This page was exported from - The Auroran
Export date: Fri Mar 29 15:27:51 2024 / +0000 GMT

Junior A Tigers hoping for bounce back season



By Jake Courtepatte

The Junior A Tigers are hoping an influx
of local talent can help put the memories of a season lost in the rearview
mirror.

Owner Jim Thomson and his Tigers staff,
as well as Highland representatives and Mayor Tom Mrakas, officially unveiled
this year's roster of players on Friday at an event held at Highland Automotive
Professionals, showcasing faces both new and old that the fan base will see
this year at the Aurora Community Centre.

?I said this to the Mayor, in five years
that we've owned the team, there's no doubt this is the best cultured group
that we've got,? said Thomson. ?That's nothing against the other teams, that's
just who we picked this year.?

Only five returnees will take to the ice
for the Tigers this season, including keeper Christian Filippetti, who
backstopped the Tigers through 19 games as only a seventeen-year old.

Trevor Grasby and Cael Cavallin return
to play a veteran role on the blue line, while Payton Schaly and Mauro Biasutti
will patrol the front lines.

?I'm really excited to get it going,?
said General Manager and Head Coach Rob DeFulviis, who was named into the roles
in March after working behind the bench as co-coach last season. ?It's been a
long, long summer of making phone calls and making trades, getting guys to
commit here.?

?Our whole process of what we thought
would be best for us is having the culture and the character that we brought
in. From the veterans coming back, to the younger guys that have come in right
away and stepped in and will be key pieces to our team?the older guys that have

made everyone feel welcome right from day one of camp.?

DeFulviis was tasked with choosing this
year's carousel of captains, opting to go with Grasby, right winger Eric
Conley, and centreman Jalen Balbosa as this year's assistants. Balbosa made the
move south on Yonge Street from the Newmarket Hurricanes, who debut this year
as the Milton Menace.

Newcomer Jonas Leas was handed the
captain's role, joining the Tigers from the NOJHL's Cochrane Crunch.

?I'm proud of (them),? said DeFulviis.
?I'm really excited to have those guys lead the team. The leadership group we
have is unbelievable.?

DeFulviis is hoping to lead the Tigers
out of a disastrous second half to last year's season, one that saw the club
squander a double0digit lead in the OJHL's North division, eventually falling
to third place, eleven back of the division-winning Markham Royals.

The Newmarket Hurricanes made easy work
of the Tigers in the first round of the postseason, needing just five games to
move on before falling in the next round and skipping town just days later.
Thomson and his group are hoping to entice the small, yet loyal fan base of the
Hurricanes to cross enemy lines and become members of the Jungle, starting with
a number of incentives for Thursday's home opener.

Ticket prices this season have been cut
from a $14 price tag to just $10, while those who show their Magna Hoedown
ticket at the home opener against the Brampton Admirals will get in for just
$5. The first 500 fans will also receive a Tigers tee shirt, while Storage Wars
Canada's Ursula Stolf will be signing autographs between periods.

The next chance to see the new-look
Tigers on home ice will come Friday, September 20 against the Stouffville
Spirit, with a 7:30 p.m. puck drop.