

## Johnson and Howard deliver three-point performances as Tigers crown Royals 7-4

The Aurora Tigers sprung back into the win column with a decisive 7-4 victory over the Royals at the Markham Centennial Community Centre last Sunday afternoon.

Matthew Johnson and Simon Howard delivered three-point performances to help snap Aurora's four-game losing streak. Nolan Shaw led the Tigers with two goals, including the game-winner in the second period.

Andrew Murray opened the scoring for the Royals at 1:51, but Shaw tied the game at 13:10 with helpers from Simon Howard and Luc Warner.

Three minutes later, Domenic Battaglia set up Johnson's seventh of the season to stake the Tigers to a 2-1 lead.

Aurora defenseman Luke Howard fired the puck past Markham goaltender Sebastian Monaco less than three minutes into the second period. Assists were earned by Johnson and Battaglia.

After Travis Rekar's unassisted goal pulled Markham to within one goal of the visitors, Michael Piao, Shaw, and Cayden Smith scored three consecutive goals in the middle frame to give the Tigers a commanding 6-2 lead.

Owen Ferguson's 13th of the season reduced Markham's deficit to three with eight minutes left in the second and Andrew Lanni's unassisted marker made it 6-4 at 6:01 of the final frame.

Tristen Aben's empty netter at 18:29 closed the scoring and provided the margin of victory for Aurora.

Tigers' goaltender Christopher Thompson made 30 saves—including 16 in the pivotal second period-- to earn the W.

On January 7, the Tigers traveled to Trenton to face the powerhouse Golden Hawks. The #1 team in the OJHL East skated to a 5-1 win over Aurora in front of 526 fans at Duncan Memorial Gardens to improve their stellar record to 30-5-2-0. With the loss, the young Tigers fell to 8-26-0-3.

Golden Hawks' forward David Fournier—currently second in the OJHL scoring race with 62 points in 36 games—fired his 31st of the season 1:15 into the contest. Thomas Kuipers made it 2-0 for the home side at 11:32. Eight seconds later, however, the plucky Tigers clawed back when Battaglia—with assists from Johnson and Smith—beat Trenton goaltender Brady Spry to pull Aurora to within one.

Jamie Darlison's power play goal at 11:11 of the second period restored Trenton's two-goal lead and the Golden Hawks pulled away in the third period with Spencer Hughes scoring at 2:51. Mason Landry put the finishing touches on Trenton's four-goal victory with 62 seconds left in the game.

The Golden Hawks peppered Aurora goaltender Erik Powers with 44 shots.

**By Jim Stewart**