

Junior A Tigers head coach to double as general manager

By Jake Courtepatte

The carousel continues to turn in junior hockey circles.

As is the case every year, the turnover of a junior hockey team is usually substantial: for the Aurora Tigers, notable this year are the changes in the front office.

After the Tigers were eliminated in the first round of the Ontario Junior Hockey League playoffs by the Newmarket Hurricanes in early March, both GM Dermot Anderson and head scout Jason Maslakow stepped down from the posts to take on new challenges elsewhere.

Team owner Jim Thomson was quick to fill the general manager's void with a familiar face: head coach Rob De Fulviis.

"I'm excited to be joining the Tigers management team for the upcoming season," said De Fulviis in a statement to the OJHL. "I'm looking forward to building a contender for years to come."

A first-year coach with the Tigers after a professional playing stint in the ECHL, the 27-year old De Fulviis takes the reigns for the first time alongside his former assistant coach Luke McCarthy, in what they hope will make for a smooth transition.

As for taking on the monumental role, De Fulviis told The Auroran it was a "no-brainer."

"I was fortunate to be brought on as an assistant coach last season, and I was so honoured to be named head coach a few months later," said De Fulviis, who took over from Mario Cicchillo early in the season. "To have this recognition this early in my coaching career, I'm so humbled and I can't say thank you enough to Jim and Rita Thomson for them to put the brand of their business in my hands, I really can't express my gratitude enough."

After spending almost the entirety of the first half of the OJHL season in first place in the division, the Tigers struggled down the stretch, something De Fulviis said he admits will need a "reevaluation."

?Obviously

we fell short of our ultimate goal this past season, but I believe we have a lot of the right pieces in place,? said De Fulviis. ?It's going to be a great summer of adding to what we have, and hopefully adding the pieces that I've targeted will set us up to be contenders for years to come.

?The

Tigers are such a storied franchise in the OJHL, with multiple national championships, graduating players year in and year out, and I just am so excited to contribute and add to the past success this franchise has seen.?

As

for Anderson and Maslakow, known around Toronto Maple Leafs fan circles as ?Dart Guy?, both have joined the newly-formed Collingwood Colts franchise, which will serve as a farm system for the OHL's Barrie Colts.

?I

would like to thank the Aurora Tigers for an amazing last three years,? said Anderson in a statement. ?Thank you Jim and Rita Thomson for trusting me with your brand, product, and hockey club.

?To

all the players and coaches I have crossed paths with, you are all beauties?.to the Town of Aurora, you have been amazing to me. You were my second home for three-plus years.?

Maslakow

said it was ?with a heavy heart? that he was stepping down from his post.

?This

was not an easy decision as the Tigers are a first-class organization that believed in me, took a chance on me?I want to thank all the fans and the Town of Aurora, you embraced me from day one and always made me feel like part of the city and culture in Aurora and I will never forget that.?

De

Fulviis said he was ?very excited? for the two as they take on the challenge.

?They

are two incredibly hard-working people. Dermot and I spent a lot of time together this past season. We were always bouncing ideas off of one another, and he had an answer for any question I had for him throughout the year. He was a great help to me, and we established a pretty good friendship as well.?

As

for Thomson, De Fulviis, and the rest of the staff, the show goes on: spring development camp is fast approaching in early May. More info can be found at www.auroratigers.pointstreaksites.com.