

Aurora Tigers halt losing streak with gritty double-overtime 2-2 Tie with Lindsay Muskies

The Aurora Tigers have experienced tough times of late, but they played their best game in weeks on Saturday night at the ACC.

The Tigers earned a hard-fought point in the OJHL East Conference standings by tying the Lindsay Muskies 2-2 to snap a six-game losing streak.

A pair of overtime periods did not break the deadlock, but the Tigers dominated both five-minute overtime sessions and narrowly-missed a two-point victory.

Tigers' defenseman Luke Hampel, who had a pair of points versus the Muskies, noted important improvements by his struggling team.

"We executed tonight from start to finish. We limited our lapses and created great chances in overtime, including a 2-on-0 that should have won the game."

Hampel, who scored the tying goal during the second period on a booming shot just inside the blue line, took solace in the Tigers ending their losing streak.

"It was a big point and one is better than none. We have to start taking two points per game and get back in the playoff race."

Hampel credited power play partner Peter Lopes for setting up the game-tying goal in the second period against Lindsay.

"We finally converted on a good 5-on-3 power play. I got a perfect pass from Peter and was able to tee it up."

Tigers' Head Coach Tom Milne said he was pleased with Hampel's performance.

"Luke was very good tonight. When he's moving his feet, he's really good."

Coach Milne discussed the value of earning a point in the standings and ending the team's slide: "Mentally, it's good for us. They're getting some structure and I thought they gave it their all tonight. They did a great job on the 4 on 4 and the 3 on 3 in overtime. Lindsay and Evenhuis were dominant 4 on 4 and created all kinds of opportunities."

Coach Milne also complimented Ryan Evenhuis's performance at the Canada East All-Star tournament in Trenton earlier in the week. The Tigers' leading scorer tallied the winning goal for Team Hawerchuk in the tourney's semi-final.

"It was a good accomplishment for Ryan. He performed really well against the upper echelon players of Junior A Hockey."

Evenhuis scored Team Hawerchuk's second goal in a 3-1 victory over CCHL Robinson on Tuesday night. The OJHL all-star squad captured the tournament's gold medal with a 5-0 win in the championship game to go undefeated in Trenton.

Evenhuis leads the Tigers in scoring with 16 goals and 16 assists.

The speedy forward picked up his seventeenth assist of the season on Saturday night versus Lindsay when he flew down the left wing and feathered a perfect tape-to-tape pass to Keegan Decaluwe who rifled a shot past Muskies' netminder Ethan Fraser.

Decaluwe's goal, his eighth of the season, narrowed the Muskies' lead to 2-1.

Decaluwe's marker was significant because the Tigers were playing catch up on Saturday night. The Muskies scored two power play goals sixty-eight seconds apart before the game was seven minutes old.

Benjamin Polomsky converted Lindsay's man-advantage at 5.28 and Devin Shoreman scored another power play goal at 6.34 to give the visitors an early 2-0 lead.

The Tigers had a golden opportunity to get back in the game while on a 5-on-3 power play, but an unlucky bounce at the blue line was swept up by Muskie penalty killer Brock Forrest who was pulled down on a clear-cut breakaway on Tigers' netminder Yianni Karkoulas and awarded a penalty shot at 9.08.

However, Karkoulas came up clutch for the home team?deflecting Forrest's snapshot left of the cage to keep Aurora's deficit at two.

Karkoulas's big penalty shot save seemed to inspire the Tigers and was the turning point of the contest.

48 seconds later and still enjoying a power play, Evenhuis and Hampel earned assists on Decaluwe's marker to go into the dressing room trailing only by one.

Hampel's seventh goal of the season 12 minutes into the second period pulled the Tigers even with the Muskies.

The productive Tiger tandem of Peter Lopes and Ethan Lindsay earned their 15th and 20th assists, respectively, on Hampel's power play marker.

The Tigers' next home game is an afternoon tilt on Tuesday, November 28 versus the North York Rangers. Puck drop will be High Noon. Come out and spend a Tuesday with the Tigers. The OJHL game is being marketed as a 'School Game' so many local students will be filling the classic black and yellow chairs at the ACC.

The atmosphere at the arena promises to be buoyant for the boys!

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