

# Bargain Basement Seals Pick Up at Gate

OAKLAND (AP) — The cellar of the National Hockey League's Western Division became a true bargain basement one month ago.

"If I'm going to go broke in hockey, I'd rather do it with a full house at half price than with two thousand fans in the arena at full price," California

Golden Seals' owner Charles O. Finley explained when he cut ticket prices in half for the remainder of the season.

Before the radical move, the last place Seals averaged 3,667 fans through their first 19 home games. At half-price, they've drawn an average of 7,731 fans for five games.

**The Montreal Canadiens, who drew a sellout crowd of 12,933 here Jan. 12, play here Sunday night in the sixth half-price game, so the average should go up.**

"But it's too early to tell whether this policy is successful. It hasn't been in effect

long enough," says Finley. "I'm just hopeful it will be a shot in the arm for attendance."

Good turnouts may convince potential buyers that the San Francisco Bay Area has its share of hockey fans. Finley revealed last month that his

first two years of Seals' ownership resulted in a \$1.2 million loss and that he anticipates losing \$1 million on the team this season.

Finley added that he has "entertained thoughts of selling" the Seals but has received no offers.

The team opened the season with a ticket price range of \$6.50-\$3. The best crowd was 8,120 on Nov. 3 against Boston and the low mark was 1,796 for a Christmas Eve game against Los Angeles.

**With the cut-rate \$3.25-\$1.50 scale, the Seals' smallest**

**crowd has been 4,612 on Jan. 19 against St. Louis. Fifteen games remain on the home schedule.**

Finley announced his half-price policy after saying, "I'd like to apologize to the hockey fans of this area for not having as good a team as I'd hoped for."

The Seals finished sixth last season, just six points out of fourth place. But several of the team's best young players jumped to the new World Hockey Association.

"I do not blame anyone but myself," Finley said about the downfall of the team.

But, he added, "I was cononed."

Finley ousted Garry Young as coach and general manag-

er, later alleging that Young's handling of player contract negotiations led to the departure of several players.

**Finley also has a half-price policy in baseball, where he has the world champion Oakland Athletics.**

He initiated Monday Family Nights last season, "for the workingman," with all tickets at half price. It was an enormous success, with more than 200,000 fans attending the seven Monday night home games on the A's schedule.

This year, the A's have scheduled 12 Monday-night games.

Finley says no league approval was needed, in hockey or baseball, when he decided to cut prices in half.