

Aurora Tigers show signs of improvement despite losses

It's really not their fault in a way; we know as sports viewers that back to back games already test your stamina. Four games in one week is a different animal.

What the Tigers have shown in this past week is resilience on another level. The team does deserve to be in the double-digit win column if it was not for some first and third period droughts and all the defensive mishaps interfering with that.

But where credit is undeniably due is the improvement from all the players and the coaching staff. When head coach Jim Wells Jr., said a few weeks ago that scoring is a problem, the Tigers now seem to have no issues with it. The boys sealed 16 goals last week in four games.

If the work put in earns that reward, when the defence comes along shouldn't that happen too?

?Defensively, we're struggling, there's no doubt about that,? said Wells, after the 8-5 loss against the North York Rangers. ?Understanding the man without the puck is the guy that is dangerous.?

He went on to add the boys need to identify threats, something he'll work on in practice.

It could reduce the 25 goals that found their way into the Tigers net last week.

Jonathan Balah and Sebastian Tamburro are the top two players on the roster, points-wise. But, over the past few weeks, players have been working on their game and improving.

Confidence is seeping into their veins at just the right time; that way, when the season finishes and next year rolls around, they know what to do.

Tamburro and Nelson have been implementing drills in practice while on the ice according to Wells. They've shown immense improvement in finding each other and creating chances.

Braeden McKinnon has been since scoring his game winner against Georgetown a few weeks back, he has seemingly been a different player. He wins faceoffs more often than not and recorded four points in four games last week.

Enough couldn't be said also about Aurora natives Jalen Balbosa and Luc Reeve. Reeve extended his point streak to five games, tallying eight assists in the process. Even Balbosa with a point streak of five games of

his own, recording 12 points. Their playmaking abilities have given players like Blake Frost the opportunity to score their first and second of the year.

But, aside from the points, it's the tenacity, the forecheck, the relentlessness to win battles that stands above it all.

The goaltenders, Andrew Barwinski and Christian Filippetti, do everything they can to keep the boys in.

It would be trite to say that only these players have been the difference. It is a team effort. Everyone is showing growth.

Most notably, in the game against the Rangers, the Tigers erased a two-goal deficit, twice in that game, to give themselves the chance to win. That's what it's all about for these boys.

AP, Curtis Boothe from the Junior C team Schomberg Cougars made an appearance for that game. The Sarnia Sting draft choice was outstanding.

After going down 3-1 in the first, Kaleb Nelson scored at the end of the period and at the beginning of the second to tie it all up. After conceding another two goals in the second, Frost scored twice in the third.

It's a matter of composure at this rate. Wouldn't it be?

Because against the Stouffville Spirit at home in the 7-5 loss, it was a 4-1 lead after the first. It seems as though deficits bring the best out of the boys.

In the final game of the week, away in Stouffville, the Tigers led 3-1 heading into the third period.

The Tigers couldn't hang on. The Spirit put 14 shots on goal and scored four times. Yes, that hurts.

In the final month of the season, the Tigers head out on the road for three of the last four games, stopping in Collingwood, Oakville and Burlington, before ending the year at home against Pickering.

By Robert Belardi