

Patrick Makes His Point

By HANK MASLER

Hockey players are more than just good skaters; they're good athletes. Craig Patrick of the California Seals helped prove that point last May, finishing third in a field of 12, in the second annual California Professional Athletes' Decathlon.

Sponsored by the March of Dimes, the decathlon offered nine events to the group of professional athletes. Patrick took first place in both the 50-meter swim (:28.0) and half-mile run (2:22.0), setting a new decathlon record in both events.

"I accomplished what I wanted to do," the Seals' right winger said. "People who were there could see that hockey players are athletes, not just good skaters."

Patrick, who finished close behind the winner, MacArthur Lane of the Green Bay Packers, and second place finisher Jim Barnett, formerly of the Golden State Warriors, also did well in golf and tennis (2nd place).

"There was also supposed to be a bike ride, but the bikes broke down," the three-year pro veteran said. "I think I might have won that event because I do a lot of bike riding for hockey training. You use the same muscles in bike riding that you use in skating."

In the final scoring, Lane finished with 664 points, Barnett had 662, and Patrick finished with 655.

The competition, which was held in the Bay Area, included members of the Los Angeles Rams, San Francisco 49ers, Oakland Raiders, Golden State Warriors, and other professional sports individuals who live in California.

Patrick is hoping that his success in the decathlon competition will be a sign of things to come this year on the ice. The torn ligaments in his knee which kept him out of 19 games last season are now repaired, and Patrick's skating and all-around play are expected to improve. Last year, he



An instant hit with the fans, Seals' Craig Patrick signs autographs after finishing third in the Professional Athletes' Decathlon.

still managed to score 30 points, while missing 25% of the season.

With the knee in good shape, Patrick is expected to bounce back to his 1972-73 form, when he scored 20 goals and played in 71 games.

Voted by his teammates as the Seals' Unsung Hero for 1972-73, Patrick has been looking forward to the coming season, and expects some surprises by the young Seals. "We've got a good, young team, and we know we're going to get better," he said. "Everyone is enthused, and we've all been working real hard." He added that the team had an attitude problem last year, but with new players and new attitudes, the team's history of losing ways is bound to change.

(Continued on page 36, column 1)



An all-around athlete, Craig Patrick shows what he does best — ramming a goal past sprawling Atlanta goalie Phil Myre.

PATRICK MAKES HIS POINT

(Continued from page 7)

One of the favorites of Oakland Coliseum fans, Patrick was busy helping to promote the Seals and professional hockey during the off season. He was one of only a few players to participate in the Seals' Speakers Bureau, often speaking at luncheons in the Bay Area.

In addition, the soft spoken rightwinger ran his own local hockey school for one month during the summer.

A good, all-around athlete since his childhood, Patrick competed in hockey, soccer, rugby, and basketball in high school. Then, at the University of Denver, he played both hockey and lacrosse.

One of the most promising American players in the NHL, Craig is the son of Lynn Patrick, the former coach of the New York Rangers and Boston Bruins, and the current Vice President of the St. Louis Blues. He is also a nephew of "Muzz" Patrick, and the grandson of Lester Patrick, both of whom are also well known in hockey circles.

"My father never pushed me into becoming an athlete," Craig Patrick said. "I enjoyed sports just like any other kid, but I wasn't pushed in that direction. In fact when your father's an athlete, he sometimes pushes you the other way."

Patrick, whose contract was bought by the Seals from Montreal in 1971, admitted that, "the first time my father put skates on me, I was two years old, and I started playing organized hockey when I was eight."

Still, Patrick became a polished all-around athlete, and remains in good shape for sports other than hockey. "During the first year of competition in the decathlon, they had lots of big names, but they didn't have any Seals, and that really bothered me," he said. A couple of phone calls later, he was on the list for this year's competition, and is now looking forward to next year. "I'd like to be back next year, and I imagine that I will be," he said.

"Actually, I really wanted to win this year to help get more publicity for the Seals, but I still accomplished another goal," Patrick said. The 28-year-old wing helped show that hockey players are good athletes, and as long as Craig Patrick is around, no one can say they are not.

