Patriots shatter Tigers? championship hopes

By Jeff Doner

Despite a valiant effort, the Aurora Tigers dreams of hoisting the OJHL's Buckland Cup were shattered by the Toronto Lakeshore Patriots with a Game Six 3 ? 1 loss on Sunday night.

The loss made for an abrupt end to an otherwise stellar season for the Tigers, ending the series four games to two.

?It was just a couple of bounces here and there,? head coach James Richmond said after the game. ?We didn't have very good puck luck this series, but we have no excuses. They played well. They were fast and you're splitting hairs between the two teams. All the credit goes to them?they played well and we didn't play well enough.?

The loss didn't come from a lack of effort, as the Tigers fought hard to create scoring chances, keep a tight defence and also set the tone with a physical game.

Richmond said his team played well and that it was ultimately one bounce that did his team in.

?We were doing the right things, but we had a blue line turnover that ended up in the back of our net and then just a fluky one that goes off another guy and in the net, but it was a good series.?

In the early going, the Tigers controlled the pace of the game and eventually held a 1 ? 0 lead when playoff hero Curtis Warren scored at 13:32.

The Tigers held on to that lead until the midpoint of the second when the Patriots' Nathan Feric tied things up to make for an exciting 20 minutes.
However, some missed opportunities on the power play and some big saves from Toronto goalie Evan Buitenhuis in the third took the steam out of the Tigers and the Patriots eventually turned it around in their favour.

Toronto forward Jacob Hayhurst scored the game winner with just under 10 minutes left and then the Patriots put it away with an empty netter in the dying seconds.

?The winning goal, what are you going to do, right? I think it took a couple of bounces and ended up in the back of the net and I think that has been the story the whole series ? we just haven't had enough bounces,? forward Johnny Curran said postgame. ?That last one put us away. I think we were working really hard, but when it really comes down to it, we just couldn't score. We had a lot

of chances and were pushing the pace.?

Goalie Andy Munroe was back in between the pipes for the Tigers after registering a 1 ? 0 shutout in game five on Friday night and made 33 saves.
Tiger Adam DiBrina said his team was confident heading into game six despite being down for much of the series.

?We were down 3 ? 1, but we're obviously a team that has faced adversity in the past and we knew we could do it, we won the last game and then tonight we knew that if we won the third period then game seven would be ours, but unfortunately they got one and it ended up being the winner,? he said.

As one of the team's veteran leaders, DiBrina was quick to praise his teammates.

?This is the best group of guys that I have ever played with and I know a lot of guys say that at the end of the year, but in all honesty that's the absolute truth,? he said. ?I made some real long time friends on this team and we're going to stick together through thick and thin no matter how far away we live from each other. I'm proud of all of them. Every single one of them from the youngest to the oldest and I'm just happy to be a part of this team.?

Richmond agreed: ?They've had a great year, they're a great bunch of guys and they stuck together. They know how close they were and they feel they should have been there.?

Ex-Tiger wins OJHL playoff MVP

During the postgame presentations, Toronto forward Kevin Shier was awarded the Brent Ladds Trophy as the most valuable player in the 2013-14 OJHL playoffs.

Shier was a member of the Aurora Tigers through parts of two seasons (2011-12 and 2012-13) and led playoff scoring with eight goals and 32 points in 19 games.

The 20-year-old Toronto-born forward has committed to playing for Union College next season.