

Tigers claw into first place after taking down Toronto and Burlington



By Jeff Doner

The Aurora Tigers have continued to iron out the wrinkles in their game and still find themselves in first place after two more wins last week.

With victories over the Toronto Junior Canadiens and the Burlington Cougars, the Tigers are four points ahead of rival Newmarket Hurricanes with a game in hand.

‘Things look really good,’ said Tigers defenceman Eric Williams. ‘Getting off to a slow start, even good teams need to learn how to lose, so we finally strung a few wins together in a row and got our confidence up. We just got into first place now, so we’re just looking to pull away from the rest of the division and I think we’ll do well.’

On Friday night, the Tigers welcomed the Junior Canadiens to the ACC looking to bounce back from a 4 ? 3 overtime loss to Pickering.

Kevin Entmaa tended the net for the Tigers and looked sharp despite Toronto taking a 1 ? 0 lead in the first on a five on three power play.

Captain Robert Angiolella evened things up three minutes later, netting a power play marker of his own.

The usual suspects, Dylan Sikura and Kory Kennedy, drew the assists on the tying goal.

With the score tied heading into the second, the Tigers tightened up and Entmaa closed the door as the ice seemed to shift the Tigers’ way.

With two minutes remaining in the period, Michael Laidley potted his eleventh of the season (tops on the Tigers for goals) to finally break the 1 ? 1 tie.

Calvin Higley and Laidley added third period goals to solidify a 4 ? 1 win for the Tigers.

Aurora fired a total of 44 shots, while Entmaa made 22 saves for the win.

‘They are a pretty good hockey club and I thought we just literally played hard for 60 minutes,’ said head coach James Richmond. ‘That’s what’s going to happen when we do that. We’ve got good goaltending and Kevin Entmaa was the difference this weekend. He was excellent.’

On Saturday night, the Tigers made a trip to Burlington to face the Cougars in a physical game.

The first period was apparently a bit of a sleeper, with a scoreless tie heading into the second, but that wouldn’t last long as Tiger’s assistant captain Taylor McCloy broke the stalemate just over a minute into the period.

Burlington tied thing up on the power play, but Alex Gilmour and Sikura replied for the Tigers to give them a 3 ? 1 lead.

Sikura's goal gave him six in just nine games since coming back from injury. He has managed to score 17 points in that span, giving the Tigers incredible depth on their forward lines.

?The guys are really buying in and skating hard and we've got some guys back in the lineup that are definitely going well right now,? said Richmond. ?Sikura is almost at two points per game and he and Laidley seem to have found some pretty good chemistry. Same with Angiolella and Kennedy. It's a pretty good one-two punch we're coming at teams with.?

Burlington scored to start the third period, but the Tigers came right back and made sure not to let the Cougars back in the game. McCloy scored his second of the game, shorthanded, and Higley added another to make the final score 5 ? 2.

Entmaa earned the win and the game's first star with a 28-save performance.

?He's really stepped it up the past few weeks as we've been winning here,? said Kory Kennedy, who leads the Tigers with 22 points. ?He has been making those key saves that really matter when it comes down to a close game.?

Over the two weekend games, the only goals the Tigers allowed were on the penalty kill. Kennedy thinks his team is finally on the right track.

?After the little rough patch we hit there I think we have finally found what it takes to win as a team and honestly, I think if we keep it simple we have what it takes,? he said.

Kennedy's play on the ice this year has also caught the attention of the right people, as the Tigers veteran forward recently committed to Sacred Heart University in Connecticut for next season.

The Tigers return home on Friday night to play Mississauga at the ACC at 7.30 p.m.