

United FC women cap off inaugural season



By Jake Courtepatte

A handful of injuries and limited substitution options left the Aurora United women shorthanded in a loss to Darby FC on Friday. It was Aurora's Ellie Hayes that found the back of the net first, just six minutes in when she finished nicely off of a corner kick. Injuries to two Aurora players followed almost immediately, causing delay, before Darby scored just seconds into resuming play. Playing the second half down a player, Aurora conceded two more goals for a 3-1 loss.

"The first half we came out well balanced on both sides," said Aurora head coach Arman Mohammadi. "Unfortunately, the second half, with us playing with ten, the game shifted against us. It was not in our favour for the first portion of the second half."

"Eventually, I think we found our way and were compact and managed to make it as competitive as possible," said Mohammadi.

"On the whole, our girls competed well."

Despite the final loss, a rocky start to Aurora's first ever League 1 squad transitioned into a strong finish by August.

Aurora won three matches in a row prior to the Darby game, vaulting up league standings to sixth in the nine-team table with a 5-8-3 final record.

Sarah Stratigakis cemented her position as one of the top midfielders in the league, notching nine goals over a ten-game season. The international star led her squad in goals, followed closely by Meghan Reynolds with seven.

Stratigakis trailed just two players in the league in the category, including Jade Kovacevic of FC London, who scored an impressive 27 goals throughout the season. London was declared the league champions when the season officially wrapped on Sunday.

The men's side of Aurora United has just three games left to make any moves in a three-way race at the bottom of the East table, after falling 5-1 Saturday to the league-leading Vaughan Azzurri.

With the season dwindling down and their fate all but sealed, the men's side fielded a much younger squad Saturday, already taking steps to prepare for next season.

Six new players were brought into the senior match, mostly from Aurora's under-21 side.

Though Vaughan controlled the ball inside Aurora's defensive half for much of the first 45 minutes, they capitalized only once on a cross to the box that sailed over the head of Aurora's Alexander Jakma.

They continued to dominate into the second half, spreading out four more goals past the young Aurora team.

Connor Woodroffe had a special moment for the Aurora side, notching his first League 1 goal in his first League 1 game, just minutes into the second half.

Under-21 coach Don Ferguson said he was pleased with how well his players were able to handle a much stronger Vaughan squad.

"I can't say any bad things about our team. I thought our team did very well today and I am very proud of the young fellas."

"I thought we played some nice football today. We had some young players in today, and they did very well."

Tied with Toronto Skillz FC for seventh in the nine-team division, the 3-13-3 squad returns to action Saturday hosting the North Toronto Nitros (11-5-3). Kickoff is set for 7 p.m. at Sheppard's Bush.