

# Seals Leading NHL—in Ties

By HUGH McDONALD

The Seals lead all clubs in the NHL in one aspect of the game — ties.

They did it again last night with their 16th of the season as they drew 4-4 with the Chicago Black Hawks before a turnaway crowd at the Oakland Arena.

They put their "title" on the line next Wednesday when they play the Buffalo Sabres who have played to a standoff 15 times.

The Seals haven't won in their last ten outings, but they have gained five ties. The one last night moved them a point ahead of Philadelphia for the fourth and final play-off spot and left them only one point back of third-place St. Louis.

"We need wins," said Coach Vic Stasiuk, who nevertheless didn't seem too badly disappointed that they had split with the division leading Black Hawks.

"I don't know how we could have played any better," he said. "It was only a bad break that gave them their tying goal. The puck hit one of their guys, bounced to another, a pass, and flip it was in.

"Maybe we learned a lesson. The puck should have been cleared off the boards instead of trying to pass it through somebody's legs down the center."

As it was, the Seals came from behind three times before they gained the lead, which was eventually nullified by Pit Mar-

tin's 20th goal of the season to make it 4-4.

Bobby Hull opened the scoring at 12:37 of the opening frame. It was a typical Hull blast, low and to the corner, that breezed by Seals' goalie Gilles Meloche.

Meloche wasn't sorry to see the last of Chicago during the schedule.

"Bobby Hull, he's too much," said the young goalie. "He lets a wrist shot go. It hits you on the chest protector. It hurts you more than anybody else's slap shot."

The Seals came back to make it 1-1 on a power play shot by Marshall Johnston for his second goal of the season.

Lou Angotti gave the Hawks the lead again at 3:17 of the second period when he rebounded a shot by J. P. Bordeleau on which Meloche had made a good save.

Joey Johnston flipped a close-in backhand shot past former Seal goalie Gary Smith to make it even at 6:14.

Soon after referee had blithely ignored a working over Chicago's bad boy, Keith Magnuson, was giving a Seals player, the Hawks took control of the puck and Stan Mikita tallied from the edge of the goal on a pass from Bobby Hull.

The Seals bounced back again with only a minute remaining in the period as Gary Croteau deflected in a goalmouth pass from Reggie Leach.

The period ended with Magnu-

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son slashing former Chicago teammate Gerry Pinder. Another former Chicago player, Paul Shmyr, came to the rescue and began trading punches with Magnuson.

Shmyr and Magnuson drew major penalties and Magnuson got a minor penalty in addition for slashing.

At 2:22 of the third period, Ivan Boldirev took a pass from Pinder, circled the Chicago net and poked the puck off the skates of goalie Tony Esposito who had replaced Smith in the Hawks' cage.

ICE CHIPS — Chicago coach Bill Reay said he didn't replace ex-Seal goalie Gary Smith with Tony Esposito at the beginning of the third period because Smith was playing badly.

"We haven't been going too well lately," said Reay, "and I thought the change might shake us up."

He was mildly critical of the soft ice which made the puck move slowly throughout the night. "I thought that better ice would have helped both teams," said Reay.

Seals' coach Vic Stasiuk was incensed that Keith Magnuson didn't get five minutes for drawing blood when Gerry Pinder was cut during the altercation at the end of the second period.

"He (referee Lloyd Gilmour) said the cut didn't occur during the incident," said Stasiuk, who then wondered out loud when it did occur.

Gilmour's version was that Pinder was cut when he fell to the ice.

Paul Shmyr, who like Pinder, was a former teammate of Magnuson's, thought Magnuson deserved a major for drawing blood, but he denied that his attack on Magnuson was anything personal and said it was just a matter of business.

"I don't think Maggie intended to injure Gerry," said Shmyr. "He's not that kind of a guy. But when I saw him two-handing Gerry I rushed over to help out."

Gary Croteau was chosen No. 1 star of the game. Stasiuk credited him with hustle that has brought him from "the end of the bench to playing a regular shift."

With the arrival of former Seal Vapnals in Boston, Bruin Wayne Cashman got off a good crack: "I don't know what my wife's going to say when I tell her my new roommate on the road is 'Carol'."

When Buffalo general manager Punch Imlach returned home from the hospital after a recent heart attack, Toronto Globe and Mail columnist wrote: "Some of Imlach's former players, who used to chafe under his tight discipline, have been disillusioned by his recent illness. They always assumed that if he ever had a heart breakdown he would never submit to a hospital stay. They thought he would go directly to IBM."

Referring to his former boss, Rochester general manager Doug Adam, Garth Rizzi, on his shift to Seattle of the WHL, got off one of the better hockey quotes of the season: "He treated me like a mushroom. He kept me in the dark."

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