

3 Burlington Barracudas edge #7 Central York Panthers 2-1 in U22 OWHL Action

The Burlington Barracudas swam into SARC on Saturday afternoon, sporting their vintage Edmonton Oiler jerseys and three of the top four scorers in the OWHL. The third-ranked team in Canada featured the league's top scorer Claire Murdoch (77 points in 27 games), third-place scorer Sara Manness (63 points in 24 games) and Bryn Prier (55 points in 28 games) who holds down fourth-place in the U22 scoring race.

The short-handed Central York Panthers?still missing four of their regular players?put forth a valiant effort against one of the league's high-powered offences and lost a 2-1 squeaker. The Junior Panthers received another strong performance between the pipes from Izzy Whynot who turned aside 35 of the 37 shots the Barracudas fired at her.

The opening frame was end-to-end action as the third-place Barracudas (21-6-2-0) and the seventh-place Panthers (20-9-1-1) put on an offensive display that was foiled only by the goaltenders?Burlington's Lauren Mooney and CYP's Whynot. The scoreless tie was broken at 12:30 when Barracuda forward Avery Peters made a power move off the left wing, found space between the circles, and fired a wrist shot past Whynot to put the bigger Barracudas on the scoreboard.

The Panthers evened the score 19 seconds into their second period power play.

The Panthers showed great tenacity to keep the puck in the O-Zone and pressured the Barracudas' PK.

The pressure paid off when Avery Johnston's laser wrist shot beat Mooney, on assists from Hailey McGuire and Abby Pak, to pull the Panthers into a 1-1 tie.

The game-winning goal was scored twelve minutes later when the high-scoring combo of Murdoch and Manness clicked for the Barracudas.

Murdoch's league-leading 78th point of the campaign came in the form of an assist that sprung Manness along the left wing.

Improbably, Manness received the pass, pulled the puck between her skates, and in a highlight reel move, lifted the puck high short side between the crossbar and Whynot's shoulder in a miniscule gap.

Manness's game-winning-goal was a masterpiece befitting a gifted goal scorer.

The Panthers kept the Dynamic Duo off the scoresheet for the rest of the game, but a last minute flurry by the home side that included a clank off the goalpost with 45 seconds left came up a bit short versus Burlington.

Panthers Head Coach Steve Dempsey delineated what went right versus the Barracudas: ?Izzy Whynot had another good game in net for us today. We made a good effort against the third-best team in the country and we're still missing key players. We did a good job of ramping up?the effort continued to go up as the game continued. Our creativity was good at times, too.?

Coach Dempsey was critical of his team's ?D-zone coverage was lacking and we got trapped too long in our own zone at times.?

?Our final execution on our plays could have been sharper so we could capitalize on our scoring opportunities.?

Alas, it was a ?lost weekend? for the Panthers as they succumbed to the Barrie Sharks 4-3 on Sunday afternoon at SARC.

Zoe Li tallied two goals for Central York and Hailey McGuire added a single in the loss to the Sharks.

The Panthers established a 3-1 lead at 9:20 of the second frame and held their two-goal advantage for nine more minutes before the

Sharks scored two in the last two minutes of play to tie the game 3-3 heading into the final period.

Barrie scored their third unanswered goal with 9:25 left in the final frame to earn the road victory.

Central York's Cheyenne Degeer earned two assists in the loss to Barrie.

The Panthers' leading scorer has 16 goals and 22 assists to hold down tenth spot in the OWHL scoring race.

By Jim Stewart