

JRC Juggernaut rolls to 8-2 win over Aurora Junior Tigers

The Toronto Junior Canadiens tallied six unanswered goals in the second and third period en-route to an impressive 8-2 thumping of the Aurora Tigers at the ACC on Friday night.

The perpetually-cycling JRC squad?currently the #2 seed in the OJHL East?resembled a red wave that swept away the home side.

Junior Canadiens' Head Coach David DeMarinis was pleased with his team's performance.

?All four lines play well and all four contributed tonight. These are valuable points for us to pick up with sixteen games left in the season.?

Coach DeMarinis felt that his talented squad ?played the JRC way.?

?It's all about Buy-In. Every player has bought in to our program. They work out three times a week and are dedicated to doing things the right way.?

Even though his team has accrued a sparkling 30-7-0-3 record, Coach DeMarinis acknowledged that a deep run in the OJHL playoffs will be a tall order.

?It's going to be tough. It's never easy, but I think we have the size, speed, and talent to be a very strong playoff opponent. We're always looking for ways to improve as we head towards the playoffs.?

Red-clad JRC, darting across the ACC ice surface in their vintage Montreal Canadiens jerseys, resembled a playoff-ready hockey team on Friday night and lit the lamp before the game was two minutes old.

Coach DeMarinis applauded the two-goal effort of forward Jay Feldberg who tallied his twelfth of the season 78 seconds into the game.

?Jay has been playing very well and he was at the right spot at the right time on his first goal. He's having a good season.?

Aurora goaltender Christopher Thompson resisted the red wave for the balance of the opening frame, repelling 12 shots and keeping his team in the hockey game with sharp athletic saves. Thompson's heroics helped weather the red storm and the Tigers tied the game with four minutes left in the first period when persistent forward Tristen Aben banged in his own rebound on the edge of JRC goaltender Amir Valiullin's crease.

It was the hard-working Aben's sixth of the season.

Feldman struck again 3:17 into the second period when he received a perfect pass from Luka Graziano. The JRC playmaker drew two Tiger defenders toward him and slid the puck deftly to Feldberg who one-timed the puck past Thompson.

It was the first of three assists by Graziano versus Aurora.

Two minutes later, the Tigers demonstrated resilience when leading scorer Simon Howard cashed in a picture-perfect pass from Nolan Shaw to tie the game 2-2. It was Howard's 11th of the season.

Although the home side stayed with the #2 team in the OJHL East for a period and a half, the swirling red wave eventually swept through the young Aurora squad.

At 11:37, Jared Harding displayed fine marksmanship when he fired the puck over Thompson's shoulder and under the crossbar from the slot. JRC opened a 4-2 lead when Kristian Lamanna made a power move off the left wing and fired a snapshot that beat Thompson stick side.

Thompson made a series of sensational saves after Lamanna's marker to keep the Tigers competitive, but Lucas Teixeira ripped a wrist shot under the crossbar that bulged the twine behind the overworked Aurora goaltender to give the visitors a three-goal cushion heading into second intermission.

Being treated to JRC's high-octane offence was the highlight of the night for any hockey fan in attendance at the ACC on Friday. The Junior Canadiens' balanced offence produced three more goals in the third period.

Joseph Macchione deftly corralled a bouncing puck and fed it to Brett Bouchard who was left all alone in front of the Tigers' net. Bouchard deposited the puck past Thompson to increase the visitors' lead to 6-2 at 5:43. In all, Thompson faced 48 shots and soldiered through the game heroically.

With under four minutes to play, Lamanna scored his second of the contest to give JRC a five-goal lead.

One final dash by Toronto's red wave resulted in a pretty tape-to-tape-to-tape passing play as Tyler Vorstadt fed Macchione whose dish to a wide-open Brayden Russell gave JRC their eighth goal and sealed an emphatic road victory?their 30th of the season.

The loss to the Junior Canadiens kicked off a four-game home-stand for the eleventh-place Tigers (8-29-0-3) who will host the third-place Haliburton County Huskies (28-11-0-1) on January 24, the seventh-place Cobourg Cougars (17-15-1-6) on January 25, and the ninth-place Lindsay Muskies (15-24-1-1) on January 31 in OJHL East matchups.

By Jim Stewart