

Seals' Maruk polishes off Kings

By JEFF CHAPMAN

OAKLAND — The cries could have been heard miles away from the Oakland Coliseum Arena.

"Rooooook. Rooooook. Rooooook," bellowed the delirious throng of 6442 after the California Golden Seals had ended their finest-ever National Hockey League campaign with a 5-2 trouncing of the Los Angeles Kings last night.

The player to whom the chants were intended was near tears. As far as a hockey career went, this was his finest moment.

"These fans here are great. They're responsible for a lot of my play," said rookie sensation Dennis Maruk moments after reaping top honors in the game and the season's Three-Star Award balloting — an honor bestowed upon the top player as chosen by the press.

"When I hear the fans calling my name, it makes me want to play even harder than I already do," the personable Maruk continued after having scored his 29th and 30th goals of the season.

"The fans don't come to see me. They are here to see good hockey, so I just do everything in my power to give them that when I'm on the ice.

"The fans give me a mental boost. I just play harder when they spur me on."

He didn't let a soul down last night. He tallied the game's first goal with 9:52 remaining in the opening period and then broke a 1-1 tie three minutes later as the Seals regained the lead for keeps.

"Scoring 30 goals is a big thrill for me," he said with a wide grin. "I thought before the season that I might score 20 this year if I was lucky. There were a lot of reasons why I did so well. The rest of the team kept me calmed down when I got moody and Jack (Seals' coach Jack Evans) has helped me plenty. He's a tremendous person.

"Next year? Maybe I'll score 100 goals," he joked. "What I have always dreamed about was scoring 50 in one season. It might take me a couple of more years to correct the mistakes that I'm still-making, but I don't think it's

beyond my reach.

"I like to gamble too much. If I can play a little steadier, I could score 50 goals."

There was no stopping the first-year speedster last night. And there was some excellent goal-tending taking place in the California nets, too. Gary Simmons somehow managed to get a skate, stick, pad or glove on some tremendous shots by the Kings that

might have gone in on another night.

Gary Sargent and Marcel Dionne scored for Los Angeles while Simmons' California teammates Jim Moxey, Al MacAdam and Bob Girard were complimenting Maruk's performance offensively.

The Seals struck first when Murdoch freed a loose puck from behind the Los Angeles net by flipping it over goalie Rogie Vachon's head

and into the crease. Maruk simply poked it past the confused net-minder — ironically, the goal scored at the exact time a Los Angeles penalty had expired. It was ruled not to be a power play despite the fact that Don Kozak had no chance to figure in the play at all.

After Sargent was left alone in front of the California net with 8:29 remaining to tie the score in the first period, Maruk converted a power play situation for the Seals at 6:29. He tallied on a backhand flip of a deflection.

"On both of those goals, it's a matter of being in the right place at the right time," said Maruk, pausing every so often to accept the congratulatory handshake of a teammate. "That's been the key to my success all year — hustling just a little harder and being in the right place."

The Seals broke no less than 25 team and individual records this season while compiling a 27-42-11 record. Despite finishing last in the Charles Adams Division, there were four other NHL clubs with worse marks.

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