

Aurora Hearts? Mike Globocki fires second half goal to salvage 1-1 tie with Toronto Celtics in battle for first place

As the southbound 9 p.m. GO Train sped along the tracks past the Aurora Soccer Club, the green and white-striped Toronto Celtics took to the Highland Park turf to strengthen their precarious hold on first place in the MPE division of the Ontario Soccer League.

The undefeated Toronto club?sporting a record of eight wins and four draws?held a two-point lead over Aurora (8-2-1) with the Hearts holding a game in hand. The evenly-matched teams tied 1-1 on May 27 in Toronto to kick off the regular season and the Celtics and Hearts fought to another 1-1 draw on Friday night in Aurora.

Mike Globocki saved the day and salvaged the tie for the Aurora squad when he fired a 30-foot bullet along the turf and through a crowd past Celtics' goalkeeper Ian Giltinan with less than five minutes left in the match. Globocki described the importance of the showdown with the Celtics: ?Everybody was hyped for the game. We've been battling with them for first place all season. This tie was extremely important. It's now up to us to win both our two remaining games so we can finish in first.?

Globocki, one of the younger players on a strong Hearts club this year, described his timely tying goal that kept the Hearts in the hunt for first place: ?I crept up from centre back position and luckily the ball found my foot on a deflection. I had to hurry and I got the shot off quickly. As my dad used to tell me, ?Stick to the ground to the net' and the ball stayed low and I saw it go in the net.?

It was Globocki's second goal of the season.

The big crowd on the north sideline of Highland Park erupted when Globocki's shot rattled into the net because the home side trailed for most of the second half. The outcome looked doubtful, especially after the Hearts banged two off the crossbar on clear cut scoring opportunities in the final twenty minutes of play. Frustrations boiled over in the back half of the contest as two yellow cards were meted out to the rambunctious Celtics.

During a scoreless first half in which the teams played as evenly as the score would indicate, the goaltenders?Aurora's Filip Ljubevski and Ian Giltinan turned in all-star, athletic performances to keep the opposition off the scoresheet.

Ljubevski leads the MPE division in shutouts with 3 while Giltinan had earned two clean sheets. Both goalies made five saves in the first half.

Despite Ljubevski's heroics, the Celtics opened the scoring less than a minute into the second half.

Division-leading scorer Cal Sheehy kicked a low shot past the athletic Hearts goaltender from fifteen feet in front of the net to give the visitors a 1-0 lead. It was Sheehy's 18th goal of the season and he is running away with the MPE scoring race. Sheehy's closest pursuer is Ethan Ray of Barrie PE who has notched 12 goals. Cooper Grimes leads the Hearts in scoring with 9.

In the final minute of play, Globocki distinguished himself on defense. He foiled the Celtics with a sterling vertical play to repel the Toronto club's final scoring opportunity. Not only did Globocki score the tying goal, but he prevented the Celtic's best scoring chance to preserve a precious point in the standings.

The Aurora Hearts' next home game is on Wednesday, September 24, when they host Pamir PE. Kickoff is at 9:30 p.m. at Highland Park at the Aurora Soccer Club. The Hearts close their regular season on Sunday, September 28 when they play Pamir to complete the home-and-home series at 8:30 p.m. in Concord.

By Jim Stewart