

Aurora women pick up a point in League 1 season finale



By Jake Courtepatte

With their season all but over, the Aurora FC women put in a valiant effort on Friday in tying a Durham United team still vying for a playoff spot.

With Durham needing a win to guarantee a spot in the Final Four, it was Aurora that came out pressing, with Hailey Appleby setting up Marissa Castellano for an opportunity just four minutes in, though the shot was sent wide.

Bringing a scoreless tie into the second half, Durham came out pressing in the final forty-five minutes, breaking the shutout just one minute into the half on a shot from just outside the box that found the top right corner past keeper Meaghan Phillips.

Aurora fought back with a goal of their own nine minutes later, a tap-in from Yasmeeen Al-Kas, holding on the remainder of the way to secure a point.

Phillips was forced to contend with a whopping fifteen shots in the match.

Aurora FC technical director Marco Ciampa said after the game he was "so proud" of the team's effort in the game and the season, on "how hard they competed against a strong Durham side and were rewarded with a result."

Ending the season with a record of 2-8-2, Aurora fell far short of reaching a playoff position, finishing eleventh in the ladder and fifteen points behind Durham for the final spot.

With the absence of Canadian national team star Sarah Stratigakis for the first time in two seasons, Markela Bejleri led the team in scoring for the 2018 season, putting up a pair of goals in her nine appearances.

FC London, the Woodbridge Strikers, Vaughan Azzurri, and Durham will face off in the postseason.

The men's side continues their season with three games left on the September schedule, falling most recently to Unionville Milliken SC on Sunday at Stewart Burnett Park.

Aurora leading scorer Morey Doner's goal just nine minutes in was quickly countered by a Unionville strike.

Though an own goal by the Unionville goalkeeper shortly after proved good luck for the Aurora side, three straight Unionville goals put the game away for good by a score of 4-2.

Next up for the 2-8-3 Aurora side is a meeting with the 3-9-1 Toronto Skillz FC at Birchmount Stadium in Toronto on September 9.

Aurora then visits with FC London in mid-September, before wrapping up their schedule back home at Stewart Burnett on September 22 against Ottawa's OSU Force.

They hold onto the slimmest of hopes of making the postseason, eight points back of Darby FC for the eighth and final playoff spot.