

Castiglione's 2-goal performance earns OJHL First Star of the Game honors in Tigers' 7-2 loss to Oakville

Tigers' rookie forward Frank Castiglione's two-goal performance earned him OJHL First Star of the Game honors on Saturday night in Oakville, but Aurora's 7-2 loss to the Blades was the struggling team's fifth in a row.

The Tigers ended their six-game road trip with a 1-5 record. The young team's "Road Trip from Hell" which opened in a promising manner with a 4-3 win over the Caledon Admirals rolled into Toronto on Friday night.

Sixth-place St. Mike's (22-14-1-5) shut out Aurora's rookie-laden lineup 6-0. With two losses on the weekend, the eleventh-place Tigers fell to 11-29-2-2 and nineteen points out of a playoff berth.

Castiglione, a bright light in an otherwise dismal season, scored both goals in the second period versus Oakville. The Blades, who reside in sixth place in the OJHL's Eastern Conference, took a 2-0 lead heading into the middle frame on Saturday night.

Castiglione's ninth of the season at 4:04 narrowed Oakville's lead to 2-1. Assists were earned by Tigers' hard-hitting rookie forward Adam Matar and Captain Keegan Decaluwe.

Gleb Akimov restored the Blades' two-goal lead at 5:51, but Castiglione fired a puck past Mikkel Christensen six minutes later to pull the visitors to within one. Rookie forward Jobey Pearson from Squamish, BC added a helper on Castiglione's tenth of the campaign, and Matar drew his second assist of the period.

However, the Blades fired four unanswered goals by Kenny Belanger, Noah Tyrell, Eric Bonsteel, and Aidan Taylor to establish their five-goal margin of victory.

Oakville outshot Aurora 50-38.

The road-weary Tigers, who have not played at the ACC since December 16, have an opportunity to recalibrate this weekend when they play their first home games of 2024. On the brink of elimination from the playoffs with only twelve regular season games remaining, Aurora hosts the tenth-place Pickering Panthers (14-24-1-4) on Friday and the eighth-place Lindsay Muskies (20-16-1-4) on Saturday.

Puck drop for both "must-win" games at the ACC is 7.30 p.m.

By Jim Stewart