

Grim prospects ahead as Barbarians slip to last place in league

By John Reich

The Aurora Barbarians senior men's rugby club slipped into unfamiliar territory in Ontario's Marshall Premiership after falling to the Harlequins at the George Jones Rugby Complex in Brantford on Saturday.

The loss, combined with a win by Waterloo County RFC, pushed the Barbarians into last place in the standings with the grim prospect of relegation to the Tier Two Division now looming.

The Aurora side travelled to Brantford buoyed up by the return of four veteran players to the lineup, but also missing a few key younger starters due to injury and alternate commitments.

Head Coach Ian McLeod was also unavailable for the match as he was away leading the Provincial Under-18 team at the national championships in Calgary.

The team struggled early while sorting out its defensive alignments and attacking lines. Brantford took advantage of the situation scoring two tries early to lead 12-0.

After 15 minutes, the Barbarians were fortunate to get a line break from deep in their half and great support play resulted in a try by Daniel Resnick. The conversion by Mark Denton brought the score to 12-7. The Barbarians miscued on the ensuing kickoff, putting Brantford in a position to score their third try, but the Barbarians managed a try of their own before the half ended by AJ Luongo and the convert and a subsequent penalty kick from Denton left the gap at only 19-17 in favour of Brantford at the break.

Despite a determined effort to start the second half, the Aurora side made some costly turnovers and proved suspect in their tackling allowing Brantford to score two tries early in the half.

The Barbarians made an attempt at a comeback including a long support try by Mark Denton, but Aurora was only able to squeak in one other try near the end of the game on a strong individual effort by replacement player Tyler Neil, and Brantford picked up one more to make the final score 41-29. The final try by Neil was significant in giving the Barbarians four on the day and a valuable bonus point.

But the home victory by Waterloo over Markham Irish gave the County club a five point win and they now sit two points ahead of the Barbarians in the standings.

In the second team game, the Barbarian Development side was again reeling due to call-ups. Despite a superior scrum, the squad could not match the pace and pressure exerted by Brantford. The game was characterized by overlaps and breakaway runs coming from the Harlequins and a disappointing lopsided final score.