hero on his home rink five minutes into the seventh period of play, on the 65th shot directed at Aurora goaltender Lucas Durante's net.

Jacob Ball and Tyler Davis each found the back of the net for Aurora.

Newmarket's Adam Trotman told the OJHL the game reflects what should be a ?tough series.?

?We don't like them and they don't like us,? said Trotman. ?So, there is a lot of emotion in every goal scored, hit thrown, puck blocked, save made etc. As a team, we are just looking to do what we need to do to get the job done.?

Aurora's Durante echoed Trotman's sentiments.

?We have re-found our scoring as of late and the boys are all in,? said Durante. ?I can see this series going seven games with every game being a one or two goal difference."

Durante's words rang true in one sense in game two of the series, a matchup dry of offense in a 1 ? 0 goaltending battle.

Fatigue was clearly not a factor for he or his Newmarket counterpart Mitchell Weeks, with the only goal of the game coming off the stick of Davis late in the first period.

Durante's 21 saves were good enough to tie the series at a game apiece.

Newmarket was back on the offensive for Sunday's game three, outshooting the Tigers 41 ? 19 in a 5 ? 3 game.

A 2 ? 1 Newmarket lead heading into the final twenty minutes, the Hurricanes exploded for four goals in the third to skate away with the win.

A pair of fresh faces scored their first goals in a Tigers uniform in Noah Tooke and Kyle Heitzner, while Rhys Forhan also pitched in for Aurora.

OJHL analyst Joe Washkurak still sees the Tigers as a possibility to squeak out of the first round, despite losing leading scorer Joseph Mizzi to the professional ranks.

?They still have Ball, they still have Davis, they have some good players and can steal games. But if they can't wipe it clean, they're going to be in tough.?

The Tigers held a thirteen-point lead atop the OJHL's North division in early December and finished the season third in the division: eleven back of the Markham Royals.

?They will have to rally around the other guys in the room,? said Washkurak. ?They'll have to rely on Durante a lot.?

Game Four of the series went Wednesday evening following press time in Aurora, while Game Five will swing back to Newmarket for a 7:30 p.m. puck drop.

If necessary, Game Six will return to the ACC on Saturday at 7:30 p.m., while Game Seven would go in Newmarket on Sunday.

Elsewhere around the NorthWest conference, the top-ranked Oakville Blades lead the Brampton Admirals two games to none, while the Buffalo Jr. Sabres are atop the Burlington Cougars two games to one.
The Royals are all square at a game apiece with the Georgetown Raiders.
For stats, schedules, and more information, visit www.auroratigers.pointstreaksites.com.