

Tigers see resurgence under new coach Perrin



By Jake Courtepatte

A new face behind the bench of the Aurora Tigers has brought back a sparkle of the Tigers of the past.

Since Brian Perrin took over as head coach of the Junior A club, the team has put up a 3-3-2 record, a major improvement over the first half of the Ontario Junior Hockey League season.

The Tigers have had a revolving door of coaches over the past two seasons as they try to rekindle the fire that brought them to the OJHL finals in 2013-14. Mark Joslin lasted just thirteen games behind the bench last season before getting the boot, with owner Jim Thomson calling his team's play 'undisciplined'.

Thomas Milne then took the reins, having formerly served under James Richmond as the team's assistant coach. When he stepped down at the end of the season after the Tigers bowed out of the first round of the postseason, Thomson made a bold move to hire Nikita Poliakov, the youngest head coach in the league at 27-years old, having worked with Thomson at his camp for years.

But now Thomson and his staff hope they have finally found their guy, in hiring the veteran coach Perrin when the Tigers remained poised to stay in the OJHL's basement.

Perrin, unlike Poliakov, took the job with plenty of experience in the OJHL, having last worked in the league as the head coach and general manager of the rival Newmarket Hurricanes in the 2014-15 season. He was released from the team over disagreements with the ownership.

Perrin first met Thomson when his son, Tigers veteran defenseman James Thomson, was a call-up for the Hurricanes in the 2013-14 season.

Taking over a team that had just lost nine straight games, the Tigers have more than doubled their standings points in the eight games that Perrin has been behind the bench, and are now ahead of or tied with four other teams in the OJHL.

It's a long and challenging task, to bring up to speed a group of youngsters that consists of just two returning players from the previous season. With player cards on short order after using up the majority to try to fix the team early in the season, not much can be done in terms of roster moves going forward.

'It's a young team, that's growing,' said Perrin. 'There's a lot of potential, and you can tell it's a team that can be very competitive very soon.'

Perrin said he sees major potential in the club's goaltending, the tandem of Brayden LaChance and Jake Sabourin.

'The goaltending has been the strength from the start,' said Perrin. 'Our goaltenders give us the chance to compete every night and that's all you can ask from them.'

While the long term goal for the team is to squeak into the postseason, Perrin said his team will have to work hard to get there.

'It's not out of the question.'