

Coaching staff pleased with how Tigers are playing

Following a 1-1-1-week, head coach of the Aurora Tigers Greg Johnston said he is very happy with where the staff and the players stand.

'I'm very, very happy with where we're at. Rob (Powers) and Joey (Piccone) are young coaches. Robby is very young in the coaching scheme of things and he is very prepared and does an excellent job with the defence, totally engaged. I'm the head guy but we coach by committee in the full scheme of things,' Johnston said.

'We make adjustments live time. They come down to me and say what they think about this and I come down to them and ask them, 'what do they think about this?' It's a really good comfortable group. We're all on the same page. We know our roles and we're comfortable with those roles and then you got Jimmy (Thomson) on top the owner and talks to us regularly. He's got a good hockey background and we feed off of that as well.'

Following a 5-1 loss to the Milton Menace, a 5-3 win against the Stouffville Spirit and an overtime loss to the Brantford 99ers, Johnston and the staff have been pleased with the boys. They are playing hard every night and giving it they're all. Their offence is secretly creative as the boys average 3.00 goals per game (14 in the league), averaging 33.9 shots per game (above the league average of 30.96).

But moving forward, there is a bigger emphasis on the defensive side of the puck as the Tigers currently rank 15 in the league in goals against, averaging 3.80 goals against per game.

'It's more just cleaning up. We don't have to do anything drastic. Overall, it's been pretty good. But we have to do a better job in protecting our house, and a little bit better on the defensive side of things. Sometimes we cheat a little bit and think offense before we take care of the defence,' Johnston said.

'Power play has been good. Penalty kill has been very good. [We're] really happy with that. I don't think we're taking a lot of penalties, which is good. We're playing very disciplined. The guys are good [and] we've just got to take care of our end a little more. You can't expect to win giving up five. We have to be better defensively as a unit.'

Johnston emphasised all of this, without taking away the offensive creativity his team possesses. He stressed the group has to find the right balance and the correct formula moving forward to stay within games.

Ranked in the top five in both power play and penalty kill, the Tigers' drastic changes over the past two years has made the world of a difference on the ice.

They had to put that all to the test against a top Georgetown Raiders side that is currently averaging 5.11 goals per game ranked third in the league and ranks fifth in goals against with 2.44 per game.

To view the results of that game, head to ojhl.ca.

To catch the Tigers in action this Friday, the boys will be on the road in Markham to challenge the Royals. In their two previous matchups, the Tigers took out the Royals 5-2 both times respectively.

Puck drop is this Friday in Markham at 7.30 p.m.

By Robert Belardi