

Central York Junior Panthers beat Barracudas 3-1 in Burlington

Amber Esterbrooks fired the game-winning goal and Izzy Whynot kicked out 27 of 28 shots to lead the U22 Central York Panthers to a crucial 3-1 win over the Burlington Barracudas at the Mainway Recreation Centre on Saturday afternoon.

Assistant Coach and CYGHA President Mark Dubeau cited the Junior Panthers' "second efforts, diving for loose pucks, blocking shots, and desperate play" as four key factors in the road win.

Coach Dubeau also credited the fine play of Whynot as a key to victory over the third-place Barracudas.

"Izzy tracked the puck really well today. She gave up very few rebounds and was very quiet in the net."

The eighth-place Panthers opened the scoring when Erica Buckley one-timed "a perfect pass" from leading scorer Cheyenne Degeer at 14:57 of the first period.

Degeer's nifty feed earned the gritty Panther her 25th assist of the season on Buckley's 14th goal of 2023-24.

The Barracudas evened the score in the second period when high-scoring Sara Manness potted her 37th of the season at 9:26. Claire Murdoch "the leading scorer in the OWHL with 107 points" earned her 62nd assist on the tying goal.

However, the Panthers showed their resolve on the road and would not be denied in Burlington.

Central York's leading goal scorer Amber Esterbrooks buried a rebound for the game winner with 1:22 left in the second period.

Li picked up her second assist of the game on Esterbrooks' 22nd of the campaign.

Avery Johnston's 15th goal gave the visitors a 3-1 lead when she redirected Esterbrooks' pass with 7:43 left in the game to provide the Junior Panthers some breathing space and their margin of victory.

The precious road win in Burlington retained Central York's hold on the 8th and final OWHL playoff spot that carries with it a bye into the Provincial Playoffs later this month.

By Jim Stewart