

Bright Future For 70% Seals

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For a team operating at only 70 per cent of its capability, the Oakland Seals' accomplishments of the past week bode well for the future.

Before 8,140 fans on Saturday night, the largest and noisiest crowd of the season, the Seals upset the famed Montreal Canadiens, 2-1, to give them their first victory over an established six NHL squad. This triumph, on top of a 1-1 draw with the Detroit Red Wings and a 4-1 win over the Los Angeles Kings last week, pulled the Seals out of the cellar into fifth place in the Western NHL division.

On Wednesday they play the Kings in the south and on Saturday they will be hosts to the Pittsburgh Penguins at the Oakland Arena.

The 70 per cent estimate was given by General Manager-Coach Bert Olmstead, a perfectionist who probably at the Pearly Gates will quarrel with St. Peter's decisions at the opening and closing of the sin bin.

Olmstead insists that his team can play 30 per cent better hockey than it is doing. He points in particular to the Bills and Ron Harris and Bill Hicke line which has not been producing goals.

In Saturday night's contest, the Seals and Canadiens went scoreless through two periods of fast, hard-hitting hockey.

In the third period wit Seals' defenseman Bobby Baun off for holding, Jerry Odrowski broke clear on a break away against the attacking Canadiens.

"I could feel those guys breathing down my neck," said Odrowski afterwards, "so I just let the puck go." His shot went past Montreal goalie Gump Worsley and sent the crowd into an uproar.

The noise was only exceeded by George Swarbrick's ninth goal of the season about five minutes later. It came on a Seals' power play on a passout from Charlie Burns. Swarbrick's ice skimmer from 40 feet away went past Worsley's stabbing stick.

A little over two minutes later the Canadiens closed the gap to 2-1 when Ralph Backstrom finished off a neat short-passing effort with J. C. Tremblay.

The combination play drew no raves from Olmstead in his

post-game analysis. "Combination, hell!" he exclaimed, "it was just lousy checking by our forwards who should have been trying to protect a two-goal lead."

The Canadiens pulled their goalie in the last 18 seconds of

the game and they engineered three face-offs inside the Oakland blue line. Goalie Charlie Hodge had to make three brilliant saves. Olmstead admitted that on the last with only four seconds left, "I turned my back and said, 'Oh, not now'."

ICE CHIPS—Of his team's loss to the Seals, second defeat by an expansion club, a disgruntled Montreal Coach Tom Blake would only say, "We didn't play good hockey. There wasn't enough effort. No, it wasn't too much Charlie Hodge, although he did come up with some good saves in the last period."

Asked if he missed the big fellow, Jean Beliveau, who remained home with a leg injury, Blake admitted glumly, "I guess so."

Hodge said that he enjoyed beating his old team, which did not protect him in the goalie draft, but no more so than he would have enjoyed beating Toronto. Speaking as an old Montrealer, he said of the Seals, "I just hate those guys."

Hodge contends that postending hasn't made him flakey. However, he always insists on sitting on the third seat on the flight when he boards a team bus.

Many sports writers refer to the Canadiens as the "Habs," an abbreviation for Habitants. However, the nickname is not used by the team itself and according to a former Montrealer it means "French Canadian peasant," a term which the society-conscious Molsons, who own the team, do not like.

Tom Therby returned to Vancouver over the weekend to bring his wife and two children to the Bay Area. Tom said he just learned that he was being promoted to the Seals on Thursday. He said that on the way to Oakland, he realized his first NHL game would be against the Canadiens and "I almost hoped I wouldn't have to play." However, Tom acquitted himself well. He had been playing defense for Canucks of the WHL and he found that that as a forward there is much more skating, especially in the major leagues. He also said that there is a lot more bodily contact and that you learn that even when you pass off the puck you get hit.

Asked to assess the abilities of Mike Laughton, Seals boss Bert Olmstead summed it up in the word "determination." He said that at training camp he didn't think Laughton could skate well enough for this league, but he compensated for this by his forceful play. Olmstead himself during his NHL career was noted more for his aggressive determination than his native talents and when it was suggested to him that he wasn't a great skater, he replied with a rare smile, "I was a better skater than Laughton."

The Coliseum operation ran into a snag Saturday when it failed to raise off pre-sold preferred parking space. It also angered some fans when it sold out of the \$3 seats. One fan, informed that only the expensive seats were left, gave an abbreviated version of "I don't believe it," turned on his heel, and said, "I'm going home."

Seals' Scoring

FIRST PERIOD

No Scoring

Penalties: LaPerriere (3:59), Laughton (6:50), Harper (19:19). Shots on goal: Oakland 5, Montreal 6.

SECOND PERIOD

No Scoring

Penalties: Cahoon (4:31), Provost (13:28), Laughton (13:28), B. Harris (14:22).

Shots on goal: Oakland 5, Montreal 7.

THIRD PERIOD

1. Oakland, Odrowski (unassisted) (1) 4:25.

2. Oakland, Swarbrick (Burns, Cahoon) (1) 9:04.

3. Montreal, Backstrom (Larose, J. C. Tremblay) (1) 11:31.

Penalties: Baun (2:28), T. Harris (8:06).

Shots on goal: Oakland 5, Montreal 13.

Score by Periods

Montreal 0 0 1—1

Oakland 2 0 3—5

Shots on goal: Oakland 6-5—17, Montreal.

A — 8,140.