

Aurora United FC women earn another clean sheet

By **Jake Courtepatte**

Junior national team standout Patricia Koutoulas is a brick wall.

Four clean sheets over the past six games has the keeper and her team, Aurora United FC, climbing up the semi-pro League 1 Ontario ladder after a less-than-stellar start to the season.

Facing the lowly Sanjaxx Lions on Saturday, it was Meghan Reynolds that put Aurora on top just two minutes into the game, a lead they held onto for the remaining 88 for a 1 ? 0 win.

Rotating several players on the young squad after a scoreless rest of the first half, Aurora head coach Gianni Cimini said the team is hoping to allow the less experienced players to take their positions in stride.

?We have some younger girls that have been called up and we wanted to make sure their minutes over the weekend were appropriately managed and not overplayed,? he said. ?I think we accomplished that well.

?It's more psychological with these girls, just that they need to realize that not every game is going to be a perfect game, not every moment is going to go right for them in a match, and they need to deal with those frustrating times in a way where they come out on top.?

Despite holding on for the win, Cimini called the match ?frustrating?.

?We had a number of frustrating performances, and definitely that is more a psychological or mental aspect of the game for these girls. They are young but they are going to have to be better in the future.?

The women have turned their season around since late May after losing their first three games of the season, playing to a record of 4-5-0 to jump into eighth position in the League 1 standings.

They return to the pitch on Saturday against North Mississauga (4-1-4), with kickoff set for 7 p.m. at St. Maximilian Kolbe field. The men, meanwhile, have not fared so well as of late, dropping their third in a row Saturday in a 3 ? 1 loss to Sigma FC.

It was Aurora that opened the scoring in the first half, with Matthew Caguana scoring in the seventeenth minute, holding off the West division leaders until the first whistle.

?Sigma played how we thought they would in the first half,? said Aurora head coach Derek O'Keeffe. They are a very good team in wide areas and like to get their fullbacks up. I thought we really frustrated them in the first half, and we countered and got a goal, so with the first half performance I couldn't have been happier with the boys. They ran, their work-rate was tremendous, and I think we nullified Sigma.?

Sigma countered with an offensive onslaught in the second, scoring three goals in a matter of eleven minutes to take the lead for good.

Aurora came into the match off of a rare two-week break, something O'Keefe said may have affected his team's play.

?We just couldn't maintain it,? said O'Keefe. ?We just tired, we tired and our fitness wasn't there. We have some injuries and some new boys coming in as well that don't have that match sharpness. I think that little bit of class from them, that little bit of detail, just showed in the end.?

The men are back in action against the Windsor TFC Stars (3-4-4) at 4 p.m. Saturday at St. Max.