

Tigers drop two in a row to start New Year



By Jake Courtepatte

The year of 2019 has not been kind to the Junior A Aurora Tigers as of yet, who lost a pair of games in the opening weekend of January to tie their season-high losing streak of three games.

Visiting the St. Michael's Majors for the first time this season after a thirteen-day break in the Ontario Junior Hockey League schedule, the Tigers met a Majors squad heading the other way with wins in three of their last four.

The rust showed early for the Tigers and goaltender Lucas Durante, who allowed a pair of St. Mike's goals before the five-minute mark of the first period.

Markus Paterson stopped the bleeding with his seventh of the year before the end of the first period, while Durante came into form in the second stopping all ten shots he faced to take a 2 ? 1 score into the final frame.

Both sides had the offense clicking with 26 shots combined in the third period, though it was the Majors that capitalized with under seven minutes to go to take a 3 ? 1 lead.

Cameron Neaylon scored for the Tigers with three seconds remaining on the clock for a final score of 3 ? 2 for St. Mike's.

Returning to the ice Sunday for a divisional matchup with the Pickering Panthers, the Panthers picked up where they left off, taking their third of four meetings with Aurora this year with a 4 ? 2 win.

Neaylon found the board for the second straight game, while Mauro Biasutto added a powerplay marker for the Tigers.

Despite dropping his third straight decision as the Tigers' backup netminder, Christian Filippetti was stellar between the pipes in stopping 32 of the 35 shots he faced.

With only three wins in the month of December, and a record of 3 ? 8 since Nov. 30, a blazing-fast start to the OJHL season has slowed enough to allow the Tigers North division rivals to climb back into the race for the top spot.

The hot Markham Royals (18-13-2-4) are just two points back of the Tigers (21-15-2-0) with a game in hand, while the Newmarket Hurricanes (17-14-2-5) sit just three back of the division leaders.

Aurora hosts the Royals in a key matchup Saturday at the Aurora Community Centre, the start of a three-game home stand, looking to improve upon a home record that has dropped near the .500 level as of late.

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

Before then, the Tigers will face their toughest matchup with the season on the road Friday, visiting the Conference-leading Oakville Blades (31-4-1-2) at the Sixteen Mile Sports Complex.

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