

# Superstitious SEALS

BY GEOFFREY FISHER

(Correspondent for The Hockey News)

Are hockey players superstitious?

According to Seals' trainer Barry Keast they are not as superstitious as they once were.

Keast, who has been patching up and nursemaiding hockey players for a dozen years, ought to know.

But call it what you will—superstition or peculiarity—some odd things are done by members of the ice fraternity.

"Now that I think about it," said Keast, "I realize I never chew gum except during a Seals' game and the same goes for Fred Glover. And Glover and I always leave by the training room door before a game, even if we happen to be closer to a different exit."

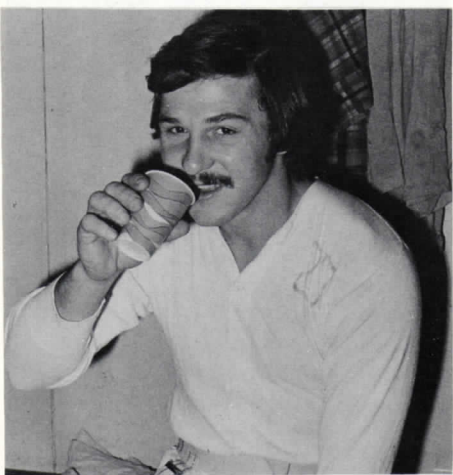
The hokus-pokus syndrome also touches assistant trainer, Gerry Dean. One of his duties is touching up the skate boots with paint.

"I never take the skates in pairs," he says. "When I finish one, I walk all the way across the room and get the other one. It's a kind of superstition I have," says Dean.

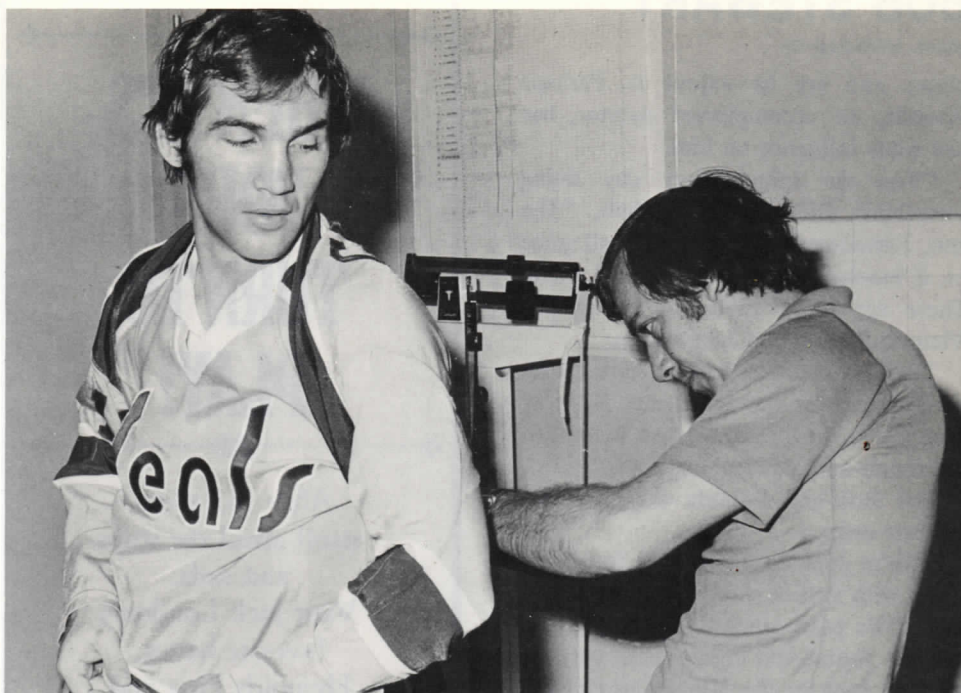
Hilliard (Hilly) Graves, Seals top goal scorer last season, wore Number 17. This year you will note that Graves is Number 16.

No, the Seals did not retire Number 17 after Hilly scored 27 goals to lead the club.

What did happen was that Graves heard that Norm Ferguson wore Number 17 when he scored 34 goals with the Seals in his first NHL season and then dropped to 11 goals his second year.



STANDING ORDER—Goalie Gilles Meloche always has a glass of ice water after pre-game warmup and between periods.



(All Photos by A. Anderson)  
HIL GRAVES makes it a point to have trainer Barry Keast hook his shirt and give him a pat on the back before taking the ice.

Graves just made up his mind that Number 17 uniform was not lucky the second time around.

Is Gary Croteau superstitious?

Maybe not, but Croteau insists on being the last player out of the dressing room and last on the ice before a game.

What about Bob Stewart, Seals' hard-rock defenseman?

Stewart changes his shoe laces before every game, even if there is no need to do so.

When the Seals ride a bus between ice rinks and the airports they do not have seat assignments. But no player would ever consider sitting in a different location on the bus.

Maybe it's superstition, maybe not, but Ray McKay, Ted McAneeley, Terry Murray, Craig Patrick, Pete LaFramboise, Hilly Graves, Stan Gilbertson and Marshall Johnston won't wear the traditional long-john underwear without alterations. They cut off the arms and legs.

McKay maintains an unusual ritual in the dressing room between periods of every game—he drops down onto the floor, leans back against the player's bench and props his feet up on a table. Considering that McKay is six-four, the result is somewhat like a section of the Oakland Bay Bridge.

Morris Mott has a rather odd attachment to his hockey sticks. Mott is forever fussing with his sticks, trimming a sixteenth of an inch here and shaping them there. One observer reports seeing Mott talking to his sticks one time, apparently telling them what he expected from them.

Most hockey players are very super-

stitious about their sticks. When they are playing well they won't change them even when they are in poor condition. Trainer Keast says that when a team is winning, the players will change sticks infrequently, but when they are losing the turnover in sticks is heavy.

A number of the Seals have a strong superstition about keeping their sticks in a spot where they dress on the day of a game. They will carefully place them in that spot following the morning workout the day of a game and an unpleasant future awaits anyone who moves them before game time.

Hockey players can be superstitious about their skates, too. If they are not sharpened precisely to their orders, they think it will ruin their performance.

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CLOSING THE DOOR BEHIND HIM, Gary Croteau insists on being the last one out of the locker room before a game.

# BOB STEWART

(Cont. from page 9)

places and say he enjoys it. Perhaps Rhonda, an accomplished painter, has had some influence on him.

"You can spend every day doing something different," says Bob. "The zoo, Fisherman's Wharf, a football game or a baseball game are some of them. There are super spots for eating like Victoria Station and Jake's Lion.

"After a practice, I might have a beer or two back at the apartment. We play ping pong, there're sauna and weightlifting rooms and a swimming pool."

But Bob and Rhonda want a house of their own.

"We're looking right now for something with two or three bedrooms," says Bob. "We tried around Union City, but haven't found the right place yet. We plan to look in the Moraga area next."

The Stewarts might spend an evening entertaining the Joey Johnstons or going out on the town with the Walt McKechnies. Recently Bob and Rhonda had relatives staying with them.

"You meet some other people outside of hockey, but the sport takes up so much of your time with the road trips and practices," Bob says. "All the people we have met out here are so polite and friendly. They really make you feel at home."

Bob says if they find a fair price on a house in the Bay Area, the off-season stays on Prince Edward Island will decrease to one-month vacations.

"Then California would be our home, wouldn't it?" says Bob.



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# Superstitious SEALS

(Cont. from page 11)

Graves insists that his blades are razor sharp.

Marshall Johnston refuses to shave the day of a game.

The Seals use five sets of different color jerseys in practice sessions for identification purposes during scrimmages. They refuse to swap colors with one another.

Hilly Graves insists on the ritual of having Trainer Barry Keast hook his shirt to his pants and then give him two slaps on the back before going into a game.

Gilles Meloche never alters his system of getting dressed for ice action. He lays each item of equipment on the floor and systematically puts each one on in the identical order every time he dresses. Sort of like a countdown before blastoff.

Meloche also has a standing order for an ice cube and a glass of ice water after the pre-game warmup and between every period of a game.

Joey Johnston is big on ice cubes, too. Every time he comes off the ice after a shift he has his hand out to snatch an ice cube from Barry Keast, or the stick boy.

Marv Edwards has a thing about a little turtle-neck dickey that he won't be caught in a practice without.

During a warm-up session Wednesday, Oct. 24, Gary Croteau broke a skate blade. After assistant trainer Gerry Dean replaced the blade, Croteau exclaimed "That should be good for two goals tonight." That night Croteau got the "hat trick" against the Detroit Red Wings. Croteau might want a new skate blade for every game.



TRIMMED TO 1000th OF AN INCH—Morris Mott fusses over his sticks and sometimes even talks to them.