

Tigers drop season opener to Hurricanes



By Jake Courtepatte

With the final cuts made and rosters finalized, the new management got their first in-game look at the 2015-16 Junior A Aurora Tigers in Newmarket last Thursday.

The heated affair, less than half a year removed from the Tigers' elimination of the Hurricanes in the first round of OJHL playoffs, left Aurora with an 0 ? 1 record and a depleted roster for the week.

?It was an intense atmosphere,? said first-year head coach Mark Joslin.

Brody Brunet, in his first game as a Tiger and already a commitment to U.S. college Division 1 hockey next year, opened the scoring just three minutes in off a pass from Gregory Winder. Joshua Boyko stood tall in net in his first OJHL regular-season action, stopping all pucks he faced in the first.

Drake Board, a key cog in the success of the Tigers in last year's regular season, doubled the lead midway through the second. Newmarket broke through Boyko a few minutes later, sending the game to the third period with the Tigers up by one.

From there, the game turned a little ugly. Veteran forward Keaton Ratcliffe was ejected from the game for Abuse of Officials less than a minute into the final frame, with Aurora taking two other minor penalties within the first four minutes. However, a strong box-out on the penalty kill prevented the Hurricanes from capitalizing.

It was with ten minutes to go that the Canes tied it up, followed a minute later by a goal from Mitchell Duggan, who spent the start of last season with the Tigers organization before being traded.

Tempers ran high at the end of the game with a scuffle leading to the ejection of Board and Nolan Dunn to join Ratcliffe in the dressing room. Dunn was handed a one game suspension while Board and Ratcliffe each earned themselves two games off.

Board and Ratcliffe were recently named assistant captains, while Jordan DaSilva has been handed the 'C' from Michael Laidley who moved on at the end of last season.

Saturday's matchup with the new Markham Royals was postponed to a later date due to the Ribfest festivities.

?There was just a lot going on around the arena that night and it was decided it would be best to reschedule,? said Joslin.

That sets up a much-anticipated Friday home opener with a number of special guests, including appearances by the cast of Storage Wars Canada. Canadian band Platinum Blonde's Mark Holmes and Sergio Galli will be there to drop the puck, along with Mayor Geoff Dawe. There is also a promise of a ?surprise celebrity.?

Admission is free for the night, with the first 500 fans receiving a Tigers tee shirt and a surprise gift bag. Puck drop is at 7.30 p.m. at the ACC.

The team is in Stouffville the night prior to take on the Spirit.

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