

## Shuts out Canucks

# Meloche hottest goalie in NHL

VANCOUVER — First, it was Tony Esposito of the Chicago Black Hawks.

Then, last year, it was Ken Dryden of the Montreal Canadiens.

Now it's Gilles Meloche of the California Golden Seals.

What, you say?

How about the hottest rookie goalie in the National Hockey League?

Right now, he's made the California Golden Seals com-

pletely forget all that flap about the Gary Smith-Gerry Desjardins trade with the 'Hawks while pocketing plenty of extra money out of Charles O. Finley's wallet.

Yesterday afternoon, before a packed Pacific Coliseum house of 15,570, the little 21-year old shut out the Vancouver Canucks, 2-0, on a dazzling display of third period thievery to raise his super play pay to \$1,200 for all.

Meloche turned back 20 Vancouver shots including 16 in the final period when the Canucks threw everything except the Zamboni ice-making machine at the California rookie.

As expected, Meloche set several Seals goal tending records and tied another, while the Seals as a club were recording their first ever victory here in six outings.

It's the first time a Seals goalie has posted back to back blank jobs and the 125 minutes and 11 seconds of allowing the opposition no goals is also a record. The fourth shutout of the year, for the young Montreal native who almost quit the Black Hawks organization because he wasn't being used, tied Smith's season mark of three years ago.

Nobody's scored on Gilles since Jim Johnson did at 14:49 of their period last Sunday when Philadelphia's Flyers were in town. In fact, it's the only score on Meloche in the last 182 minutes and one second and, over the last seven games, he's 5-1-1 with just seven goals allowed. Five of those came in one game—last Friday night when New York's potent Rangres rung out a 5-0 victory.

Perhaps the most important thing about the whole performance is that has boosted the Seals to a three point bulge over St. Louis in the race for third place in the NHL West, eight over Philadelphia, 11 over Pittsburgh and 12 over Los Angeles.

Ironically, the Canucks get the next crack at Meloche, Wednesday night at 8 p.m. in the Coliseum Arena.

Stan Gilbertson and Walt McKechnie each notched their 11th goals of the campaign for the California scores; Gilbertson's 25-foot slap shot giving the Seals a 1-0 lead at 2:08 of the first period.

Then it was up to Meloche to do the job on the Canucks until McKechnie sewed it up with a 40-foot drive, off a Gilbertson pass, with 2:12 remaining in the game.

#### Score by periods:

California	1	0	1	—2
Vancouver	0	0	0	—0

First period—1. California, Gilbertson 11 (Ferguson, Shmyr) 2:08. Penalties—Boltirev 18:52, Quinn (double minor) 18:52.

Second period—No scoring. Penalties—Shmyr 7:01.

Third Period—2. California, McKechnie 11 (Gilbertson) 17:48. Penalties—None.

#### Shots on goal by:

California	7	8	2	—17
Vancouver	7	4	14	—25

Goalkeepers: California—Meloche; Vancouver—Wilson.  
A—15,570

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# Sports

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