

Struggling Flyers replace coach Coolen

Fife Flyers have parted company with head coach Tom Coolen by “mutual agreement” and crooked player Johnny Curran, a Great Britain international despite being born in Niagara Falls, Canada, has taken over on the bench.

Former coach, Todd Dutiaume, will lead training sessions “to implement Curran’s vision”.

The 29-year-old right wing or centre suffered a torn anterior cruciate ligament earlier this season and he has been acting as an assistant coach since October.

The Kirkcaldy-based club have confirmed that they are actively looking to boost their coaching team and bosses appealed to fans to give the interim coach time to adjust to his new role.

Flyers have added young players to their injury-hit bench. Rhys Edwards, aged 18, has played as a forward and defenceman and has split his season between Hull Jets and Hull Seahawks who play in the Northern Ice Hockey League.

Owen Dell, a 22-year-old forward, joins from Leeds Knights and Edinburgh-born defenceman, Josh Saunders, who last season made his debut for Great Britain at under-18 level, is also added. He played junior development hockey in Kirkcaldy.

Furthermore, the Elite League's standards committee have deferred a one-game suspension for Ryan Foss in order to ensure that Flyers are not at risk of failing below the minimum bench strength over the Festive period.

The move was agreed by the four teams on the committee and also including agreement from Belfast. A further decision on the ban will be taken in January.

These are tough times for Britain's oldest professional ice hockey team who have also lost right wing Drake Pilon who is understood quit on Friday.

Star forward, Lucas Chiodo, is home in North America following a bereavement and skipper Olivier LeBlanc, a key defenceman, and forward, Phelix Martineau, are both sidelined with injury.

The club have not won a game since December 1 when they turned the form book upside down to beat high-flying Sheffield Steelers 5-3 at The Fife Ice Arena and are in bottom spot with six points from 20 fixtures, seven adrift of Dundee Stars who are ninth and nine away from Storm who occupy the eighth and final play-off spot.

Just over 1,000 fans watch the action on Saturday and their favourites drew the opening session 1-1 but caved in during the second, going down 4-0 before losing the final period 1-0.

Fife were outshot 49 to 14 over the 60 minutes and Belfast opened their account after four minutes.

PICTURE: Tom Coolen on the bench