

## Humphries's 57-save performance spurs Tigers to 5-2 upset of JRC and earns promotion to Ice Dogs

Matthew Humphries bid adieu to the Aurora Tigers on Monday, but not before leading the club to its best performance in 2025: a decisive 5-2 victory over the powerful Toronto Junior Canadiens on Sunday afternoon.

The game was played in front of 478 fans at Newmarket's Ray Twinney Complex - JRC's prospective new home.

Based on Sunday afternoon's sublime performance between the pipes, Humphries was promoted to the Niagara Ice Dogs for the rest of the OHL season. Humphries's promotion is a feather in the cap for the Tigers' organization and provided some much-needed good news after the team's tough 0-4 homestand.

Sunday's victory demonstrated Humphries's capacity to steal wins. The Tigers were outshot 59-30, but Humphries was spectacular - especially in the second period when he stopped all 24 shots fired at him by the high octane JRC offense.

The Tigers took an early 2-0 lead in Newmarket when Christian Holden and Cayden Smith lit the lamp before the middle of the first frame. Iliya Shybinshkyi pulled JRC to within one with exactly four minutes before first intermission, but the Tigers strengthened their lead with two quick second period goals.

RIT D1 commit Andreas Mikrogiannakis fired his 11th of the season at 2:36. Twenty-five seconds later, Michael Piao beat Toronto goaltender Sebastian Monaco to give Aurora a commanding 4-1 - despite being outshot 41-24 after two periods of play.

Brady Wassink's goal at 3:56 of the third period narrowed Aurora's lead to 4-2, but the unflappable Humphries made seventeen more saves in the final frame to seal the victory in his final game as a Tiger.

The lightning-quick Mikrogiannakis fired his second goal into an empty net at 17:56 to provide the Tigers' margin of victory.

The big win in Newmarket bordered on the miraculous for a Tigers squad that struggled through a recent homestand.

After one-sided 8-2 and 7-2 losses to JRC and St. Mike's, respectively, the Tigers sought a reversal in fortune versus the high-flying Haliburton County Huskies on Friday night at the ACC.

Despite a compelling 48-save performance by Aurora rookie goaltender Erik Powers, the Tigers mustered little offence and were blanked 5-0. For his acrobatic heroics, Powers earned Second Star of the Game honors by OJHL staff.

Undaunted by the home team's tepid offensive performance, the 3rd Aurora Scouts group cheered heartily for the Tigers from start to finish. The contingent of six leaders and 22 youngsters - comprised of Beavers, Cubs, and Scouts - was comfortably ensconced in rink-side seats beside the Haliburton bench.

The spirited community group pounded the boards and chanted in unison, "Let's Go Tigers," including one big collective cheer with five minutes remaining and the home side trailing by four. The Scouts also dominated the Chuck-a-Puck contest during the second intermission and an older sister connected to the extended group won a vintage Tigers jersey for her marksmanship.

The Scouts and their families had a great time cheering on the Tigers, much to the delight of Scout Leader Kyle Munro who noted, "This is the second Tigers game we've attended."

It's a good night out for the kids and their parents. It's also a good local community event for us to attend. We're here to support the local team. The kids are engaged in the game. Many of them play in the Tigers house league so I heard them talking about playing on the ACC ice. It was also great that one of their older sisters won the Chuck-a-Puck, too."

Munro, who is a Group Commissioner with Scouts Canada, expressed his gratitude to Tigers' owner Jim Thomson for the group's discounted tickets, great seats, and for providing a fun night for the group.

The Tigers have been very generous to us. A great part about tonight is that for many of our kids, this was their first Junior Hockey game.

The Scout leader remained as optimistic as his troop during our third period interview.

Now all we need is a quick five goals.

Alas, the comeback hoped for by the 3rd Aurora Scouts group did not materialize and the Tigers lost for the sixth game in a row. The home side was outshot 55-15.

In addition to being treated to Powers's strong performance between the pipes, dozens of fans enjoyed concession manager Yu Ding's \$5 popcorn, a gastronomic delight on a rough night at the ACC. The Tigers closed out the four-game homestand with a tough 6-1 loss to the Cobourg Cougars making Sunday night's win at Ray Twinney a comparative "Miracle on Ice" for the rookie-laden Aurora lineup.

Hope springs eternal with stellar goaltending.

**By Jim Stewart**