

Butler and Maynard tally two goals each in U12 Tigers' 5-2 win over Newmarket Renegades in 'Battle of Yonge Street'



Kaelen Butler and John Maynard tallied two goals each to lead the U12 Aurora Tigers to a convincing 5-2 win over the Newmarket Renegades in 'The Battle of Yonge Street' on Saturday afternoon at the ACC.

The annual spirit-raising and fundraising event in support of Covenant House pits rep teams from Newmarket and Aurora in a home-and-away series for 'bragging rights,' according to AMHA VP Holly Windle.

'Every year, we choose a weekend where we can do a series of home and away games with Newmarket. We total the points earned by all the teams and the winning association gets to hang their jersey in the head office of the losing association for the year. It's a fun weekend. Beyond the good-natured rivalry and spirit of competition, the more important purpose is to raise money for Covenant House. Half the proceeds of our 50/50 draw are donated to Covenant House to help homeless youth.'

After the opening ceremonies, featuring a slate of dignitaries from both hockey associations and a ceremonial puck drop presided over by Mayor Tom Mrakas, the young Tigers and Renegades' spirited tilt added another chapter to the storied historical rivalry between Aurora and Newmarket.

Tigers' goaltender Caiden Gnanapragasam made a big save to open the entertaining contest when he thwarted a clear-cut breakaway created by a botched line change by Aurora. However, the red-jerseyed Renegades took a 1-0 lead when Nolan Kimla fired a high shot that fluttered under the crossbar three minutes into the first period.

Although the Renegades kept the Tigers hemmed in the own end for most of the opening frame, the white-clad home side managed to sustain pressure on the visitors and only a pair of spectacular saves by Newmarket netminder Camden Leblanc kept Aurora scoreless.

Remarkably, the Tigers got on the scoreboard while killing a penalty when Butler banged home the tying goal from the slot as the Renegades' power play seemed discombobulated by Aurora's PK pressure. The teams took their 1-1 tie into the first intermission.

In the first minute of the middle frame, Butler stickhandled through three Renegades with a brilliant individual effort, and slid the puck past Leblanc to give Aurora their first lead of the game.

Renegades' forward Michael Bellissimo banged home a rebound past Gnanapragasam at 12:41 to pull Newmarket into a 2-2 tie, but

Maynard took a nice centering pass at 8:54 and buried the biscuit to restore Aurora's lead.

With 40.3 seconds left in the second period, Aurora forward Daniel Tropiano rifled a wrist shot past Leblanc and just under the crossbar to give the Tigers a two-goal cushion heading into the third period.

Two minutes into the final frame, Maynard tallied his second goal of the game from a goal mouth scramble to provide Aurora's margin of victory in front of over 150 clamouring fans at the ACC.

By Jim Stewart