

Tigers winning streak snapped at eleven



By Jake Courtepatte

After a slow start to the 2013-2014 season, the Junior A Aurora Tigers were heading into last Wednesday's matchup against the North York Rangers riding an eleven-game winning streak.

The scoring was opened just over six minutes in, when Tigers goaltender Andy Munroe was beaten under the glove to put the home team up by one.

But just under thirty seconds later, Mitchell Duggan picked up his first point in a Tigers uniform as his shot from the point rebounded off the end board, coming out right to Drake Board who sent it to Nicholas Erb for his seventh goal of the year.

Down 2 ? 1 in the second period, the Tigers got into penalty trouble when Michael Longato got his stick up high on a Ranger defenceman.

North York would capitalize, as Matthew Whittaker took a cross-ice pass and barely squeaked the puck between the pads of Munroe.

Before the second intermission, however, the Tigers' Johnny Curran would continue his hot streak by scoring shorthanded to make the score 3 ? 2 after two periods for the Rangers.

Aurora turned the tables in the third, dominating the play for the first time in the game. Just over five minutes into the third, Jordan DaSilva sent home a one-time slapshot from the right circle that sent the goaltender's water bottle flying.

Shortly after, Erb potted his second of the game over the Ranger goaltender's glove to put the Tigers up 4 ? 3.

A late penalty would prove costly, with Matthew Bernard sitting in the box for interference a North York offensive-zone faceoff win led to the tying goal.

Both sides exchanged some quality last-minute chances, including a Ranger shot from the top of the slot blocked on a great defensive effort from DaSilva.

With the puck now heading the other way with five seconds left, Keaton Ratcliffe was sent in on a semi-breakaway and just missed the far side as the buzzer sounded.

The Tigers were headed to their first overtime of the season, with their winning streak on the line.

But in the extra frame, the faceoff troubles that had plagued them all game prevailed. A minute in, North York won an offensive faceoff that was picked up by the right winger and behind Munroe before he even knew it.

Head coach James Richmond called the game "an emotional letdown", having played five games over the last seven nights.

"We didn't have the same energy as we usually have. We weren't as fast on the puck?it wasn't for lack of effort, the boys were just exhausted."

With five days rest after the loss, the Tigers were recharged heading into Monday's game against the Hamilton Red Wings.

Down 2 ? 1 after the first period, Aurora then potted five unanswered goals on route to an 8 ? 4 win.

Both Liam Neuman and Erb had a three-point night, each earning two goals and an assist.

Having won twelve of their last thirteen contests, the Tigers remain the dominant force in the OJHL's North Division, a title Richmond feels his team is deserving.

"They're all working hard, and really buying into our style of play now," said Richmond. "We've got a commitment by everybody."

On tap for the Tigers is another busy week with three games in three nights, starting with a game against the Orangeville Flyers Friday evening at the Aurora Community Centre.

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