

Tigers best Cougars to advance to OJHL Conference finals

By Jake Courtepatte

In a cat fight, the Tigers proved to be the kings of the jungle.

The Junior A Aurora Tigers are moving on to the OJHL NorthEast Conference finals after a five-game series win over the Cobourg Cougars, which culminated Friday in a decisive 7 ? 2 road victory.

Marching into the Cobourg Community Centre on Thursday with a 3 ? 0 series lead, the Tigers failed to close out the series in a 5 ? 4 overtime loss, with Cobourg's Mac Lowry keeping his team's season alive just over eight minutes into the extra frame.

Captain Jake Bricknell scored twice for Aurora, while Joseph Mizzi and Brock Welsh each added singles.

They bounced back Friday with an explosive third period that saw them move on to the third round for the first time in five seasons.

Up 2 ? 1 heading into the third thanks to goals from Mizzi and Tyler Davis, Rizvan Mansurov gave the Tigers a commanding lead with a pair of markers, while Austin Eastman made it 5 ? 1 with just five minutes to go.

Luca Esposito added an empty netter, while JD Falconer put the icing on the cake with a goal in the final thirty seconds.

It has been quite a week for the Tigers, who just had alumnus Dylan Sikura sign with the NHL's Chicago Blackhawks, while longtime volunteer Vivienne Bridgeford was named the OJHL's Volunteer of the Year.

Forty-plus years with the organization earned her the title, mostly working as a box office ticket seller though also performing the diligent duties of serving through the booster club room at the Aurora Community Centre for some time.

?I don't do it to see a hockey game, I do it to see the smile on people's faces,? she said. ?The people are now a part of the family.?

?It's simple, Vivienne is Aurora Tigers,? said president and owner Jim Thomson.

?Her passion and commitment are unmatched anywhere.?

She made the trip to Alberta when the Tigers took home the national title at the RBC Cup in 2004, but wasn't able to make the trip when they returned to the top spot in 2007.

?I told Jim that three would be nice,? said Bridgeford. ?Maybe this year??

The incredible run of this year's most improved squad will resume next week in the conference final, against either the Wellington Dukes or Newmarket Hurricanes, who play the decisive game seven of their series Tuesday following press time.

On the other side, the Toronto Lakeshore Patriots will face off against the Georgetown Raiders in the SouthWest Conference final. For stats, schedules, and more information, visit www.auroratigers.pointstreaksites.com.