

Seals give crowd a treat

By Glenn Schwarz

Accustomed over the years to being pushed around — literally and figuratively — the California Golden Seals no longer want to live with their past.

"I liked the score the best," said coach Fred Glover of the Seals' season opener last night, "but there was one thing in particular that impressed me.

"That was that our players did not let the other club shove them all over the ice. The Blues tried it right off and didn't get away with it."

Most importantly for the Seals, they left the ice with a 2-1 victory witnessed by 4766 appreciative fans at the Oakland Coliseum Arena. Gary Croteau put in the winning goal with only 2:22 to play, but the deciding moment may have come only six seconds into the game.

That was when the Blues' best player, Garry Unger, was banished with a game

misconduct penalty for refusing to go to the penalty box. Unger's wrong move, though, was dropping his gloves in the presence of Seals' policeman Bobby Stewart, who didn't lead the team in penalty minutes last year by avoiding fights.

"I was going to deck Jack Egers after he dumped Marshall Johnston, but then I saw Unger and nailed him," said Stewart later.

"I hit him hard and his head went up against the glass. I guess that's why he was pretty mad and kept trying to get through the lineman to me.

"But it was pretty stupid of him, eh, to get kicked out of a game like that."

Without their 41-goal scorer of last season, the Blues were fortunate to stay close the first two periods. The Seals skated a little better and shot much more, Joey Johnston finding the net. Only the confident goaltend-

ing of John Davidson — the 20-year-old whom the Blues picked first in the last free agent draft — kept St. Louis even.

After they forced the Blues to abandon their intimidation game, the Seals turned mellow, too. But they stayed alert and, finally, it paid off.

Croteau picked up a loose puck near center ice after Craig Patrick checked Lou Angotti — who scored the Blues' goal — into a bad pass.

"Craig made this play," said the grateful Croteau. "All I had to do was find the puck and shoot."

He blasted it through defenseman Ab DeMarco and goalie Davidson from about 35 feet out.

"We were a little tight the first period," said Croteau, who watched Angotti score only 20 seconds after the opening faceoff. "But then we loosened up. And any time Unger's off the ice, it's an asset to your club."

FIRST PERIOD

SCORING — 1. Blues, Angotti 1 (Sabourin, Awrey), 0:20;
PENALTIES — Stewart, Seals (0:06); major, fighting; Unger, Blues (0:06); major, fighting and game misconduct; DeMarco, Blues (6:56); Boldirev, Seals (12:46); Harbaruk, Blues (15:57); Durban, Blues (18:12)
SHOTS ON GOAL — Seals 10, Blues 5.

SECOND PERIOD

SCORING — 2. Seals, J. Johnston 1 (McKechnie), 0:41.
PENALTIES — DeMarco, Blues (3:22); N. Johnston, Seals (10:23); Team penalty Blues, served by DeMarco (18:31).
SHOTS ON GOAL — Seals 10, Blues 3.

THIRD PERIOD

SCORING — 3. Seals, Croteau (unassisted), 17:38.
PENALTIES — Egers, Blues (19:49).
SHOTS ON GOAL — Seals, 9, Blues 13.
TOTAL SHOTS — Seals 29, Blues 21.
GOALIES—Seals, Meloche; Blues, Davidson.
ATTENDANCE — 4766.
REFEREE — Moffat.

Spotlight . . . By LEE SUSMAN

