

Tigers draw Golden Hawks in OJHL first round



By Jake Courtepatte

If the Aurora Tigers are to go deep in this year's postseason, they will have to first go through the most experienced team in recent Ontario Junior Hockey League history.

The Junior A season wrapped up over the weekend with a win and an overtime loss for the Tigers, a pair of meaningless games for the NorthEast Conference champs who clinched the title the week prior.

The Golden Hawks, meanwhile, were looking for a better draw in their final weekend, yet losses in four of their final five earned them a date with the red-hot Tigers.

Trying to catch the seventh-place Pickering Panthers in the standings, it was the Panthers that entered the Tigers' den on Friday in what could have been a potential first round matchup, turning vicious in the third period.

A 3 - 0 Aurora lead heading into the final frame quickly became one-sided, with Anthony Romano scoring just seven seconds into the third, before both benches blew up with pre-playoff tension.

Ten misconducts were handed out over a pair of scuffles, including Aurora's Luca Esposito, James Thomson, Zach Wilkie, Matthew Ferrari, and Christopher Giroday.

To the relief of the Tigers brass, the only additional punishment was a one-game suspension to Ferrari for removing his helmet, who sat the final game of the season on Saturday hosting the Lindsay Muskies.

With the Tigers clinched and the Muskies eliminated from playoff contention, it was a much more timid affair in what ended as a 3 ? 2 Muskies overtime win.

Bricknell notched a powerplay goal early in the third period to tie the game at one before Romano gave Aurora the lead just a few minutes later, though a late goal from Lindsay sent it to extra time.

Jack Irvine was beat just over two minutes into the overtime, just his fourth loss in his last six games backing up starter Bradley Van Schubert.

A final record of 36-12-1-5 earned the Tigers an 'honourable mention' in the CJHL's end-of-season top twenty rankings list, behind only the Toronto Patriots (8th) and North York Rangers (18th) as those hailing from the OJHL.

Despite the difference in numbers, the Aurora-Trenton matchup should prove to be a tenacious one: three of the four games between the teams this season went to overtime, with Trenton taking the season series two games to one, adding another 0 ? 0 double overtime tie.

Yet to be approved by the OJHL, the official playoff schedule will be released later this week, with action set to begin by the weekend.

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