

Pride and Authority

Coach Applauds Seals

By Hugh McDonald
Times Staff Writer

Playing it loose and with nothing to worry about except next year's contracts, the Seals are making life miserable for teams that have more to gain than the Seals have to lose.

Teams are finding that they can't look past the Seals to their next game.

"I knew what the Seals are capable of," said St. Louis coach and former Seals hockey director Garry Young. "Maybe our boys were looking forward to Sunday's game against Vancouver instead of the one at hand."

Whatever it was, the game wound up 7-4 in favor of the Seals before a crowd of 5,000 who braved the storm Friday night to come to the Oakland Arena and see the Seals give out with a sterling offensive effort.

The loss cost the Blues a chance to make their Sunday game against Vancouver a tussle for first place in NHL Division No. 2. Vancouver was drubbed 12-4 by Atlanta Friday night, and the Blues failed to take advantage of their opportunity to close the three-point gap between the two teams. As it was, Chicago defeated Detroit 6-2 and moved into the division lead, one point over Vancouver.

The Seals closed out a six-game home stand with a fine effort. They play in Buffalo on Sunday and Toronto on Monday before returning to Oakland Wednesday to host the Philadelphia Flyers.

"I think it is a compliment to the individuals that they are playing with so much pride and so much authority," said Seals hockey director and coach Bill McCreary of his charges, who are out of playoff contention. "The team is playing well as a unit."

This was evident as the Seals' goals were scored by seven different players.

The Seals got off to a 2-0 lead as Larry Patey notched his 22nd goal of the season and Dave Hrechosy his 29th in the first period. A minuted after the latter's goal, Bill Collins was put into the clear by Bob Plager for the Blues' first counter. Rick Hampton ad ed one for

the Seals and Floyd Thomson one for St. Louis before the period ended.

Jim Neilson caught the right hand corner of the St. Louis net with a good shot for the only goal of the middle frame.

Bob Gasson outmuscled Seals defenseman Rick Hampton to score at 5:23 of the third period, but the Seals got this one back when Stan Weir and Brian Lavender clicked on a two-on-one break. Weir faked a shot and passed to Lavender, who had a practically empty net for his second goal of the season when St. Louis goalie Yves Belanger went for Weir's adroit feint.

Al MacAdam broke a scoring drought for the Seals' sixth goal, and captain Joey Johnson scored his first goal since Feb. 19 (when he broke his wrist in a game against Toronto).

Playing at center, Johnson also had two assists to go along with his goal. Collins scored his second goal of the evening for the Blues in a lost cause at 18:37.

ICE CHIPS

When Blues coach Young was advised before last night's game that Atlanta had drubbed Vancouver 12-4, he said, "Tell the guys. If we win this game tonight, we'll be going for first place on the TV game of the week from Vancouver on Sunday."

As an afterthought, he added, "I worry when a team gets hurt like that. They get tough."

Young's worries were premature. The Seals took care of that. Nevertheless, after the game, Young still was hopeful. "We can still end up in first place," he said.

The Blues trail Chicago by four points and the Canucks by three. When Young took over as coach of the Blues last November, St. Louis had only nine points. They now have 73.

He attributed the changeabout mainly to good trades. He said the Solomons, owner of the Blues, "are great people to work for."

The Blues are drawing crowds of 18,000 at times. Young said they have sold 17,000 season tickets.

The Seals' season ticket total is in the region of 1,000. One of the factors in the Blues' success was out of action last night.

Nineteen-year-old defenseman Bob Hess was hit in the foot by a puck in the St. Louis loss to Los Angeles on Thursday night. He expects to be back in the lineup by Sunday.

Of him, Young has said, "He's faced the big scorers all season and has done a job on them. For his age, he's the best there is."

To this, one of Hess's teammates added, "The big thing about Bob is that he has learned to cut down on his mistakes. He improves every game and makes plays some veteran defensemen won't make. Once you tell him something, he never forgets it."

Gilles Meloche had 44 shots fired by him last night and was given full credit by Young for his contribution to the Seals victory.

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Seals Rout Blues

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McCreary thought Meloche played well, but not really any better than in some other games in the past.

Internal Revenue Service eyebrows have been raised at some of the deductions claimed by hockey players.

The IRS was not persuaded that \$90 worth of hair styling was to a player's professional advantage.

Arguments that \$60 for a canoe trip, \$75 for bowling and larger amounts for golfing on grounds that any exercise is essential to professional fitness didn't wash either.

SCORING

St. Louis	2	0	2-4
California	3	1	3-4
First Period — 1, California, Patey 22:55, 2, California, Hrechosy 29:11, Williams, Gardner, 8:01, 3, St. Louis, Collins 20:18, Plager, Lotley, 9:01, 4, California, Hampton 3:55, Johnston, 11:04, 5, St. Louis, Thomson 10:15, Belanger, 12:35, Penalty-Gassoff, StL, 17:55.				
Second Period — 6, California, Neilson 3:15, 2B, Penalties — Simmer Cal, 4:54; Pesut, Cal, 9:04; Plante, StL, 16:35.				
Third Period — 7, St. Louis, Gassoff 3:52, 8, California, Lavender 2:42, Weir, 8:42, 9, California, MacAdam 17:55, Johnston, Pesut, 12:55, 10, California, Johnston 12:55, MacAdam, Frig, 17:55, 11, St. Louis, Collins 21:55, Gassoff, 18:37.				
PENALTIES — Patey, Cal, 2:27; Affleck, StL, 19:21.				
Shots on goal: St. Louis 13-13-18-44, California 13-8-13-34.				
Goalies: St. Louis, Belanger; California, Meloche. A- 5,089.				