

# Seals Play Aceless Foe

By HUGH McDONALD

The California Golden Seals will have a little matter of catch-up on their minds again tomorrow at 7 o'clock when they play the Vancouver Canucks at the Oakland Arena.

They gained some practice at it last night as 1,500 fans cheered their upset 2-1 victory over the New York Rangers. The outcome evened the games at 2-2-1 between the two teams.

The Seals hope they can square things off, too, with the pesky expansionist Canucks who have a 2-1 edge on them this season. Their chances are improved in that Vancouver's leader, former Seal Orland Kurtenbach, is on the injured list.

Last night's loss cost the Rangers a chance to go ahead of the Boston Bruins in the NHL Eastern Division. The win moved the Seals to just one point behind second-to-last Los Angeles Kings in the Western Division.

The star of the piece last night was lanky goaltender Gary Smith who kicked out of 38 of 39 Ranger shots while his opposition at the other end of the rink, Ed Giacomin, had only 15 shots directed on him.

Smith, a goallender who likes to wander, nearly had an empty net goal in the dying seconds. He brought the house to its feet as he stickhandled up to the red line and essayed a missing shot on the Ranger goal.

Shaking his head after the game, Coach Fred Glover commented, "I think it's the ambition of his life to score a goal."

The Seals took a 2-1 lead in the first period, added an insurance goal in the middle frame, and withstood a furious third period attack which saw the New York team outshoot California 16 to 8.

Glover pinned the laurel wreaths on Smith, his rookie defenseman Ron Stackhouse and his fiery center Denis Hextall for the triumph.

However, the scoring was opened at 7:40 of the first period by Bill Hicke who slammed in Ted Hampson's pass from 25 feet out.

The Rangers tied it up at 11:49 when they picked off an errant Seals' pass: Rod Gilbert got the puck over to Jean Ratelle who beat Smith on the short side for his 13th goal of the season.

At 15:30 Hextall notched his 14th marker to give the Seals a 2-1 lead. Gary Croteau was trying to get Norm Ferguson's rebound and as Giacomin concentrated on stopping Croteau, Hextall came up to fire into a yawning net.

With Giacomin appearing to have smothered a shot by Ted Hampson and seemingly waiting for a whistle, Jarrett got his stick onto the loose puck for the goal that clinched it for the Seals at 18:34 of the second period.

The Rangers poured it on in the third period, but as their coach Emiel Francis explained, "the Seals got the impetus from the first goal and made us come from behind. We couldn't put it together. And that Smith played a real fine game."

The Seals have three more games before they hit the road again. Of their 13 victories, 10 have been at home.

They won it last night with Carol Vadansis, Earl Ingarfield, Joe Haroy and Mike Laughton in the role of spectators due to injuries. Defenseman Wayne Muloin left the ice in the second period with a charlie horse. He returned to the bench in the third period, but did not play.

Tomorrow's game originally was scheduled as a matinee offering, but was moved up to the 7 p.m. start to avoid a conflict with Super Bowl watching.

The Seals announced that they have discontinued televising future home games.