

Aurora Tigers ready for redemption



By Jake Courtepatte

There are enough returning players to this year's Aurora Tigers roster to remember the pain of defeat in the 2015 OJHL playoffs.

'It's not a good feeling,' said forward Cameron Morrison at the end of last season, the rookie that led the team in goals. 'We had it and we just lost it.'

The Tigers are looking to put a semi-final loss to the Kingston Voyageurs behind them, one in which they led three games to none in the best-of-seven series.

'We just have to put it behind us and come back strong next year.'

And that's just what one of the most dominant teams in the Ontario Junior A Hockey League in recent years plans to do.

Despite the off-season shakeup at the executive level, with Mark Joslin taking the reins from James Richmond as head coach and assistant GM as well as ex-NHLer Jim Thomson as the new owner, the on-ice talent did not see much change. Morrison, along with his high-flying teammates Johnny Curran and Drake Board, are looking to lead the Tigers to the top of the regular season standings, just like the 2014/15 season.

With the departure of Andy Munroe between the pipes, the Tigers should be looking towards Marcus Semiao to bear a good brunt of the load in goal, having put together a stellar performance as a back-up last season. In 15 games, Semiao went 14-0-1, compiling a .928 save percentage and a 1.89 goals against average.

Interestingly, the club has also brought in 20-year old Cole Skinner from the Central Canada Hockey League, formerly with the Kanata Stallions and most recently the Smiths Falls Bears.

Coach Joslin said he's happy with what he saw on the ice during camp, where 45 players vied for a spot on the elite roster.

'This group of players has really pushed each other. They've been working hard to get their spot on the team, and we look good.'

This year's pre-season consists of a home-and-home with the Orangeville Flyers, with the Tigers taking to the ice in Aurora on Wednesday, following press-time. They then head to Orangeville on Saturday evening.

The team wrapped up their summer camp on Sunday with the final 'black vs. yellow' scrimmage match, concluding with the

players' exit meetings following a 6 ? 1 win by team black.

The regular season kicks off September 10 in Newmarket, a rematch of the OJHL quarter-finals with the Redbirds. The first home game goes two days later against the newly-minted Markham Royals, formerly the Hamilton Red Wings. All home games are at the Aurora Community Centre.

For a schedule of the 2015/16 season, visit www.auroratigers.pointstreaksites.com.