

Tigers remain first in Northeast during five-game home stand



By Jake Courtepatte

The Junior A Aurora Tigers are in good shape for the rest of November, finishing off the month playing exclusively in their favourite venue ? the Aurora Community Centre.

But they are hanging on to the OJHL's Northeast division by a thread, following a 1 ? 1 weekend in which division rivals the Markham Royals put up back-to-back wins.

Aurora was barely able to slip by the basement-dwelling Lindsay Muskies on the road Friday, a team tied for the second-highest loss total in the entire 22 team league.

Drake Board continued to prove why he is one of the most prolific goal scorers in Junior A hockey by opening the scoring just four minutes in. Aurora's defence shut down Lindsay to allow just four shots on Alex Brooks-Potts in the first period.

But the Muskies broke the shutout bid shortly into the second, as Newmarket's Owen Barnett potted his first of the season to even the score.

Darren Iwai, a first-year Tiger out of the SAC Saints program, has been impressive as of late with his third goal in five games later in the period.

Jordan DaSilva put the Tigers up 3 ? 1 early in the third on the powerplay. Lindsay pulled within one just seconds after killing a penalty midway through the final frame, but Brooks-Potts stood tall for the remainder to earn his eleventh win of the season.

Saturday's matchup with the Wellington Dukes in Aurora was an interesting one ? it was the first for goaltender Alex Fotinos, having only joined the team late last week after being released from an ECHL tryout last month.

Up 1 ? 0 off a powerplay goal from Evan Kearns, two Wellington powerplay goals in the second period played the spoiler in Fotinos' debut loss. Despite outshooting the Dukes 38-28, Aurora left empty-handed as Fotino stopped 25 shots in the 3 ? 1 game.

The 20-year old has spent the last four seasons splitting time between the OHL's Barrie Colts and Windsor Spitfires. His tenure with the Junior A club may not be a long one ? he is expected to join the Acadia Axemen of CIS hockey for the winter semester, having worked out with the York and University of Toronto clubs this season.

The loss leaves the Tigers with a slim three-point lead on Markham atop the Northeast, arguably one of the league's weakest divisions to date this season. The Royals also have two games in hand on the Tigers.

What cannot come at a better time, however, is the five-game home stand the Tigers are set to continue this Friday, culminating on November 29. Saturday's home loss was the first the Tigers have experienced in regulation since October 2, putting up a home record of 7-2-2 this season.

Two non-divisional matchups are on tap this week as the Tigers host the Orangeville Flyers (13-8-2) Friday at 7.30 p.m. before welcoming the Wellington Dukes (13-10-1) on Saturday.

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