

Lavallee and Karkoulas sparkle in Tigers? 4-1 win over Toronto Patriots

The Aurora Tigers defeated the Toronto Patriots 4-1 in OJHL action at Westwood Arena on Saturday night.

The Tigers, in the midst of another grueling four-game road trip, turned in a terrific team effort in Toronto that featured two goals by Jace Lavallee and stellar goaltending by Yianni Karkoulas, who turned aside 26 of 27 shots to earn the W versus the Patriots.

Aurora fell behind in Toronto when Matthew Manza scored at 16.03 of the first period to give the Patriots a 1-0 lead. However, it would be the only goal that Karkoulas would surrender and Tigers' forward Max Cervjakovs tied the game thirty-seven seconds after Manza's marker with assists from Bode Pearson and Connor Russo.

The Tigers took the lead less than two minutes later when Lavallee beat Patriots' goaltender Evan Maillet. Frank Castiglione earned the only assist?his eighth of the season?on Lavallee's go-ahead and game-winning goal.

Lavallee's timely marker stood up after a scoreless second period and Kyle Baston made it 3-1 for the Tigers at 6.40 of the final frame with helpers from Kenneth Wu and Jonah Ziskinder.

Lavallee's second goal of the game closed the scoring at 16.54 when he fired the puck into an empty Patriots cage.

Jacob Carroll and Wu earned assists on Aurora's empty netter.

Prior to Saturday night's much-needed victory, the Tigers lost in Trenton 7-4 to the Golden Hawks on Friday and lost 4-2 in Burlington to the Cougars on Tuesday.

In Trenton, Aurora held a 2-1 lead after the first period on goals by Kyle Baston?assisted by Bode Pearson and Kenneth Wu?and Ryan Evenhuis with helpers from Peter Lopes and Ethan Lindsay. It was Evenhuis's tenth goal of the season.

However, Trenton tallied four consecutive goals in the second period to take a 5-2 lead into the final frame and Barret Joynt's second goal of the game at 7:44 gave the Golden Hawks a commanding 6-2 lead. The Tigers fired two third period goals?courtesy of Frank Castiglione?three minutes apart, but the Aurora rally on the road came up short.

A silver lining to a tough final result in Trenton was the production of Aurora's top line of Evenhuis, Lindsay, and Castiglione who collected eight points in the loss to the Golden Hawks.

In Burlington, Yianni Karkoulas was selected as the first star of the game by PJHL staff. He stopped 46 of the 49 shots that the Cougars fired his way, but it wasn't enough in a 4-2 loss to start the road trip on Tuesday.

Ryan Evenhuis?with his ninth goal of the season?and Frank Castiglione scored for power play goals for the Tigers in Burlington. The Tigers and Cougars battled to a 1-1 tie after two periods, but Burlington scored twice early in the third period to take a 3-1 lead.

The teams exchanged goals in the back half of the final frame at Central Arena, but the Tigers could not close its two-goal deficit.

The Aurora Tigers look to even their road trip to 2-2 with a win in Pickering on Tuesday night.

By Jim Stewart