

New name, new look, new season for Aurora's Tigers



By Jake Courtepatte

What's in a name?

For the Aurora Tigers, the answer is now Highland GM.

Tigers owner Jim Thomson joined staff at Highland GM in Aurora on Saturday to unveil the new moniker for the Junior A hockey club, which will go by the name Highland GM Aurora Tigers for the upcoming 2018-19 season.

"Highland GM has been one of our sponsors now for three years," said Thomson. "They really help us in the community, there's a good partnership there. We looked at a way we could do more together, and we got around the table and came up with the Highland GM Aurora Tigers. It's a great partnership for the Town of Aurora."

Highland General Manager Jennifer Copley said she was "really excited" to partner with Thomson and wife Rita, in the first corporate naming deal the team has struck in its over fifty-year history.

"We're very proud to be involved," said Copley. "I think we're really on the same page, in terms of community involvement, and giving back to the community. So, we're excited about the season."

The change is just the latest development in a busy offseason for the Tigers, who have revamped everything from the logo to the team colours. The organization unveiled their plans for a silver, gold, and red colour scheme in July, akin to that of the NHL's Vegas Golden Knights, complemented by a new shielded logo on the jerseys showcased at Saturday's event.

The words "Highland GM" over the updated logo represent the first change in the Tiger name for the past quarter century: the current incarnation of the Aurora franchise reinstated the Tigers nickname in 1993 after seven years as the Aurora Eagles, when the team joined the Metro Junior A Hockey League, a precursor to their OJHL instatement in 1997.

Initially taking up the Tigers name in 1967, the Aurora franchise fell by the wayside when the financial situation of the OHA Junior A league made it less viable to stay afloat in 1985.

The introduction of the Central Junior B league as the OHA's most popular junior destination coaxed the Aurora franchise's return in 1987, skating as the Aurora Eagles for seven seasons.

This year's incarnation of the Highland GM Aurora Tigers can already be seen in their new digs in preseason action, with a pair of games under their belt before the final roster is announced.

Losses to both the Toronto Jr. Canadiens and Stouffville Spirit opened up a four-game preseason schedule with less than a handful of familiar names from the 2017-18 Northeast Conference champion Tigers.

The Tigers round out their preseason with road games against the Whitby Fury on Thursday and the Jr. Canadiens on Friday.

Regular season schedules are yet to be announced.

Season passes are available at www.auroratigers.pointstreaksites.com until September 30.