

Baseball Delays Seals

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The future direction of the Oakland Seals is waiting for solution of the major league baseball strike, presently occupying owner Charles O. Finley.

Involved is the tenure of general manager Garry Young, the expired contracts of Coach Vic Stasiuk and many of the promising young hockey players exposed to recruitment by the new World Hockey Association, and even the possible sale or removal

of the Oakland Seals franchise.

A meeting between Young and Finley to answer some or most of the open questions appears unlikely until Finley has his Oakland Athletics playing American League baseball.

"Mr. Finley is tied up with the strike and I haven't been able to meet him since the season ended," said Young. "I hope to sit down with him this week and go over the year's operation."

Sources close to Young feel he will resign unless his authority is broadened.

Many of his Kiddie Korps skaters are waiting his decision.

"How many of us do you think will stay if Garry isn't here next season?" asked one of them. "We didn't make the playoffs. Garry will be blamed and you know how many managers Finley's fired in baseball."

Finley has praised Young's work this season, but the Seals didn't make the playoffs. The last eight games were played without a win, the final six all losses.

That late season slide was disappointing for Young, but he points to improvement made in the year he has been general manager.

"On the plane to the West Coast from training camp, one of the players showed me an article in a Toronto newspaper saying we should get a gold medal if we won 11 games this season," he said. "Well, we tied 18 and won 21, so we must have been doing something right."

The Seals improved their finish one notch from seventh

to sixth, increased their total points from 45 to 60, upped their goals-for from 190 to 216 despite losing right wing Tom Webster (30 goals last year) to a back ailment and, decreased the goals-against from 320 to 288 with two rookie goalies.

Improvement also was evident at the turnstiles where the Seals set a season record for home attendance with 237,532 paid fans, far above last season's 200,953 figure.

The previous record was 236,555 in 1969-70, the year af-

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er the club finished second in its division. This season the Seals were coming off a last-place finish in which they set a National Hockey League record of 53 losses.

Stasiuk was under a one-year contract with the Seals after taking over from coach Fred Glover, who was fired by Young three games into the season.

It was agreed Stasiuk's contract would be renegotiated

after this season, but he left for his home in Lethbridge, Alberta last week without a job.

"I guess you could say he was a free agent April 2, the day after the season ended," Young said.

As to the club being sold, Finley has replied in the past he would sell the franchise for the right price, but said no offers had been made nor had he sought buyers. He also declined to reveal "the right price."

When Munson Campbell, the Seals' vice-president who recruited Young from Boston and worked on several of the deals that formed the present team, resigned in February, he offered this opinion about the Oakland franchise being relocated outside of the Bay Area:

"I truly don't believe there is any possible way Mr. Finley can obtain the permission from the National Hockey League to move," he said.

"I personally believe the National Hockey League from the Chairman, the President, right on through the owners, is firmly convinced that with a competitive product, meaningful promotion, and enthusiastic locally involved management, the Bay Area franchise could be a great success . . ." Campbell said.

Only two players — goalie Gilles Meloche and defenseman Bob Stewart — are under contract for next season, while the WHA is waving money around.

Young has had preliminary talks with most of the players, but they are waiting to see what direction the Seals' management will take before signing.