

Seals Face Vancouver

By JOHN PORTER
Tribune Sport Writer

Always a bridesmaid, never a bride has been the lament of the Oakland Seals and the rest of the expansion clubs in the National Hockey League.

Tonight the Seals will don their wedding-gown white skates for their first game use with an 8 o'clock face off against the Vancouver Canucks at the Arena.

The Seals opened last season in Detroit with Kelly green and California gold colored skates, the two favorite colors of the then new owner, Charlie Finley. It was the first time an NHL team had departed from black boots.

"We were the first to wear

those colored ones," said winger Gary Jarrett. "In Detroit we got all those catcalls and whistles. But it doesn't make any difference to the players. Hopefully, everybody has them broken in."

Since early December, the Seals have been using the white skates in practice when they haven't been on the road.

Finley's Oakland A's wear white baseball shoes, originally said to be kangaroo hide. The hockey club calls their new skates polar bear white, but to keep from upsetting environmentalists, it should be

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Seals Try New Skates At Arena

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noted the skates aren't furry and are probably made of something else.

No one has seen the full effect of the white skates with the green and gold uniforms, yet. There was joking among some players about their looking like over-stuffed Peggy Felmings on the ice tonight, but Ivan Boldirev dug out the important point.

"I don't care what color they are as long as they fit right," said the Oakland center. "The color of the skates is not going to make you play any better."

His coach agreed.

"It's how you use them," said Vic Stasiuk. "We're going to have a colorful team, but skates are skates. No, they're not supposed to be camouflage."

The Seals did well enough in the old green and gold skates with a 2-0 tight-checking win over Minnesota Wednesday at the Arena but Stasiuk is admittedly concerned about the last-place Canucks for tonight's game.

"I'm sure," he said with surety. "I won't have to remind the players about the nine and six goals scored against us."

Oakland has played Vancouver twice this season. The Seals lost the first one in Oakland, 9-6, and dropped the second one in British Columbia, 6-2.

The Seals led that first game, 4-0, but the Canucks had easy pickings after that with Gary Kurt in the nets. Oakland also led Vancouver in the second one, 2-1, but it was an afternoon game and the team had played the night before in Los Angeles. Goalie Lyle Carter had some pretty tired skaters in front of him.

Two key players back in the Vancouver lineup after injuries are forwards Rosaire Palement (eye) and Wayne Connelly (fractured cheek bone). The former was a 34-goal scorer last season who liked the rugged going, and the latter was acquired in a trade from New York via St. Louis.