

Panthers struggling to score in early season



By Jake Courtepatte

Five games into the regular season, all is not well for the new-look Intermediate AA Panthers, fresh off their return to the Provincial Women's Hockey League postseason.

Aurora's highest-level women's team has been searching for answers offensively since the season began almost one month ago, still on the hunt for their first goal of the season.

A tough back-to-back series on the road at the end of last month led the Panthers into October ready for their first taste of home ice, in front of an always rambunctious home crowd.

They were blanked by the Neapean Wildcats 5 ? 0, before a goalie battle with the Ottawa Lady Sens the next day left the game a scoreless tie.

Frances Tenney, in her first year with the club, stopped all 27 shots she faced in the contest.

The Brampton Canadettes were the opponent last Saturday at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex (AFLC), also searching for their first win of the season. It was Jenna Alessandrini, the other half of Aurora's goalie tandem, who gave her best effort in helping her team find the win column.

Aurora dominated the game offensively in the first period with a number of scoring opportunities that just could not be capitalized on. But it was Brampton that opened the scoring midway through the second, shortly before frustration boiled over as Panther Julia Giannitsopoulos got into a tussle with a Brampton forward.

Alessandrini made a highlight-reel save close to the end of the period, hoping to spark her team by stacking the pads to deny Brampton their second goal.

Unfortunately, it was déjà vu in the third, with Aurora coming up empty-handed and once again coming out on the wrong end of a shutout score.

Despite the lack of offence, both rookie goaltenders have settled into their roles nicely. After giving up ten goals over her first two starts, Alessandrini turned aside 22 shots in the loss to Brampton, while Tenney is among the league leaders in both goals-against and save percentage.

Their schedule doesn't provide much help this week, matched up with league-leading Stoney Creek on Saturday.

Puck drop is at 12.25 p.m. at the AFLC.