

Tigers back on track in second straight win

One can't help but wonder, is it too late for the Aurora Tigers to turn their season around?

Don't fault them for trying.

The Junior A club has now won three of their last four games on the Ontario Junior Hockey League schedule, after opening the season with a whopping eleven straight losses. Last weekend featured a pair of points each taken from the division rival Markham Royals and the Milton Menace.

Markham Centennial Centre was the venue on Friday evening for the Tigers' first road win of the season, riding a productive final half of the third period on their way to a 5 ? 4 victory.

It was a handful of former members from another cat's den, the Elliott Lake Wildcats of the Northern Ontario Junior Hockey League, that led the way for the Tigers: down 4 ? 3 with just under four minutes left in regulation, Eric Conley sent home the tying goal, before fellow former Wildcat Jalen Balbosa capitalized on the game winner just over thirty seconds later.

The Minns brothers Noah and Caleb, picked up from the Wildcats in the offseason, added a pair of assists in securing the Tigers' second win of the season.

Noah took the lead on the team's season scoresheet with thirteen points, while defenseman Thomas Kloepfer had a night to remember in picking up his first career OJHL goal.

Yet it was Jalen Balbosa who again played the hero in Sunday's matchup with the Menace, a thirteen-goal total effort that took a pair of overtimes to decide. Starting goaltender Christian Filippetti struggled to keep up with the onslaught of Menace shots on his net, pulled in the middle of the second period with his team down 6 ? 5 after four straight Milton goals.

Noah Minns was able to capitalize to tie it at sixes heading into the break, before relieving keeper Andrew Barwinski and his counterpart Forbes Anderson put on a goaltending clinic in shutting down the offense.

Balbosa gave the Tigers the extra point just nineteen seconds into the second overtime, finally letting the keepers rest after Aurora faced a whopping 51 shots.

Back on what appears to be the right

track, the hill to climb remains steep: Aurora is still in the basement of the OJHL standings, although share the honour with the Lindsay Muskies, each with eight total points.

Aurora's record of 3-10-0-2 has the squad ten points back of the Collingwood Colts for the division lead, who are enjoying quite a successful inaugural season. The Tigers will pay a visit to Collingwood for the ultimate test this Friday in their third meeting of the season, after the Tigers picked up their first win over the Colts earlier this month.

Saturday's hosting of the Burlington Cougars will feature the team's annual 'Pink in the Rink' fundraiser in support of Southlake Regional Health Centre. The Tigers will be donned in pink jerseys for the contest, which will be auctioned off post-game to raise funds for cancer treatment and research.

Puck drop is set for 7:30 p.m.

For stats, schedules, and more information, visit www.auroratigers.pointstreaksites.com.

By Jake Courtepatte