

Baby makes it, Seals don't

By JOE DeLOACH

OAKLAND — It was one day that California Golden Seals' coach Marshall Johnston would not easily forget.

Not only did his team drop a disappointing, 5-2, loss to the Detroit Red Wings before 3,644 fans at the Coliseum Arena, but Johnston's wife, Barbara, gave birth to a baby girl named Amy during the National Hockey League game.

"It has really been a long day for me," said Johnston afterwards in the Seals' locker room. "I had to take my wife to the hospital (Washington Hospital in Fremont) about 4 a.m. this morning (Wednesday)," said Johnston. "Nothing happened until 8 p.m. tonight (Wednesday), when she had an operation. I had to telephone the hospital between the second and third periods of our game to find out how she was doing. Boy, was I ever worried."

Well, to the happiness of the Johnstons', their newest arrival is very safe and secure. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of Mr. Johnston's ice hockey team.

For two thrill-packed periods, the Seals played very competitive hockey. Then, all of a sudden, a Detroit team, which had played an uninspired game for two periods, erupted for four goals in the final 20 minutes of play to claim the win.

"Detroit capitalized on their chances and we didn't and that was the story of the game," said Johnston afterwards. "It wasn't so much

that we weren't moving the puck like in some of our games, but we were just stick handling the puck too much at the red line."

For the first time in many a NHL game, the Seals actually accumulated more shots on goal than the opposition. Still, the Seals' 32-26 shots-on-goal edge, didn't make enough difference for the win.

The obvious difference in the game was the spectacular play of Detroit goalie Jim Rutherford, who entered the contest with a porous 3.95 goals against average.

"Rutherford (Jim) played very well," said Johnston. "Rutherford was just hot. If our guys made a mistake it was not sliding the puck enough when they shot."

The Seals, especially in the second period when they had 15 shots on goals, had numerous breakaway attempts on Rutherford, but most of the time, the Detroit goalie would make the vital save.

"It is really a discouraging defeat," said Johnston, "because the guys keep on hustling so much, but mark my work word, we'll be back. I'm not discouraged because we play very well for two periods. You just can't hope to win if the biscuit doesn't go into the basket."

After a scoreless first period, the Red Wings took a 1-0 lead only 56 seconds into the second period on Mickey Redmond's 40th goal of the season.

Before the period had elapsed, however, the Seals took the lead at 2-1 on Walt McKechnie's breakaway score and on a picture-play goal by Joey Johnston, his 24th of the year, with assists from Ron Huston and Reggie Leach.

In the final 20 minutes of play, however, Detroit dominated the offensive play to win the game. Marcel Dionne scored two goals and Red Berenson and Pierre Jarry added single tallies to account for the visitors' scoring.

The Red Wings failed to have a single player cited a for a penalty. The Seals, on the

other hand, suffered three infractions.

"I find it difficult for a team to go an entire game without getting tired," said Johnston. "There were a couple of times in the third period that I did see some holding and interference infractions. Of course, when a team wins, it never talks about the penalties; it's only when you lose."