

## Aurora Junior A Tigers? losing streak reaches five after weekend setbacks to Pickering and Cobourg

Former King Rebellion Head Coach Mark Joslin assumed the mantle of leadership with the struggling Cobourg Cougars at the end of September.

In his short tenure, the 2023 OJHL Coach of the Year has transformed a moribund group that opened the season 1-7 into a competitive squad that has gone 2-2 in its last four games.

The new esprit de corps was evident in Cobourg's decisive 7-3 win over Aurora at the ACC on Saturday night. Coach Joslin acknowledged the recent struggles of the Tigers.

?These guys were desperate for a win tonight after losing four in a row. I reminded our team before the game that we can't get complacent in a situation like this, so we came out firing. We got a pair of early goals, which was big for us on the road, and I was really happy with the work ethic all game.?

Carter Seto's shortie 1:01 into the game provided the visitors with an early 1-0 lead. Three minutes later, Lincoln Edwards made it 2-0. Marcus Carter's fourth of the season got Aurora on the scoreboard at 12:51, but that was as close as the Junior Tigers got on Saturday night.

The play of Jack Foley ? the OJHL's First Star of the Week ? was another decisive factor in Cobourg's road victory. Foley?whose four goals and two assists in four games earned him the honors?scored two goals in the second period. The talented forward's power play goal 2:44 into the middle frame restored Cobourg's two-goal margin and he earned the assist on Carson Durnin's game-winning, shorthanded marker that gave Cobourg a 4-1 lead at 7:28.

After newly-acquired Aurora defenseman Nick Frasca fired one from the point past Cobourg goaltender Reese Herman to reduce the Tigers' deficit to 4-2, Foley fired his sixth of the season to make it 5-2 at 18:46. Less than a minute later, former Tiger Max Cervjakovs pushed the Cobourg lead to four heading into the second intermission.

Coach Joslin commented on the recent offensive surge by Foley who was selected as the First Star of the Game by OJHL staff for his three-point performance.

?We've got to get the most out of our players right now as we try to turn around our season. Jack's got six goals in my first three games coaching the club. He was our top player out there again tonight.?

The steady play of goaltender Reece Herman?who stopped 26 of 29 shots to earn the W ? was also acknowledged by Coach Joslin: ?He's been great over the last three games. He's given us a chance to win.?

The lop-sided loss to the resurgent Cougars made the Tigers' weekend even more miserable after dropping a tough 6-4 decision to the Pickering Panthers on Friday night.

The Tigers played their best first period at home this season versus Pickering and their lineup was augmented by the arrival of four new players via trades.

A flurry of transactions by Tigers' management netted OHL Flint Firebird and North York Ranger forward Charlie Hotles who was moved on to Aurora's top line on the right wing with Captain Simon Howard at centre and Assistant Captain Cayden Smith at left wing. The trio dominated every shift in the first twenty minutes of play. Goaltender Finn Wilson arrived from the Trenton Golden Hawks, started between the pipes, and shut out Pickering for over 30 minutes of play.

Defenseman Nick Frasca took his place in a Top 4 pairing after being picked up from the Toronto Patriots. Forward Mason Dermastja arrived from the Stouffville Spirit and promptly endeared himself to his new teammates and fans at the ACC by giving Aurora a 1-0 lead at 9:29 of the first period.

Frasca earned his first point as a Tiger on Dermastja's first of the season.

When the Tigers defenseman Nicholas Brady beat Panthers' goaltender Anthony Sciere at 4:52 of the middle frame, the Tigers seemed poised to end their three-game losing streak and upset fourth-ranked Pickering.

However, three consecutive goals by the Panthers—including a pair of power play goals three minutes apart by Ryder Dagenais and Joshua Brady, and especially Carter Fogarty's goal with 1:26 left in the period—deflated the home side. Fogarty completed his hat trick with a power play goal at 11:07 of the final frame and an empty netter at 19:01.

The Tigers host Leamington on Friday, October 10.

Puck drop at the ACC is 7 p.m.

**By Jim Stewart**