

Aurora Tigers off to a 1-1 start



Following the presentation of the new-look Aurora Tigers at Serpa Automotive Boutique last Thursday with Mayor Tom Mrakas, the Tigers split their back-to-back tilt with the Stouffville Spirit.

In what was an excellent outing at the Aurora Community Centre for opening night, fans, players and coaches alike saw players of the 2007 RBC Cup Champion Tigers team receive green jackets before puck drop.

In a tight matchup against the Spirit and a very back and forth affair, the Tigers were the first to get a goal on the board near the end of the opening frame. Hollander Thompson found the back of the net assisted by Ty Roberts and Jett McCullum.

But much to the boys' dismay, the lead lasted just over a minute as Ryan Cutyler found the back of the net to tie things up.

With Jacob Roach giving the Spirit the lead in the second, Roach quickly added the team's third goal just under three minutes into the third. Tigers forward Justin Biraben pulled the boys within one before Spirit Anthony Lamanna sealed the 4-2 win.

?The home opener was excellent. I thought the guys played really well. The fans were great. A lot of energy in the building and then obviously recognizing the championship team was pretty special,? said head coach Greg Johnston.

?I thought we had opportunities to certainly win the game. We came up a little short. But they competed right until the end. Competed hard. Played hard. Kept going and we kind of rolled that end of the game into Stouffville and just continued the energy and the high tempo with pace and high tempo with play.?

Since the Spirit decided to spoil the Tigers' party, The Tigers travelled down to Stouffville Arena on Saturday night to spoil theirs.

The Tigers took down the Spirit, walking away with a 6-4 victory.

Two goals came from Biraben and Blake Frost, as well as William Moore, captain Luc Reeve and William Smith all got on the score sheet that night.

?They were eager to respond to that and get back into the win column. You have to have a short memory in this game. Win or lose, you move on pretty quickly because you play quite often the next night or in three or four days,? Johnston said.

?Once again, I thought we were the better team and we deserved to win.

During the last OJHL season two years ago, the Tigers struggled to score a lot in games, especially in the first period. In the first weekend of the season, the Tigers have put eight goals into the net.

Johnston said that he is fortunate to have a very fast team that can skate a high level and score goals at will. He loves their creativity, drive and work ethic in the offensive end.

This week coming up the Tigers travel to Collingwood to take on the Colts before hosting the Markham Royals Saturday night and then travelling to Markham on Sunday.

In this week's three-in-three, Johnston is now looking on the defensive side of the puck.

?Hoping to show up on the defensive end, working on things that we as a coaching staff recognize that we have to work on throughout the week. Just reminding the guys to take care of themselves for three games in three nights. A lot of it being proper diet and proper rest. It's not a series, it's the beginning of the season.?

With all the confidence in the world in both of his goaltenders for this season, Friday night Christian Filippetti will get the start and Keaton Lyons will get Saturday night's game. After that, Johnston and the staff will make the call for Sunday.

Puck drop at home Saturday night against Markham is at 7.30 p.m.

By Robert Belardi