

Paisley tallies 2 and Sanford turns aside 29 in U22 Panthers' 4-0 win over Toronto Leaside Wildcats

Lily Paisley tallied two goals, Anastasia Trifon earned two assists, Audrey Martone contributed a highlight reel goal, Ashley Minor fired the game-winner, and Jamie Sanford turned aside all 29 shots she faced in the Junior Panthers' tidy 4-0 win over the Toronto Leaside Wildcats on Sunday at SARC.

The Junior Panthers were missing two of their most dangerous scorers versus the Wildcats.

Scoring leader Annabella Van Berkel, currently in tenth place in the OWHA's U22 Division with 32 points, was injured in Saturday's 4-1 loss in Burlington. Prolific goal scorer Demi Lazarou remains out of action for the fourth consecutive week with a serious shoulder injury.

With two of the team's top scoring threats in sick bay, Minor and Martone filled the void with a pair of picturesque goals in the first period.

13:05 into the opening frame, Minor crept in from the blue line and fired a laser from the left face-off dot that beat Wildcats' goaltender Grace Robitaille high glove side to give Central York a 1-0 lead.

Captain Keira Johnson and Martone earned assists on the go-ahead marker.

Minor, in addition to scoring the game-winning goal, performed brilliantly as a mobile defender and played a pivotal role on the Panthers' perfect PK on Sunday afternoon.

Four minutes after Minor's first marker of the season, the blue-clad Panthers took a two-goal lead on the power play. On a splendid individual effort, Martone picked the pocket of a Wildcats defender in the neutral zone, cut in sharply from the right wing, pivoted between the circles, and snapped the puck from the slot between the pads of Robitaille. The feisty forward's 14th goal earned assists for Ellie Lewington and Catelyn Clark.

Backstopping the early goal-scoring heroics of Minor and Martone was Sanford who repelled all nine shots in the first frame and was even busier during the second when she turned aside 13 Wildcats shots, including many premium scoring opportunities.

After a brilliant stick save by Sanford in the second period, Paisley supported her goaltender's efforts with the first of her two goals.

At 10:48, Anastasia Trifon secured the puck deep in the Wildcats zone and fed Paisley who rifled a shot high glove side from between the circles that beat Robitaille cleanly, staking the Panthers to a 3-0 lead. Paisley described her second period goal: "It was off one of our plays. Jano [Elizabeth Janovski] freed up the puck with great forechecking. I got open to get the pass from Anna and was able to shoot from a screen. The goalie never saw it."

While Robitaille was surrendering the Panthers' third goal, Sanford preserved her shutout in the busy middle frame. The nimble netminder flashed the leather with seven minutes remaining and closed the door again with 55 seconds left by sealing the five-hole on a dangerous incursion by the Wildcats.

As Sanford continued to present a "Navy Blue Wall" to Toronto Leaside shooters in the third period, the dynamic duo of Trifon and Paisley struck again at 12:59. Securing the puck behind the net after a Leaside defender skated away from the play due to a missing neckguard, Trifon took full advantage of the odd situation. The nifty playmaker centred a perfect pass from below the goal line onto her open teammate's tape in the slot and Paisley one-timed the puck into the back of the net to give the Panthers a comfortable four-goal margin.

Paisley described her 14th of the season by praising Trifon's pass: "It was amazing. I was yelling at Anna for the puck. She was able to chip it out from behind the net. I just had to get it far side because the goalie was ready for me."

The Junior Panthers' shutout win on Sunday was in sharp contrast to Saturday's loss in Burlington during which Trifon opened the scoring for Central York in the first period, but the Barracudas fired four unanswered goals to secure the home ice victory.

Paisley noted the importance of her team's effort on home ice: "Last night was definitely not our game. We had to dial it up at the rink today. We knew it was an important game. The energy was high in the dressing room and in our pregame. We were ready to play."

In addition to crediting her teammates' collective readiness to tame the Wildcats, Paisley praised the performance of Sanford between the pipes.

"She played incredible today. We had a rough game last night and we needed a big game out of Jamie. She did great shutting it down out there."

The fifth-place Panthers improved their record to 19-6-1-2 in the 25-team OWHA U22 Elite Division with the win over Toronto Leaside.

Central York will host another team of Wildcats this time from Windsor Southwest-- on Sunday, December 21 at SARC. Puck drop is 1.25 p.m.

By Jim Stewart