

Junior A Tigers still in search of first win



By Jake Courtepatte

Things have gone from bad to worse for the junior A Aurora Tigers, whose roar has been little more than a whimper in the early goings of the Ontario Junior Hockey League season.

A trio of losses over a busy weekend has the franchise winless in their first five regular season games, an unprecedented feat for the Tigers in the OJHL era.

Defensive woes has plagued the club from the beginning, giving up five and six-goal efforts throughout their first two games, a trend that continued into their home-and-home series with the Stouffville Spirit over the weekend.

Hosting the Spirit at the Aurora Community Centre on Friday night, the Tigers trailed 4 ? 2 after two periods, hanging on by a thread thanks to goals from Paten Schaly and Sebastian Tamburro.

Schaly brought it within a one-goal score on the powerplay early in the third before Bryce Young was able to even it up, though Stouffville's Luke Strickland notched the game winner with just under eleven minutes to play.

The Spirit added an empty netter for a final score of 6 ? 4.

The struggles continued at Stouffville Arena on Saturday, where the Tigers were blanked in a 3 ? 0 final. Goaltender Christian Filippetti was peppered with pucks, forced to make 35 stops on 38 shots.

College and pro scouts alike took to the Harbor Center in Buffalo on Monday for the OJHL's annual showcase, where a shining performance from Filippetti was one of few bright spots to feature for the Tigers in a 3 ? 2 matinee loss to the Toronto Jr. Patriots.

Jackson Clark notched his first goal in a Tigers uniform at just the right time in front of a large gathered crowd, while Bryce Young picked up his second goal and third point of the regular season. Filippetti managed 35 saves on 35 shots from the Patriots.

The loss marked just the latest in a string of subpar performances for the Tigers to open the season, albeit the first to manage to keep the final score within a one-goal margin.

Two weeks in, and it is already quite a hole for the Tigers to dig themselves out: the Aurora club and the Buffalo Jr. Sabres remain the only teams in the entire 22-team OJHL to yet find themselves on the right side of the scoreboard, and are already eight points back of the division-leading Collingwood Colts and Markham Royals.

The Burlington Cougars lead the conference at a perfect 6 ? 0 record.

The going does not get any easier this weekend, when the Tigers will try to right the ship against the 6-2-0-0 Trenton Golden Hawks in a road game on Friday evening. They continue their road swing in visiting the Colts in Collingwood for a Sunday afternoon matinee.

Aurora next plays host to the St. Michael's Majors on Saturday, October 5.

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