

## Tigers' rookie centre Simon Howard fires three goals in narrow 6-4 loss to the high-flying Trenton Golden Hawks

The Aurora Junior A Tigers' two-game winning streak at home came to an abrupt end at the ACC on Friday night.

The young Tigers dropped a disappointing 5-1 decision to the Cobourg Cougars (9-8-1-3) and were edged 4-3 on Saturday night by the first-place Trenton Golden Hawks.

On a brighter note, the Tigers showed lots of fight on Tuesday night against the top team in the OJHL East before succumbing 6-4 to the Golden Hawks in Trenton.

Aurora rookie centre Simon Howard provided Aurora's highlight of the week by scoring a hat-trick including a third period marker that tied the game 4-4 but first-place Trenton scored two late period goals to eke out a win against the youngest team in the OJHL.

Howard, who was named the First Star of the Game by OJHL staff on Tuesday night, expressed his modest disbelief at his three-goal effort in Trenton.

"It was pretty shocking. It was nice to score my first OJHL hat trick. Cerqua set me up perfectly on my third goal that tied the game."

He described the impact of his hat trick against the Golden Hawks: "We got our energy up when we tied it 4-4, but they fought back to win the game."

The 6'3", 190-pound centre was gracious in defeat following the Tigers' four-goal loss to seventh-place Cobourg on Friday night.

"We started off well tonight, but we got into penalty trouble and got a little deflated in the second period."

The Tigers did, indeed, get off to a good start on Friday night at the ACC limiting the Cougars to one power play goal in the first frame when Beckett Ewart one-timed a rebound past Aurora goaltender Cam Millar at 14:11.

Thirty-three seconds into the middle frame, Luke Howard's howitzer from the left point hit iron and bounced past Cougars' netminder Tommy O'Donnell to tie the game 1-1. The rookie defenseman's power play goal was set up methodically by Antonio Cerqua who earned his team-leading 13th assist of the season.

The Tigers were energized by the tying goal and skated with the Cougars for the next six minutes, but Cobourg fired two quick goals to "deflate" the rookie-laden Aurora club. Ewart buried a juicy rebound at 6:38 and Carson Durnin's skillful deflection at 7:30 barely dribbled through Millar's pads into the net.

Tigers' Head Coach Tom Milne pulled Millar from the game after the call-up goaltender gave up three goals on 13 shots. Millar was subbing for ailing Tigers' netminder Christopher Thompson who has been sidelined with a hip injury.

Millar's replacement "Matthew Humphries" kept the prowling Cougars off the scoresheet until 14:49 when Cobourg's Michael DeSousa redirected Nico LaForge's pass in the slot to give the visitors a commanding 4-1 lead heading into the second intermission.

On Saturday night, the Tigers (6-13-0-1) fell behind 2-0 to the powerful Golden Hawks (16-3-1-0), but Nolan Shaw's power play goal at 15:01 of the first period with helpers from Cayden Smith and Simon Howard pulled Aurora to within one of the visitors.

Thirty-nine seconds later, Devin Mauro took the wind out of the Tigers' sails when he beat Matthew Humphries to restore Trenton's two-goal lead.

Less than five minutes into the second period, Kylvie Ellis put the Golden Hawks ahead 4-1, but the valiant Tigers replied with two goals in the middle frame. Aurora defenseman Jack Rispin lit the lamp at 9:46 for his second of the season and Nolan Winter pulled the Tigers to within one with his first OJHL goal at 13:45, but the closely-matched squads skated to a scoreless third period.

The Tigers (6-13-0-1) host the Oakville Blades (5-7-3-1) on Friday, November 8 and the Pickering Panthers (8-9-1-1) on Saturday, November 9. Both games start at 7.30 p.m. at the ACC.

**By Jim Stewart**