

Tigers forwards sign with UOIT Ridgebacks



By Jake Courtepatte

Two major components of the Aurora Tigers success have found their new home for next season.

Both captain Jake Bricknell and fellow forward Austin Eastman signed on Monday with the University of Ontario Institute of Technology, committing to skate for the Ridgebacks in the 2018-19 season.

"Both these guys can play," said Ridgebacks head coach Curtis Hodgins. "Jake has the coveted right-hand shot that we're still looking for here to help our offence and be able to help our power play. Austin has terrific skill and can flat out fly. I think both are going to be very good U SPORTS players and great Ridgebacks for us."

Bricknell, who began the highly-successful 2017-18 season wearing the 'C' for the Tigers, came to Aurora after a league championship with the Cobourg Cougars the previous year.

Only one point shy of 100 to end the regular season, his leadership has helped the Tigers to a conference-best record.

According to Bricknell, his 35 goals, which were good for second-best in the entire OJHL, came thanks to the commitment of the Tigers staff.

"They provided me with the right tools and opportunities that I've been seeking in my junior career to further my game that I've known I've always had in me."

Eastman, a native of Lindsay, ON, said the location of the school was a strong component of his signing.

"Landing in UOIT was big for me because it stays closer to home, which makes things easier," said Eastman, who also said he was impressed upon touring the campus.

"While I was there, it just gave me a home-like feel, and being that it's a smaller school everybody knows who is who, and it has a lot to offer when it comes to academic help to make my time more proactive."

Eastman joined the team midway through the 2017-18 season, having spent time with the major junior Quebec Remparts of the QMJHL. Since his debut as a Tiger, his 0.59 points-per-game trails only fellow forward Joseph Mizzi, accumulating 44 points in just 26 games.

The pair join fellow Tigers alumnus Kyle Locke, having skated for Aurora from 2014-16, who will be entering his junior year as a Ridgeback next season.