

Tigers? Richmond makes move to the OHL



By Jake Courtepatte

The Aurora Tigers' bench boss has been called up to the junior big leagues.

James Richmond, affectionately known as 'JR' in hockey circles, will be joining the OHL's Mississauga Steelheads' staff for the 2015-16 season, taking the position as assistant coach.

'It's a wonderful opportunity,' said Richmond. 'It's a team with a lot of promise.'

With training camp set to start in just over a month, Richmond was one of three new additions to the Steelheads' staff, along with Jan Egert as assistant general manager and Ryan Daniels as video coach.

JR leaves behind him an extremely successful tenure as head coach in Aurora, twice named OJHL Coach of the Year in 2013 and 2014. Although the Tigers bowed out of the playoffs unexpectedly early last season, Richmond led them to first-place in regular season standings with players taking home a handful of hardware. Eric Williams was named the recipient of the Top Defenceman award while Cameron Morrison earned the award for top rookie.

Richmond joined the Tigers in 2010, improving their season record each year and bringing the team to the third-ranked position in minor junior in the country. He will continue to be a member of the player development staff of the NHL's Los Angeles Kings.

'I've been given the chance to work for some great clubs,' he said. 'My time in Aurora was some of the best years I've had.'

Although failing to take home a Buckland Cup during his tenure, the Aurora Tigers went to the OJHL finals two years ago when they lost to the Toronto Lakeshore Patriots in six games.

'It's a great team with a great future,' said Richmond, who turned the team from a sub-.500 season to a championship contender in his first year.

Mississauga will be looking to put their newest coach to use immediately, as the Steelheads, having only made the transition from the St. Michael's Majors three years ago, have a long road to success still ahead. They finished the 2014-15 season with a record of 25-40-3, missing the playoffs for the second straight year.

'It's a young team with a lot of potential,' said Richmond, a Richmond Hill native. 'The staff is excellent, and they've got a lot of good young guys. I'm excited about the opportunity.'

The Steelheads are set to open the OHL season against the Ottawa 67's at the Hershey Centre on Sept. 25.

The Tigers, meanwhile, have recently named Mark Joslin as Richmond's replacement at the head coach and assistant general manager positions. Joslin was most recently the head coach of the OJHL's North York Rangers, who fell in the first round of playoffs last season. It's his second stint with the Tigers, with whom he won the RBC Cup in 2007 serving as an assistant coach.

?A Richmond Hill resident for 51 years, past OJHL experience includes winning the Dudley Hewitt Championship with the Aurora Tigers in 2007,? said Tigers Manager Barry Quinn in a statement. ?Mark has also coached in Pickering, Stouffville, and the Ranger. In addition to his coaching experience, Mark is a skills development specialist working with numerous players at all levels of the game including Anthony Peluso (Winnipeg Jets), Chris Tierney (San Jose Sharks), Connor McDavid (Erie Otters) and Derek Joslin (Carolina Hurricanes).?

With 14 players returning to the active roster for the 2015-16 season, Tigers main camp is set to open next week.