

Junior Tigers? Defenseman Luke Howard commits to NCAA Division 1 Rochester Institute of Technology Tigers

There was more good news on the Junior A Tigers' front this week after the club's two-game sweep over the Caledon Admirals and St. Michael's Buzzers.

The Aurora-based hockey club and the OJHL announced that defenseman Luke Howard has committed to the NCAA Division 1 Rochester Institute of Technology Tigers for the 2025-26 season.

The eighteen-year-old Howard is a team leader on and off the ice.

Recently, he was appointed Assistant Captain by the Tigers coaching staff.

Howard has proven to be a steady, durable defender who currently leads all Aurora defensemen with 3 goals and 13 assists. Remarkably, the 6'3", 185-pound US College commit has collected only 7 minutes in penalties in 17 games played this season.

Tigers' General Manager and Assistant Coach James Thomson in his recent interview with OJHL staff complimented Howard's commitment as a student-athlete.

Luke's dedication to growth both on the ice and in the classroom has been unwavering, and he exemplifies the qualities we strive to instill in our players. Luke is not only a strong leader, but also a young man of character and integrity.

Howard's academic prowess netted him a \$6,000 bursary from the Dairy Farmers of Ontario to further his post-secondary education. He was one of eight OHA players recognized for their leadership in building strong and healthy communities, [demonstrating] high academic achievement, and [being] dedicated to and [having] a passion for hockey.

The Woodbridge native is in his second season with the Junior Tigers and has one game-winning goal so far in 2025-26. Luke's brother, Simon, is the Tigers' Captain and leading scorer. Both brothers showed their connection to community when they greeted guests at Sport Aurora's annual Breakfast of Champions event alongside long-time Emcee and Tigers' Owner/Governor Jim Thomson on October 19.

Luke took time from his post-secondary studies as well as his responsibilities with the Aurora Tigers to answer our interview questions:

The Auroran: Why did you commit to the RIT Tigers?

Luke Howard: I committed to the RIT because playing NCAA hockey while pursuing my education has always been a major goal of mine. RIT is a great fit for me as it has great facilities, a great coaching staff, and awesome campus.

The Auroran: What are you looking forward to the most about going to school in Rochester, NY?

Luke Howard: I'm looking forward to the experience of playing college hockey and living away from home.

The Auroran: What will be your major area of study at RIT?

Luke Howard: I am planning to study mechanical engineering as that is what I'm currently doing here in Ontario.

The Auroran: What are your athletic and academic goals as a student-athlete at RIT?

Luke Howard: ?My goal is to be a successful player in their program, win a championship, and for possible opportunities after school. Academically, I want to complete my degree as an engineer and learn many skills and strategies that come with it.?

The Auroran: How did the Aurora Tigers assist you with your college hockey placement?

Luke Howard: ?Aurora gave me all the opportunities, all the confidence in me, and always made it feel like a second home. All members of the staff foster a welcoming and hardworking environment. Huge thank you to the Aurora Tigers organization!?

The Auroran: What has been the highlight of your career as an Aurora Tiger so far?

Luke Howard: ?Most recently, I was named Assistant Captain! This means a lot to me as I was trusted with a leadership role with the team and is something I always wanted to achieve.?

The Auroran: What advice would you offer the younger Tigers rep players about achieving post-secondary goals as a student-athlete?

Luke Howard: ?To always stay consistent, push yourself, and be a player who is coachable and understands how to take criticism. Not everything will go your way, but always stick with it!?

By Jim Stewart