

## PILOUS HAS FAITH—IN HIMSELF

# Will Seals Be an NHL Contender?

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The California Seals of the expanded National Hockey League of 1967-68 will be competitive with existing teams in the present league in three or four years, Gen. Mgr. Rudy Pilous of the Seals predicted yesterday.

Rudy's look into the crystal ball was prompted by a question at a sportswriters' luncheon Wednesday at the Athens Club in Oakland.

The question was, "How come the Seals expect to do so well when after umpteen years the Boston Bruins haven't been able to get out of the NHL basement?"

No man to hide his modesty under a stray puck, and with the credentials of a Stanley Cup and a couple of Canadian junior hockey championships behind his masterminding to back it up, Rudy gave his reasons for believing the Seals would be

NHL contenders at a comparatively early date.

"I have faith in myself," he said frankly, "and I think we will be getting the younger players that will enable us to catch up to the older established clubs."

He admitted that he had hoped for a better crack at NHL personnel in the draft plan recently announced, but said he understood the attitude of general managers who had been

reluctant to give up too many of their stars.

He believes the established clubs will hang on to older stars and that the new clubs will be able to get some younger up-and-coming players. He and his chief scout, Bob Wilson, have been viewing and making a book on all prospects in all professional leagues. They also intend to look at the new crop of over-age juniors toward the end of the season. Clubs can no

longer tie them up due to an agreement of the NHL and the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association.

Pilous said that before the rule on tampering with players to whom clubs now have a right was made, he was able to speak to Jacques Plante, the famed masked goalie who used to play for the Montreal Canadiens.

Plante, now a sportswriter, has been in retirement.

Pilous said, "He was enthusiastic about coming back, but

whether he still will be next June, I can't say."

He admitted to some concern about the rules governing the signing or tying up of young players and said he hoped to get this ironed out with NHL Pres. Clarence Campbell.

The present rule is that a club can't sign a player until he is 20 years old. Pilous said he wondered how this applied to such boys as 18-year-old Bobby Orr who is showing "he can more than hold his

own with the big boys."

He wants to be sure he gets his share of the young crop. He noted that Campbell is a Rhodes scholar and a lawyer and he not only makes the rules but "is able to find the loopholes."

As for the present Western-Hockey League Seals, Pilous said they have a large number of home games in the next two months and they not only are interested in catching second-place Vancouver but also in overhauling first-place Portland.