

Overtime hero Ball lifts Tigers over rival Royals

By Jake Courtepatte

A rollercoaster of a weekend for the Junior A Aurora Tigers ended on a positive note Saturday, picking up a crucial extra point in the ongoing saga of the Aurora-Markham rivalry.

Between the pipes for his first action in eleven days, Aurora goaltender Christian Filippetti was effective in allowing starter Jack Irvine the night off in a 4 ? 3 double overtime victory.

Jack Ball opened the scoring for the Tigers seven minutes into the first on a cross-ice feed from Jack Varga, though Markham returned the favour late in the frame on a snapshot past Filippetti.

The sides traded two blows each in the second, Aurora's coming off the sticks of Landis Antonic and Ryan Littlejohn, before Filippetti and his counterpart Nick Althaus settled in for a scoreless third period to send the game to overtime.

It took close to ten minutes of extra time before the Ball came full circle for the Tigers, who, after scoring the opener, buried the double overtime winner with five seconds on the clock.

?You gotta love it,? said Tigers analyst Kevin Dean of Ball's winner, a snapshot five hole after a nice strip from a defender for a breakaway. ?It was a brutal mistake by Markham, giving the puck up before the sniper buried the twine.?

It was a collective sigh of relief for a Tigers' bench that was walked over one night prior against the Brampton Admirals, formerly the Orangeville Flyers, where Varga was the only Tiger to get on the board in the third period.

Yet a vital extra point no matter what side of the ice it fell on, Saturday's win over Markham padded the Tigers' lead over the Royals in the OJHL's North division, giving them a nine-point cushion at 14-5-2-0.

They sit just four points back of the Conference-leading Oakville Blades.

The Tigers also welcomed back a familiar face over the weekend in defenseman Domenico Argento, a Montreal native returned from the Fort McMurray Oil Barons of the Alberta Junior Hockey League.

The 6'3", 210-lb. Argento played eight games for the Tigers in the 2016-17 season, amassing four assists in eight games.

Not all was well in the den, though, as the team's second-leading scorer Kyle Bollers had his OHL rights traded from the Saginaw Spirit to the Oshawa Generals on Friday, who promptly scooped him back up to the major junior level.

The rest of the squad will have to pick up the slack when the Tigers wrap up a streak of six of seven games on home ice, hosting the Cobourg Cougars (14-4-0-4) at the Aurora Community Centre in their only matchup of the year.

It should prove to be a barnburner: the sides have not seen one another since the Tigers knocked the Cougars out of the OJHL playoffs in five games in the Conference semifinal last season. Puck drop is set for 7:30 p.m.

They wrap up the weekend with a visit to the Toronto Patriots (8-10-0-0) on Saturday.

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