

## Panthers drop first two games to Whitby in playoff quarterfinals

By Jeff Doner

After eliminating the Nepean Wildcats in the preliminary round, the Aurora Panthers women's team find themselves in a bit of a bind against the first place Whitby Wolves in the quarterfinals.

After crushing weekend losses (1 ? 0 on Saturday and 2 ? 0 on Sunday) the Panthers trail the series two games to none.

Despite being down in the best of five series, the Panthers have played a solid series thus far keeping pace with Whitby throughout. Panthers coach Stephanie Boyd said her club was expecting the series to be a hard-fought, low-scoring affair.

?Yeah, we knew that,? she said after the home loss on Sunday. ?Both teams are actually very good defensively, both goaltenders are good, both teams are good offensively. It's a real tight series and obviously we've come out on the short end in the first couple games, but it's the best of five so we can get there, it's just a bit of a tougher road now.?

Game two at the Aurora Rec Centre featured some good end to end action with the goalies keeping blanks on the scoreboard deep into the game.

In fact, the score was tied until Krista Yip-Chuck scored a shorthanded goal with three minutes left in the second period to put Whitby up 1 ? 0.

The second Whitby goal was a nice tic-tac-toe play right in front of the Aurora net, also with just three minutes left to play.

?I think it was a little bit of circumstance really,? said Boyd when asked if her team was sitting back a bit at the end of the periods. ?The first goal against was actually off our own defenseman's stick and the second one was an offensive zone faceoff issue that came back in a three on one and they score.?

As the time ticked away on the clock, the Panthers began playing a man high hoping to create a scoring chance. The plan almost worked late in the game, as Christina Ieradi picked up a pass and was sent in the Whitby zone with a sparking chance, but was turned away by goalie Hannah Baker.

Panthers defenseman Jacky Normandeau said her team needs to tighten up and capitalize on scoring chances in order to extend the series.

?It's always a pretty quick game and we have to play tight defensively and then hope to pot our offensive chances ? that's pretty much our game plan.?

Normandeau added that her team needs to be more disciplined.

?We also have to stay out of the penalty box, but overall we played a really tight game and we just had some bad bounces so we're bound for some good luck on Friday.?

Coach Boyd agreed and explained that the game plan is simple.

?[It's] just taking it one game at a time and one shift at a time, because we have a bit of a hole here and now and we just need to take it slow and get one job on Friday night and then get Saturday night done and come into a Sunday game. That's all we can do.?



Kayla Jardine looks on from the bench as the clock ticks down in the third period of game two on Sunday afternoon. The Panthers lost the game 2 - 0 and are in a must win situation for game three.