

## Defense only 'problem' now

# Barons find a way to score on Montreal

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RICHFIELD—The Cleveland Barons came up with the right formula to score on the Montreal Canadiens—not only the best won-loss team in the National Hockey League, but tops in defense as well.

All you have to do is lull them to sleep with a 7-0 lead.

The formula might not win many games, but the Barons four-goal spree within four minutes in the final period Wednesday not only cut the final deficit to 7-4 but also did a good job of waking up the 7,011 fans at the Coliseum.

THE FIREWORKS started with only 8:50 left in the game, and the mighty Canadiens holding a commanding 7-0 bulge. Chuck Arnason, one of several players just obtained by the Barons recently, took a wild shot from the right while in the process of being decked by a Canadian player. Arnason went sprawling while the puck went into the net, giving the Coliseum fans their first cheer of the game.

Actually, they probably would have cheered the spill

even without a goal, because to that point it was one of the few displays of physical play on the part of the Barons.

Just 51 seconds later, J. R. Parise pushed in the second quickie Baron goal right in front of the net. Parise is another newcomer, obtained last week from the Islanders.

Lo and behold, 21 seconds later Rick Hampton took a pass from behind the goal and slammed the puck home for still under Baron goal. It was his 50th career score.

The fourth one took a little longer, two minutes, as Walt McKecknie deflected a pass from Greg Smith, and the Barons suddenly only trailed by 7-4 with still 5:08 remaining in the game.

BY THIS TIME the Canadiens woke up and, even though the Barons continued to dominate play, the scoring was ended.

Up until that last spree, there was little question about which team on the ice was in first place in its division, and which was in last place.

About half the crowd came out to see the famous Montreal Canadiens do their thing, and about half were

lured by the prospect of seeing a major upset by their beloved Barons. There seemed a chance for both halves to be happy because Montreal is always Montreal, and the Barons did actually beat the Canadiens once before this season. That was by a 2-1 count back on Nov. 23. And, just a few weeks ago, the Barons gave hockey's greatest team a battle in Montreal before losing 5-3.

For two and a half periods, though, it was the half that wanted to see Montreal that was getting its money's worth.

After a warming-up period, in which the Canadiens only outscored the Barons 1-0 and had a mere 10-8 shot-on-goal advantage, the powerful visitors put on a real show in the second stanza. They blasted the nets four times, and usually with seemingly effortless energy.

AND THEY did it without the help of any power-play situations. In fact, the two times the Barons were short-handed in the second period was when they played their best.

It was downright embarrassing for the Barons, who had been playing so well as of late since their recent trades. They actually went into the game with a four-game winning streak on the home ice. And those victories weren't cheapies, either. They came against Vancouver, the New York Islanders, Toronto and Buffalo, with all but Vancouver having a winning record.

A back-hand slap shot to start the third period, followed by a hard-driving shot from the right by Guy Lafleur with 16:01 remaining in the game padded the Montreal bulge to 7-0. Lafleur, called by many the best hockey player today, scored twice during the evening and added two assists to up his season's total to 64 points.

That's when the Barons and their fans finally woke up, while the Canadiens took a little nap, to salvage at least some excitement out of the evening for the other half of the crowd that was hoping to see the upset.

CLEVELAND FELL to 14-27-4, which is last place in the Adams Division, while Montreal is now 31-7-5, naturally good for first place in the Norris Division. Only

Philadelphia, with 27 wins, and Boston, with 26, challenge the Canadiens' record.

The Barons travel to Buffalo tonight and then return home Saturday to face Colorado.

Montreal coach Scotty Bowman was happy with the victory despite the late Baron surge. "It's still easier to play with a lead than to come from behind," he said. "We made a couple of mistakes and gave them a couple of power plays, but it was a good lesson, really. We still won the game."

"And I'd like to think that if the game was closer, that wouldn't have happened," he added. "We haven't been forechecking a lot lately, but we did it very well (in the second period). For execution, it was one of our best periods of the season."

Defenseman Jean Potvin, who came to the Barons last week in a trade with the New York Islanders, was proud of his new teammates for their third-period surge.

"THE POSITIVE side of this game was we played a good first period and a good third period," Potvin said. "But we played a terrible second. I think these guys showed an awful lot of guts and pride the way they played in the third period."

"We had guys chasing the puck and out of position in the second period, and you can't do that against Montreal," Potvin added. "They move that puck around so well, if you get guys out of position running around, they'll kill you."

"They could have just up and quit, but they pulled together and came back," he continued. "I don't think that was there a couple of weeks ago."