

Barbarians take out Markham Irish for first wins of the season

By John Reich

The Aurora Barbarians' Senior Men's team faced cross region rival Markham Irish Canadians for three matches at Fletcher's Fields on Saturday.

In the first team game, Coach Ian McLeod's pre-game decision to switch Mark Denton to fullback and bring in Sean Sinel to play at flyhalf as well as adding some veteran strength to the bench proved to be the right magic as Aurora won its first game of the year, knocking off the previously undefeated and reigning McCormick Cup champions Irish.

The game began with the typical fury exhibited by the two longtime rivals with open play and hard tackling from both squads. Markham drew first blood scoring a hard-fought try 10 minutes into the game but Aurora responded quickly with a series of tight passes that sprung winger Mike Neely open for a 60-metre run to the goal line.

Neely was able to set up under the posts to give kicker Mark Denton an easy conversion. Ten minutes later, it was wing forward Eric Charest crashing over for a try, also converted by Denton. But, before the half, a poor clearing kick caught the Aurora forwards in a mismatch with the Markham backs in the open field resulting in a try for the green team to close out the half at 14-10 in favour of the Barbarians.

In the second half, McLeod brought on veteran players Marco DiGirolamo and David Nielsen to settle the troops and despite receiving two yellow cards for professional fouls, Aurora played a lock down defence, restricting the Irish to a single try while picking up three of their own from Sinel, second row rookie Austin St. Amant and a clever kick and chase try from Neely for his second.

Mark Denton added two conversions and a penalty goal to round out an 11 point day. Final score: Aurora Barbarians 36 ? Markham Irish 15.

The second team game saw the Irish barge out to a 14 point lead in the first 10 minutes of the game as Aurora got off to what has become a pattern of slow starts.

Although the pace evened up after the initial thrust by Markham, the Barbarians were unable to repeat their heroics of the past two matches, falling 33- 27.

Scoring for Aurora was James Hulbert with two trys with Nick Manoukas and Derek Haines each getting a single. Hulbert added two conversions while U-18 graduate Conner Chowen tallied a penalty goal.

Aurora's third team made their season debut featuring a squad of very young players led by a small group of grizzled veterans, almost a perfect reflection of what was put out by the Irish.

The Irish came out with more energy, scoring the first try and dominating possession. But it became a seesaw battle from about midway through the first half with Aurora getting the better of Markham as the game wore on.

Both teams scored late trys but the superior kicking of Aurora put them over the top at the final whistle with a 26-25 win. Scoring for Aurora was Alex Jordan with a pair of trys and singles to Justin Foy and Jordan Marsh, all the scorers being just 19-years-of-age. James Hulbert added two conversions while Liam Kennelly added one as well.

With a 2-1 record Aurora will face Oakville Crusaders next week at Fletchers Fields. The Crusaders are also 1-2 having won their first match on the weekend as well, overpowering Stoney Creek 38-21 in Oakville.