

York Region high schools face off in Tier 1 hockey playoffs



By Jake Courtepatte

A few upsets could be in the cards for the first round of the elite division in York Region Athletic Association hockey, unless the league's top teams can turn it around in the short three-point series.

Aurora's St. Max Mustangs, second in the league in scoring all year, were effectively shut down by the fifth-place Newmarket Raiders in the first game of their series last Thursday at Magna Centre.

They took it to the Mustangs in the first minute of play, forcing goaltender Matthew Tanel to make a spectacular toe stop on a breakaway.

Newmarket opened the scoring midway through the first frame after a giveaway up the middle left Tanel no chance at getting into position.

St. Max was able to tie it up five minutes into the second on a scramble in front of the Newmarket net, but it was all the offence they could muster in the contest.

Tanel was a brick wall at the other end until the final three minutes of play in the third, when he was beaten by a lucky rebound on a screened shot.

The Mustangs have a must-win game against the Raiders at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex later this week.

The St. Jean De Brebeuf Bears of Vaughan lead the Stouffville District Secondary School Spartans 1 ? 0 following a stellar performance from their veteran female goaltender, Fabiana Petricca. The Bears will be looking to close out the series Wednesday on the road following press time.

St. Theresa of Lisieux, who finished tied with the Mustangs for first in the league with a regular season record of 7-1-0, will try to rebound from a 3 ? 3 tie with the St. Brother Andre Cardinals later this week.

Bill Crothers will also be looking to close out their first round series this week, with the Markham school taking the first game by a score of 4 ? 3 over the St. Elizabeth Panthers of Thornhill.

Winning teams move onto the York Region semifinals before the final round is set to wrap up by the beginning of March.