

Aurora Tigers leading OJHL North division



By Jake Courtepatte

Following one of the most disastrous seasons in team history, Aurora Tigers owner Jim Thomson and his staff knew something had to change.

Taking a path towards experience and age over up-and-comers, the organization worked tirelessly over the offseason to acquire handfuls of ex-OHLers and seasoned OJHL vets to round out a nearly empty roster.

So far, the approach has paid off in spades.

After two weeks of play, the junior A club finds itself leading the OJHL's North division, at the other end of the spectrum from the same time last season. They brought an unbeaten record into Kingston on Sunday before they finally lost after six games.

Following a dismantling of the reigning league champion Cobourg Cougars in back-to-back games in week one, week two of the season brought about wins over the Orangeville Flyers and Oakville Blades in mid-week clashes, before the Trenton Golden Hawks joined the Tigers at the Aurora Community Centre on Friday in what would be a defensive showdown.

Neither side would budge as Aurora's Bradley Van Schubert and Trenton's Carson Poulin played their way to a 0-0 double overtime tie.

Stachelback came close in the first period, thinking a scramble in front of the Trenton net had crossed the line, but was waved off by the referee behind the net. Team-leading scorer Jake Bricknell had what he thought was an open net on the backhand shortly after, before Poulin made a diving stop to keep the game scoreless.

It was Van Schubert who was forced to steal the point for the Tigers in the final minute of double overtime, stopping a breakaway opportunity with a nice glove save with just six seconds left on the clock.

What a hockey game it was, said Kevin Dean, the Tiger's play-by-play analyst. In three years of junior hockey and the OJHL, it was what I would call an A++ game.

Van Schubert, a Barrie native and product of the OHL's Guelph Storm, has transitioned well into the OJHL in sitting fourth in the league in goals-against-average as well as a tie for third in wins.

The five game unbeaten streak was ended Sunday in a trip to Kingston to face the Frontenacs, where only one of 48 shots made it through in a 5-1 loss.

Stachelback notched Aurora's only goal of the contest, while Van Schubert allowed more than three goals past him for the first time all season.

Newly-acquired defenseman Zach Wilkie will join the team this week, a 20-year old American who has spent the last four seasons splitting time between the OHL's Niagara IceDogs and Sudbury Wolves.

Fans can catch back-to-back home games this weekend with the Tigers hosting the league-leading Georgetown Raiders (6-1-1) on Friday night before the Lindsay Muskies (0-3-0) pay a visit on Saturday.

Both puck drops are set for 7:30 p.m.

Aurora leads the division with a record of 4-1-1, two points back of the Wellington Dukes for tops of the Northeast Conference

albeit with two games in hand.

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