

Finley Seen Adding Color (Green and Gold) to Hockey

ICICLES—or, hockey on the farm, Charles Finley's acres, where skates are Kelly green and gold as designed by Shirley, the lady of the house, who thus steps into National Hockey League annals alongside Irene Castle McLaughlin, the lady who designed the original Black Hawks' uniform back in 1926. "We were thinking about all-white skates," explained Shirley, "but we needed a contrast from the ice; we settled for a white strap that will come around the ankle."

"Color," said Finley, the most famous farmer in the state of Indiana, "is all that hockey needs. It is a wonderful game. It is faster than baseball, rougher than football, and there is constant action. It is a game that sells itself."

But the man, who parlayed insurance policies into a rare dynasty that now includes the Oakland Athletics baseball club and the Oakland Seals hockey franchise, nevertheless, has very elaborate plans for selling hockey to the people of the rich bay area. "I know very little about the actual mechanics of hockey," admits the ever effervescent Finley, who makes his N. H. L. debut next month. "But before long I'll know whatever there is to know about hockey; I'm a salesman, and I

A Shot and a Goal!

BY TED DAMATA

think I'm a good one, and knowing your product thoroly is the only way to become a successful salesman."

Hockey selected Finley over various syndicates bidding for the Oakland franchise because hockey needs a man like Finley in that particular area. One man, like Finley, can succeed where syndicates have failed. Hockey expects some "Veeckisms" to emerge from the move, and it won't be disappointed. But there will not be a live seal barking a mascot bark; nor will "Charlie O," the famous mule, be fitted with ice skates. "No, he [Charlie O] belongs to the baseball club," explained Finley.

Then he detailed some of his selling plans. "We'll have entertainment between periods," he said. "I think people who pay the top dollar in sports deserve more than a roving ice cleaning machine or lucky program number announcements during intermissions. Hockey really is a wonderful game for the women folk, and they're the ones we must sell; the men love the game, and if mama learns to like it, too, then you have two fans where there was one.

"Hockey is a natural game for the girls. It is played in the comfort of the indoors, and the girls can dress anyway they wish—for a fancy post-game dinner or party . . . anything. They leave a football game, they have the choice of a hamburger joint or going home and changing clothes before hitting the better spots."

Finley has a beautiful plan for zeroing in on the ladies. He's going to meet them on their own grounds—the hair dresser. "Where else can you pin them down long enough to sell them; it's a captive audience, and for some reason that is where they listen, too—to the hair dresser."

So Charles Finley, who is always thinking, is inviting 1,000 beauticians to dinner. "Each of them will get a season pass, a puck and a hockey stick—not those miniature things, real hockey stuff that they can hang up in their salons." Finley grinned out: "It doesn't take much of an imagination to visualize a customer asking if that stick up there is a new fangled hair curler, and so the beautician starts selling hockey for you."

There will, of course, be the other sales promotions, such as the Junior Chamber of Commerce charity outings, and ticket inducements for industry. These, however, will not be restricted to Oakland, and in that line of thought, Finley is changing the name of the club from the Oakland Seals to the Bay Area's Seals.

"That makes the Seals 'local' to all commerce and industry and develops a 'home town' association for all the towns and hamlets in the Bay area," said Finley. "There are thousands of people in the Bay area, people with the entertainment dollar in their budgets, who associate themselves with the area but not with Oakland."

Does that hold true in baseball? Finley skirted the question. "I'll tell you, tho, if I had to decide between hockey and baseball, I'd keep the hockey team."

Now Seals 'Bay Area'

Without any fanfare, Charles O. Finley has changed the name of the Oakland Seals hockey team to the Bay Area Seals.

This makes a complete circle on naming the team during the reign of three ownerships of the National Hockey League club.

It was initially known as the California Seals. Then the Oakland Tribune campaigned to have the sextet called the Oakland Seals.

Without announcing his decision, Finley, upon assuming ownership of the team, changed the name again. This time to the Bay Area Seals.

All stationery reads "The Seals" and right under that "The Bay Area's Hockey Team."

All employees are also requested to answer the phone in the Seals offices the same way—"The Seals, the Bay Area's hockey team."

"We are the only hockey team in the area, why not call it an area team," Finley told his office staff. "After all, the Coliseum was built by Alameda County and people from Fremont, Lafayette, Hayward and Milpitas all have their money in it."

The new name has found much favor down in San Jose and on the deep Peninsula, where many hold season tickets to the Seals.

Finley also has ordered all posters, brochures and publicity releases to feature the Bay Area Seals and has ruled that the players will have their names on the back of their jerseys because there will be 10 games televised this season.

Meantime, the Seals were taking double workouts at their Oshawa, Ont. training camp, the 60 players being divided into two shifts for two skating sessions a day.

None but the original seven have signed contracts.

Finley's team now 'Bay Area Seals'

Associated Press

OAKLAND—The Oakland Seals are dead.

Charles O. Finley, the new owner of the National Hockey League team, has renamed them the "Bay Area Seals" in an image-changing campaign.

They'll still play at the Oakland Arena and be listed in the standings as Oakland. But Finley hopes fans from San Jose to Petaluma will help pull the team out of the red ink that caused the earlier owners to sell.

"I don't know a damned thing about hockey," Finley said last July in his first news conference as Seals owner.

But he promised an all-out effort to build a winning team and predicted "within a few years, fans will be standing in line to get tickets, like they do in other NHL cities."

Finley wrapped up his baseball business this weekend, meeting with newly hired Oakland Athletics manager Dick Williams.

On Monday night, he'll be host at a Seals' dinner for Bay Area barbers.

"We realize barbers represent an important link with countless sports fans and potential Seals fans," Finley said in a letter of invitation mailed to 2500 barbers. More than 500 are expected to attend the dinner.

A scheduling break

brings the NHL champion Bruins here Friday for the Seals home opener and a good crowd is assured.

Finley's promotional ideas will get tested later, as he tries to pep up attendance. Last season, the Seals averaged 6600 fans per home game.

Soon after buying the club, Finley said he'd like to have trained seals perform at home games.

"But they'd have to be special. They'd have to be able to spin hockey pucks on their noses," said the man who brought Charlie O. the mule to baseball.

The Seals—Finley's players, that is—are now wearing uniforms with the owner's favorite colors, Kelly green and California gold. Last year, the colors were dark blue and green.

Finley has advertised his team heavily in a push to sell tickets. About 750,000 Seals brochures have been mailed to companies and homes in the area.

Ten home games will be televised under a contract Finley signed recently, and all Seals games will be carried on radio for the first time.