

Tigers blanked in back-to-back contests

It may be time to embrace the tank for the Aurora Tigers.

The roster carousel continued to revolve for the ailing Junior A club over the weekend, sending forward Bryce Young to the Steinbach Pistons of the Manitoba Junior Hockey League, a sacrifice of the team's leading scorer back to his home province in what is a lost season in Aurora.

The nineteen-year old led the Tigers with eighteen points in his first nineteen games in the black and gold, one of a limited amount of bright lights shone upon the team's 2019-20 Ontario Junior Hockey League season.

Noah Minns, a product of the Northern Ontario league before joining the Tigers in the offseason, took over the reins as the offensive leader heading into a pair of meetings with the lowly Lindsay Muskies and Brantford 99ers over the weekend: faring no better without Young.

A meeting with the Muskies in Lindsay on Friday saw a battle of the OJHL's bottom two basement-dwellers, the first meeting of the year between the only two teams still in the single digits in terms of points.

The lack of offensive firepower on both sides was evident: a pair of goals from the home side just twelve seconds apart in the first period were the only tallies through the first two periods, before Lindsay sent one more past Aurora keeper Andrew Barwinski midway through the third for a final score of 3 ? 0.

Barwinski, who may have been feeling the effects of some stale play after being kept off the ice since an October 20 shutout, managed 23 saves on 26 shots, while Aurora failed to find the back of the net on 22 opportunities of their own.

A small win, but a win nonetheless for the Muskies, who leapfrogged the Tigers in the standings, before Aurora met with the 99ers at the Wayne Gretzky Centre the following day.

Things went from bad to worse for Aurora, who dropped an 8 ? 0 stinker while leaving regular starter Christian Filippetti completely out to dry.

Forced to contend with 56 total shots, Filippetti faced 23 in the middle frame alone, where four straight goals for the 99ers prompted a penalty-filled finale for a frustrated Tigers squad.

Assistant captain Jalen Balbosa was ejected for a hit from behind just past the midway point of the contest, setting off a war of words between head coach Rob De Fulviis and the referee. The Tigers will be without their bench boss for the next three games following the exchange.

By the final whistle, the Tigers had reached a 128-minute goalless streak, and were the owners of just nine points over their first twenty games of the season.

Friday's home meeting with the 99ers should mark an interesting rematch between the two after the last emotional contest, set for a 7:30 p.m. start at the Aurora Community Centre. The Tigers are back at it on Saturday to host the Milton Menace, same puck drop.

They close out the weekend with a trip to Whitby to face the Warriors on Sunday.

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

By Jake Courtepatte