

Tigers on pace for another strong season



By Jake Courtepatte

If history can repeat itself, the Aurora Tigers are in for another strong regular season showing in 2018-19.

The Junior A club has come roaring out the gate to a 4-1-1 record through the first six games of the Ontario Junior Hockey League season, a repeat of their September record en route to becoming last year's NorthEast Conference champions.

Arguably the standout reason behind the quick start to the season has been the play of goaltender Jack Irvine, who after riding the pine in Friday's 3 ? 2 loss to the Pickering Panthers, picked up a well-fought tie with the powerhouse Trenton Golden Hawks on Saturday to remain undefeated on the season.

Hosting the Hawks at the Aurora Community Centre, Irvine stepped up early for his team in stopping all seven Trenton shots in the first, though a barrage early in the second saw the Hawks capitalize on a two-on-one.

Trenton doubled their lead just seconds into the third period on another defensive breakdown leading to a two-on-one, though Aurora returned to break the goose egg just a few minutes later when Joseph Mizzi was sent in alone to score his team-leading fourth of the year.

Cameron Neaylon had a night to remember when he scored his first OJHL goal later in the frame off a tipped shot from Sam Duchesne to tie the game at two, while a pair of overtimes saw both teams walk away with a point. Irvine stopped 32 of the 34 shots he faced.

He kept his perfect record intact in the annual trip to Buffalo for the OJHL Showcase on Monday afternoon, where team captain Steve McLean played the overtime hero in a 5 ? 4 win.

Lanis Antonic scored with just over twenty seconds left in regulation to send it to overtime, while Mizzi scored twice and Jack Varga added a single.

Watching most of the action from the bench last season in a backup role, the now 18-year-old Irvine brings experience to the starters position in 2018-19, posting a 1.58 goals-against-average so far to sit fourth among all OJHL goaltenders. He will be expected to be backed up most of the year by 16-year-old Christian Filippetti, playing the mentor role to the Nobleton native.

Aurora's nine points are good for second in the NorthWest Conference early on, trailing just the Oakville Blades by a single point. They next take to the ice on Saturday in Stouffville to face the Spirit in the middle of a five-game road trip, before longtime divisional rivals the Markham Royals in a Sunday afternoon matinee.

Next home game is scheduled for October 6 against the Wellington Dukes.

And for those late to jump on the bandwagon, tickets to December 8's Rogers Hometown Hockey spectacular between the Tigers and rival Newmarket Hurricanes are on sale at each home game.

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