

Battle of Yonge Street comes down to the wire after Tigers battle Caines



By Jeff Doner

Heading into the playoffs for a round with the rival Newmarket Hurricanes, the Aurora Tigers Junior A hockey club knew exactly what it would take to win, and, so far, have executed the game plan well.

After one week of play, the Tigers find themselves up 3 ? 0 in the OJHL playoff series, forcing the Hurricanes into a do-or-die situation for game four on Tuesday night.

?Obviously we want to win four straight and want to win them all right away and maybe get a little bit of a break and then get ready for the next series, but it's going to be a tough game four,? said Tigers' Captain Robert Angiolella. ?We know they're going to come out and battle us hard. It's do or die for them now and we want to come out with the win.?

After getting acquainted in the first two games of the series, game three was a better game all around, despite the fact that all the scoring came within a four minute span in the first period.

The Tigers got things going at the eight minute mark when Calvin Higley scored his first of the playoffs to put his team up 1 ? 0. Dylan Sikura and Taylor McCloy received assists on the goal.

A mere three minutes later, the Hurricanes would capitalize on some sloppy defensive zone play by the Tigers to tie the game.

However, it was Higley that would once again provide the heroics by netting his second of the game for a 2 ? 1 Tigers lead.

?It felt pretty good,? Higley said of his two goals. ?It's always good to score against your old team, but it feels better winning.?

From then on the game was a stalemate on the score sheet, but Kevin Entmaa made some big saves in the final 40 minutes to keep the Tigers ahead.

At one point in the third period, the Hurricanes had Entmaa beat, but the post bailed him out and the Tigers finished with the 2 ? 1 win.

Since their game one blowout, the series seems to have evened out a bit, which Higley said was to be expected.

?Playing in the playoffs with them last year we went really far and I kind of got used to playing in close games,? he said. ?You've got to win games 2 ? 1 and 1 ? 0 in the playoffs. You're not going to win 4 ? 1, you've got to be comfortable playing in a 2 ? 1 game at all times.?

Head coach James Richmond said it wasn't the cleanest win, but was nonetheless happy his team came out on top.

?The best thing about that game was the buzzer at the end,? he said. ?We came out pretty good and we had a good period and a half

and then I thought we got a little tight and started watching pucks a little bit.

?Their top guys, Petersen, Francisco and Farrell, played a heck of a game and put us on our heels a little bit, but even still we had a few more chances down low that bounced over sticks and Kevin Entmaa was really great in net.?

Richmond also said he was happy to see one of his scorers break out in the win.

?It's good for him,? he said of Higley. ?He didn't have a very good game in game two and he and I talked and he said he was going to be better tonight and he was. He was moving his feet, taking away lanes and the puck was coming to him. He can score, he's got great hands.?

Earlier in the week, the Tigers got the series off to a good start by clobbering the Hurricanes 6 ? 1 in game one at the ACC on Wednesday night.

The Tigers top scorers were largely responsible for the offensive outburst, with Robert Angiolella netting two goals and an assist and Michael Laidley with a goal and three points.

Austin Rigney, Dylan Sikura and Curtis Warren each added goals of their own, with goalie Kevin Entmaa making 24 saves for the win.

Game two the next night was less one-sided, but the Tigers strong defensive game along with some timely offence insured the win.

Kory Kennedy scored the only goal of the first period on the power play to get the Tigers off to a good start.

Newmarket tied it up in the second and took a 2 ? 1 lead to start the third, but Laidley's two third period goals secured a 3-2 win for the Tigers.

Hoping to finish off the Hurricanes in game four, Richmond said he wants his team to stick to the game plan and not get complacent.

?I don't think we change much,? he said. ?Tonight we changed up the forechecking system a bit, but I don't think we'll change much for game four. We'll just come out and go to work the same as we have all year.?

Added Higley: ?I think they're still going to come hard. You can never count anyone out. It's a seven game series, you've got to win four games and we've won three in a row, but a team can come back from 3 ? 0. We've just got to stay composed and win that fourth game.?