

Decaluwe's two-goal performance leads the Aurora Tigers to a 6-2 win over the Lindsay Muskies

Keegan Decaluwe pumped in a first period power play goal and a second period short-handed goal to pace the Aurora Tigers to a 6-2 win over the Muskies on Friday night at the Lindsay Rec Complex.

The Tigers scored four unanswered goals to break a 2-2 second period tie and picked up a key divisional victory to improve their OJHL record to 4-5-1.

It was the Tigers' third road game in three nights following a pair of tough 4-3 and 4-1 losses to the Markham Royals and the North York Rangers, respectively, at the OJHL Showcase in Buffalo, New York.

Tigers Head Coach Greg Johnston was pleased with how his tired team soldiered through in Lindsay.

"We needed to win after losing both games in Buffalo. The guys really battled to get a big two points on the road."

Coach Johnson applauded Decaluwe's game-winning, short-handed goal versus the Muskies.

"Keegan made a great steal at the blue line and outskated the last Lindsay player. Keegan's effort turned the tie game to our favor and it was big that we stole a goal off their power play. Short-handed goals like the one Keegan scored hurt for sure."

He also complimented Ryan Evenhuis's effort in Lindsay which led to the forward's team-leading eighth goal of the season and a key insurance marker on Friday night.

"Ryan is skating well, he's moving well, and he's seeing well. He stole the puck, beat two Lindsay players, and put us up 4-2. It was a big goal in the second period to give us some breathing room."

The Tigers struck first in Lindsay with two goals in the first seven minutes of play, despite being outshot 17-5 in the first period.

Keegan Decaluwe's first goal of the game came via the power play at 4:52 finishing off a three-way passing play with Frankie Castiglione and Captain Ethan Lindsay. Luke Hampel, on an assist from Jace Lavallee, made it 2-0 at 7:04. However, with Tigers Captain Ethan Lindsay in the penalty box for slashing, the home team's power play unit narrowed the margin to 2-1 at 14:33 when Joaquin Gonzalez finally beat Tigers' netminder Will Goumas who had mesmerized the Muskies up to that point in the opening frame.

Lindsay drew even with Aurora four minutes into the second period when Brock Forest finished a Devin Shoreman pass, but that was all the offence the Muskies could muster as the Tigers responded with four consecutive goals for the balance of the game and Goumas shut the door to subdue the home side.

Decaluwe's short-handed, unassisted goal at 7:10 of the middle frame turned out to be the game-winner and Aurora's scoring leader Ryan Evenhuis scored two minutes later to put the Tigers up 4-2 heading into the second intermission.

Peter Lopes earned the assist on Evenhuis's eighth goal of the season.

The Tigers did not sit on their two-goal lead and opened the third period aggressively. Jace Lavallee, on assists from Hampel and Luca Hobbs, scored one minute into the final frame to open up a three-goal lead for the visitors.

Tigers forward Tyler Oletic closed the scoring when he finished a passing play from Kyle Baston and Hampel at 9:31 to put the visitors up by four. The last minute of the game featured some fisticuffs when Rookie Tiger Luca Hobbs earned a major and game

misconduct after exchanging pleasantries with Nick Galeazza who was issued an identical punishment.

The skirmish also involved Tigers Tyler Oletic who engaged in some roughing and verbal jousting with Vince Albanese and Shoreman.

Aurora netminder Will Goumas turned in another strong performance between the pipes for the Tigers, stopping 36 of the 38 Muskie shots, including 16 of 17 in the first period when Aurora was outshot by a 12-shot margin.

Coach Johnston complimented his keeper's disposition and his work in Lindsay.

?He's a positive kid on and off the ice. He's played really solid. He gives us an opportunity to win every night. He has the ability to steal a game and did that in Lindsay on Friday night. Goumas gives the guys in front of him a lot of confidence.?

The Tigers will need that confidence when they return home for two consecutive games against OJHL division leaders on Thanksgiving Weekend at the Aurora Community Centre: a tilt with the East Division-leading Toronto Junior Canadiens on Friday, October 6 followed by a matchup with the West Division-leading Collingwood Blues on Saturday, October 7.

Coach Johnston delineated the keys to victory against these front-running teams: ?The biggest thing is we have to be skating well. [The Canadiens and Blues] play sound hockey and they have great skaters. There's a reason both teams are in first place. We'll have to be sound on defence, too. There are no easy games in this league.?

Puck drop for both these challenging games will be at 7:30 PM at the ACC this weekend.

After their Holiday Weekend home-stand, the Tigers?ever the ?Road Warriors' thus far this OJHL season?embark on another four-game road trip with games in Burlington, Trenton, Toronto, and Pickering on October 10, 13, 14, and 17, respectively.

By Jim Stewart