

Solilo and St. Max Mustangs stay unbeaten with third shutout in a row



By Jake Courtepatte

The St. Max Mustangs are the team to beat in YRAA Girls hockey heading into the holiday break.

Through the first half of the regular season, a shutdown defence and some solid goaltending have been the story for the Mustangs, whose opponents are often left with a goose egg on the scoreboard.

Heading into last Thursday's action with the Newmarket Raiders, St. Max had not seen a goal against in close to a month: when they squeaked out a close 3 ? 2 victory over Bill Crothers, the first meeting between the two since Crothers beat the Mustangs in last year's YRAA final.

At home at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex, the Mustangs kept rolling. Almost the entire first period was spent in the Newmarket end, with play overwhelmingly controlled by Mustangs captain and defenseman Zoe Webster. It was the Raider goaltender, however, who shone the brightest in the period to preserve a 0 ? 0 tie after one.

The onslaught continued in the second, with Nicki Rice robbed early on a rebound opportunity on the doorstep. But she made no mistake on her next shift, sending a wrist shot off the goalie's glove and in to open the scoring.

A two-on-one break later in the period set up Katie Howe from in close, who buried the rebound to put the Mustangs up 2 ? 0.

Newmarket kept themselves within striking distance only by a beautiful back check on a Lauren Daniels breakaway in the dying seconds of the period.

They wouldn't get any closer, however.

St. Max goaltender Victoria Solilo was forced to make one nice pad save in the third, but spent most of it leaning on her goalpost watching the play at the other end.

She earned the 2 ? 0 victory, the team's third shutout in a row.

The Mustangs move to 4-0-1 in the YRAA Tier 1 division, and continue to battle it out with Crothers for top spot against Markham, Stouffville, and Newmarket.

After a much deserved holiday rest, the girls are back at it on January 6 in a rematch with Newmarket, this time on the road at Magna Centre.

For schedules and standings, visit www.yraa.com.