

## Canadian Junior Hockey League places Tigers fifth in national rankings

**By Jake Courtepatte**

The success of the Aurora Tigers Junior A franchise this season has not gone unnoticed on a national scale.

A recent ranking of the top teams in the Canadian Junior Hockey League (CJHL) has the Tigers in fifth place, the only Ontario Junior Hockey League team to crack the top ten.

The honour is due in large part to the play and leadership of a handful of veterans and newcomers, some of which may be away from the team for the remainder of the month.

With six players selected to try out for Team Canada East in mid-December's World Junior A Challenge in Saskatchewan, it may cost the Tigers points in both the CJHL ranks and the OJHL standings, but assistant coach Thomas Milne says that strong goaltending and a good defensive core could keep the team at the top of their game.

'We'll just have to change our game plan a bit,' said Milne. 'You won't see us having possession as much, probably be doing a lot of chipping and chasing.'

He also mentioned the success of the special teams this year, where the Tigers sit in the top three in the OJHL in both powerplay percentage and penalty kill percentage.

'Our special teams have been good all year, we shouldn't have to worry about that.'

And with every negative there is a positive. The extra roster space and ice time should give opportunity to some of the younger and more inexperienced players, looking to make an impact on a powerhouse team.

'To make a team you've got to have different guys that buy into different roles,' said Milne. 'Some of these guys now will get to step into roles that maybe they wouldn't have got with all the other guys back? it'll be good to see how everyone takes on their roles.'

While one recent newcomer, Kyle Locke, could be on his way to Saskatchewan, two remain behind with the team in forwards Taylor Joseph and Mack Lemmon.

While Lemmon came from the OHL's Kingston Frontenacs, Joseph was the leading scorer on Newmarket's OJHL team before being traded.

'He'll get an expanded role now, as he tries to fit into our system,' said Milne. 'There's always an adjustment period of four to six weeks when guys come here. But, Joseph's been really good for us, he's been killing penalties and he scored the other night.'

And in a situation like this, the coaching staff sees the importance of experience in guys like ex-OHLer Lemmon.

'He's been a good player for us, he was a high draft pick in the OHL, so he's been around the game a lot.'

Meanwhile, the team can rest easy knowing their last line of defence, goaltender Andy Munroe, was recently named Gongshow Goaltender of the Month.