

Late strike ties Aurora United with North Toronto



By Jake Courtepatte

Aurora United FC managed their first point of the League 1 Ontario season on Saturday in a 1 ? 1 draw with the North Toronto Nitros.

Blustery weather conditions failed to stop fans and players from converging on St. Maximilian Kolbe's field for an evening matchup. "The weather affected both teams," said Aurora executive director Jimmy Brennan.

"It was windy, miserable, a cold night. We said it to them at the start of the game today that it would be a scrap and they were not going to be able to do fantastic football and build it out of the back. It just wasn't the weather to do that game."

The Nitros were able to take the lead in the 37th minute after grinding in midfield for much of the game, while Aurora's Matthew Caguana notched his first of the season off a corner kick in the 79th minute.

"This is the type of game where you need to get it forward, get your second balls, and you knew it was going to be a scrap," said Brennan. "And it was ? it was a scrappy game with a lot of yellow cards and tackles and that's the way it goes when you're playing in weather like this. When it's a nice sunny day hopefully you can play some beautiful soccer that you like to play, but today was a scrap from the beginning to the end."

Aurora next visits with Durham United FA (0-1-1) at the Pickering Soccer Complex on Friday. Home action resumes next Sunday when AUFC hosts Masters Futbol of Toronto at St. Max.

The women's side of Aurora United opened their season just hours before, playing to a 3 ? 1 loss against Unionville Milliken SC in the latter's league debut.

Ellie Hayes scored for the home side just seven minutes in before Unionville tallied three goals in the second half to earn the victory. "It was a difficult day," said Aurora head coach Gianni Cimini. "Weather conditions obviously had an impact on the day. It was really a tale of two halves with one team always trying to play against the wind and rain in the face, so that definitely had an impact and it was a difficult game to play but the team will learn from experiences like this."

While last year's debut Aurora women's squad was a composite of out-of-town players looking to make their mark in semi-pro soccer, Cimini says this year's team is more "homegrown" and has come through the program's development system.

"The majority of the girls in the team came in when they were nine years old and we feel that this step is a good step for them. There are a lot of talented players in the age group, like Michaela Iacono, Kayla Gonzales, Brittany (Gardiner) in the middle of the field."

"There is tons of loaded talent in the team and I think in the future we are going to be a very good League1 women's team."

Aurora next faces Darby FC of Whitby on the road Friday, before returning to St. Max to host West Ottawa SC next Sunday.

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