

Aurora FC women on a hot streak

By Jake Courtepatte

The return of Aurora's most gifted talent on the pitch has sparked a fire under the Aurora United FC women.

Sarah Stratigakis scored twice to lead the AUFC to a 2-0 win over the Toronto Azzurri Blizzard, playing all ninety minutes of the match while Aurora only fielded nine players.

"I've been coaching for a long time and a lot of the players have been playing for a long time and I don't think any of us have ever been part of something like what we witnessed today," said Aurora head coach Gianni Cimini.

"The players and I will remember this forever and it is certainly something we will take with us in preparation for other games as well."

Down two players to Toronto's eleven, Cimini was forced to get creative and rotate his lineup to bear the brunt of the Azzurri attack.

"We said to the girls that it would be a unique challenge on the day and we had to take it step by step," he said.

"When we went to half-time at zero-zero after playing with two players down, we felt more confidence. I thought some players stepped up, more than a few actually, to the challenge and I'm very happy for them that they came out on top."

Stratigakis, who has now notched three goals in the three games since she returned to the lineup, capitalized at the 55 and 69-minute marks before the team turned to a shutdown role.

"Strategically speaking we just wanted to put our attacking players and some of our special players into positions where they could find a goal, like [Stratigakis] and Victoria (Pickett)," said Cimini.

"Sarah ended up finding two goals, and she worked her butt off for the entire game. The idea was just to get her as close to the net as we could."

Equally impressive on the backend has been the work of goalkeeper Patricia Koutoulas, who earned her third clean sheet in a row.

The talented keeper has now gone close to 300 minutes without allowing a goal.

The women take their 3-3-0 record to Highland Park in Aurora on Saturday to host the Vaughan Azzurri (4-1-1) with kickoff set for 3 p.m.

It was a different story for the men's side, who were on the wrong end of a 7-0 score in a match with Toronto FC III in Scarborough.

Goals at the 17, 43, 44, 45, 72, 81, and 89-minute marks left Aurora with the second clean sheet against them of the season, and the most goals conceded in a match.

Left to play down a man after the dismissal of Justin Broome in the 36th minute, Aurora needs to "take the loss in stride," said player Chris Jacovou.

"Once we got the red card we put our heads down and we weren't as positive as we should have been," he said.

"We conceded a second goal and dropped our heads completely and it is always hard playing against a squad like TFC. They are young, fit and talented and we just didn't win our individual battles. That's what it came down to. There is nothing more to say."

"We'll keep training and working hard and come back next week and hopefully get the result then."

Aurora will bring their 1-6-1 record to Highland Park this Saturday in a match against North Mississauga (2-6-0).

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