

Tigers pass Panthers in OJHL standings



By Jake Courtepatte

As the rebuild season winds down for the Aurora Tigers, the club can perhaps take solace in a strong finish.

With a win, a loss, and a tie for the Junior A Tigers over the weekend, they have picked up five points in their last five games, moving them ahead of the Pickering Panthers in the Northeast Conference of the Ontario Junior Hockey League.

Their eighth win of the season came at the hands of the Lindsay Muskies on Friday, using an early lead to hang on to a 4 ? 3 score. Both Brandon MacKinnon and Mel Melconian scored late in the first to give the Tigers a 2 ? 0 lead, cut in half by a shorthanded Lindsay goal with one second remaining in the period.

Tyler Davis scored the only goal of the second period to restore the two-goal lead, while Eric Holland notched a third period marker that would eventually be the game winner.

The Whitby Fury came to the Aurora Community Centre on Saturday and absolutely drilled goalie Jake Sabourin with shots, pouring a total of 64 on net in a 3 ? 1 win.

Sabourin was handed third star honours for his 61-save performance, while Holland scored the only Aurora goal, joining Melconian as the only Tigers to pass the 20-goal plateau this season.

The Tigers then managed their first point of the year against their crosstown rivals, the Newmarket Hurricanes, in a 4 ? 4 tie on Sunday.

Alex Ierullo opened the scoring for the Hurricanes late in the first, a powerplay marker on a second rebound from goalie Brayden LaChance.

Shorthanded just a few minutes later, Konner McMillan used some amazing speed to burst past the Hurricanes defense shorthanded, beating Jesse Hodgson and tying the game.

Melconian buried to take the lead before the end of the period on just the Tigers' fifth shot of the game, prompting a change in goal for the Hurricanes.

Barrett Mundell didn't fare much better against the Aurora offense, with Melconian tipping a shot in front to take a 3 - 1 lead in the second, before McMillan fooled Mundell with a backhand for a 4 ? 1 lead.

Newmarket then spread three straight goals over the third period to take the game into extra time at 4 ? 4, with neither goalie solved again over the course of two overtimes.

?They've definitely improved as a team this season,? said Newmarket's Todd Winder, who spent parts of two seasons with the Tigers. ?They have a lot of young guys, up-and-comers.?

Newmarket clinched the eighth and final playoff spot in the Northeast Conference just days earlier.

Sunday marked the final time this season fans can see the Tigers at the Aurora Community Centre, where they put up a record of 5-20-2-1. They take their game on the road for the final week.

With three games left on the regular season schedule, the Tigers visit the Whitby Fury (35-11-1-4) for an afternoon tilt on Sunday before visiting the eliminated Orangeville Flyers (16-30-1-3) on Monday.

They close out against the Kingston Voyageurs (25-15-3-7), locked into sixth place in the Northeast Conference, on the road Thursday.

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