

Bruins Stunned By Golden Seals, 6-2

OAKLAND (UPI) — Reggie Leach, a former Bruin, scored a three-goal hat trick against his former team Sunday night as the California Golden Seals walloped Boston 6-2.

It was the first win for the last place NHL West Division team this season in five games against the East Division leaders and the first time California beat the Bruins since December, 1971.

The loss cut Boston's lead over second place Montreal to nine points and was the first setback for Bruin goaltender Ross Brooks, who last week set

a league record with 14 consecutive victories. Brooks, who lost his season opening start, is now 14-1-6.

The Seals led 3-1 and 5-1 after the first and second periods as Hilliard Graves added two goals and Morris Mott one.

Boston scored first on a delayed penalty at 11:43 of the first period when Don Marcotte took Phil Esposito's pass at the blue line and beat goalie Giler Melecke. Esposito, who picked up his 186th point with the goal, was the sixth man on the ice as the Bruins pulled out Brooks.

After Graves and Mott put California in front 2-1 after the opening 20 minutes, Leach scored at 1:33 and 7:46 of the middle period and Graves got his second on a power play to give the winners a 5-1 margin.

A short handed goal by Gregg Sheppard at 8:43 of the final period reduced the margin but Leach got his third of the night and his first of the season a minute later to wrap up the scoring.

It was only the second victory for Seals' new coach Marshall Johnston against the Bruins and two ties since he took over the club three weeks ago.

Finley gone, Seals prosper

By Bob Ryan
Globe Staff

OAKLAND — As the California Golden Seals skated off the ice to the organ strains of "Happy Days are Here Again," their stunning 6-2 triumph over the Bruins safe in hand, there was but one question on the minds and lips of 8875 amazed patrons, and that was this: "Who are those masked men, anyhow?"

Could they possibly be the same California Golden Seals who have fashioned a magnificent 2-33 road record? Were they the same team the Bruins spotted a 4-1 lead and came back to defeat, 9-6, only three short weeks ago? Were they the same Seals who have given hockey a bad name in the Bay Area for as long as most people can remember?

The answer to all these is "yes" and if you want to know the reason why the Seals no longer feel it necessary to travel in pairs and aren't afraid to venture out in daylight, it's because Charlie Finley is gone. Or, rather, because Gary Young and Marshall Johnston are here.

"We've learned lots since Marshall took over" said Reggie Leach, the ex-Bruin whose hat trick helped bury his old mates. "We've been playing super."

"It's the way we're coached," agreed winger Joey Johnston.

The obvious implication is that the Seals weren't getting too much coaching from Fred Glover, who was too busy being a general manager and saying, "Yes, sir,

Mr. Finley," to worry about teaching hockey to an inferior team.

But, as soon as Finley sold the team and it became a trusteeship of the league, out went Glover and in came the Young-Johnston team.

Young, of course, is the same Gary Young who used to be the Bruins' head scout, and who, as general manager of the Seals once before, built the team into a play-off club before the WHA came along. Nine players jumped, mainly because Finley wouldn't pay anybody anything. Of those nine, six became WHA All Stars. Had there been no WHA, or no Finley, the Seals might today have 12 good players entering their third year together.

Anyway, Young soon became an ex-Finley employee, thus joining a group larger than the Henry VIII Wives Club. The team soon dropped into a level comparable to the Suburban League, and attendance was commensurate with the product. Now, however, the players are relaxed and attentive under Young — whose catchy title is Manager of Hockey Activities — and Johnston, who until two and a half weeks ago, was best known only as a journeyman defenseman.

"He has given us direction," says Johnston. "We didn't even know how to bring the puck out of our own end. Right now, we're not measuring our accomplishments on wins and losses. We're learning how the system must be. We can't be a high scoring team. We've got to play like Chicago. We'll have to play for breaks, and then we'll score."