

Washington streak ends as Seals capitulate, 5-3

By JOE DeLOACH

OAKLAND — Stan Gilbertson was so happy that he looked like a child opening presents on Christmas morning.

"The team knew I lived in the area so they came up with the big win for me," joked Gilbertson last night in the Washington Capitals' dressing room following a stunning 5-3 victory over the California Golden Seals.

"This will be the highlight of my summer. I still have my home in Danville and I'll probably see some of the players every now and then. It sure is going to be nice to talk about this game."

As incredible as it may seem, the lowly Capitals, a first-year expansion team in the National Hockey League, have finally won a game on the road.

After 37 straight losses, Washington played a full 60 minutes of hockey last night to defeat the Seals before a disgruntled, frustrated and booing Coliseum Arena crowd of 3,933 fans.

The Seals did very little right last night against Washington. It was only the seventh time this season that the Caps have won a game.

"I have spend some time in the other dressing room, too," said Gilbertson, who until the first month of this season was a member of the Seals. "I know how they must feel. It seems that we would always play well against the good teams when I was with the Seals. It has been the same way playing for this team."

Gilbertson didn't score a goal against the Seals, but he was one of many Washington players that played a strong checking game. The Seals managed just 20 shots on the Capitals' goal.

"We just couldn't do anything," said a disappointed Seals' coach Bill McCreary. "It is a deep hurt feeling to lose to this

team. We have no excuse for it. They don't have the personnel that we have and they do not have a tough team. No question about it, this was our worst game of the season."

After Washington had jumped out to a 3-1 lead in the first period, the Seals battled back and had an excellent chance to win the game.

Trailing 3-2 in the third period, Gary Gardner of the Seals tied the game at 5:05 after taking a pass from teammate Butch Williams.

Washington, however, quickly regained the advantage when Nelson Pyatt fired in a rebound shot from the right side at 6:31 for a 4-3 advantage.

After the Seals failed on many good chances throughout the remainder of the period, Pyatt scored an empty net goal with just 16 seconds left to seal (pardon the pun) the victory.

"It has to be one of the low points of the season for us," said California reserve goalie Gary Simmons. "We didn't take this team for granted, but can you really believe this. We're again in the history books. We are the first team to lose at home to them."

The Caps started quickly in the opening minutes of the game to take a 2-0 lead.

Score by periods:
Washington 3 0 2 — 5
California 1 1 1 — 3

First period — 1. Washington Mohs 2 (T. Williams, Bailey) 2:04. 2. Washington (Anderson) (Lalonde, Gryp) 4:12. 3. California (B. Williams) 11 (Hrechkosy, Meloche) 15:57. 4. Washington Smith 3 (T. Williams, Bailey) 16:49. Penalties: Grzig 1:33, Labre 9:14.

Second period — 5. California Simmer 8 (Christie, B. Williams) 3:31. Penalties: Labre 9:36, Labre 15:15, Seals bench 18:00. Third period — 6. California Gardner 16 (B. Williams) 5:06. 7. Washington Pyatt 4 (Joly) 6:31. 8. Washington Pyatt 5 (unassisted) 19:44. Penalties: Joly 7:15, Lesuk 11:06, Lynch 19:28, Hampton 19:28.

Shots on goal by:
Washington 12 5 8 — 25
California 5 4 11 — 20

Goalkeepers: Washington Low; California Meloche.
A: 3,933.