

Junior A Tigers losing streak reaches four games



By Jake Courtepatte

The Aurora Tigers will be in tough in looking to return to OJHL contender status, after seeing their record plummet to 2-9-0-2 in the new year and their losing streak hit four games over the weekend.

A pair of losses to the Whitby Fury and rival Newmarket Hurricanes in back-to-back nights has the playoff-clinched Tigers almost at the .500 level, a position the club has not held since the start of the season.

The absence of league-leading scorer in Friday's tilt with the Fury was certainly felt on the bench at the Aurora Community Centre, where the Tigers were shutout by a score of 4 ? 0.

The Fury managed to outshoot the Tigers 35 ? 28 in the contest, with Aurora goaltender Lucas Durante managing 31 stops. Luke Pearson picked up the shutout for Whitby.

Saturday's meeting with the Hurricanes was a much closer battle between two evenly-matched squads, with the Canes coming out on top 4 ? 2 after a late empty-netter.

Jack Varga notched both of the Aurora goals, while Christian Filippetti made 25 saves between the Aurora pipes.

With only five games remaining on the schedule, the Tigers (23-22-2-2) will be in tough to crawl back into a top-two spot in the North division standings, currently five points back of the Hurricanes and eight points back of the Markham Royals.

Fans looking to get their faces in the spotlight should be looking forward to this Saturday's battle with the Pickering Panthers: the game has been chosen as the OJHL's 'Game of the Week', to be broadcast on CHCH TV.

OJHL analyst Alex Bloomfield said he expects a good matchup.

'The Panthers have had Aurora's number all season long,' said Bloomfield. 'They've really had no trouble with the Tigers, despite being behind them by upwards of twenty points.'

'The slump of the Aurora Tigers has been spreading?they're barely treading water at this point in the North division.'

Yet all is not yet lost for one of the hottest teams in the OJHL in the season's opening half: the Tigers host two more games at the Aurora Community Centre this weekend, a place where Bloomfield said he has seen some significantly good play for the home team.

'On home ice, they're a tough team to beat anytime. But the Panthers, with Aurora and Newmarket, have had no trouble with them this season though they're well back in the standings. I expect an evenly-played game.'

The Tigers will host the division-leading Royals in a Friday night tilt at 7.30 p.m., before closing out the regular season home schedule against the Panthers with Saturday's televised game.

Books close on the regular season on February 22 against Markham, the finale of a three-game road trip.

For stats, schedules, and more information, visit www.auroratigers.pointstreaksites.com.