

Big Seals Crowd Savors 6-1 Win

By JOHN PORTER
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In their most important game of the season before one of the largest home crowds, the California Seals ran up their biggest margin of victory, 6-1 over the Toronto Maple Leafs at the Arena last night.

Seals coach Bill McCreary, after his second game behind the bench, appeared relaxed and pleased.

"It was our players," he said. "They've got individual confidence and pride. If they had lost tonight they would have been so far behind Toronto . . ."

With the win, the Seals aren't all that far back now. There are eight points between the two teams in the Adams Division and the Seals could cut that even more when they play next week in Toronto.

The Seals got off to a good start last night for the appreciative 9,958 fans who showed up for Family Night, presented by The Tribune and the Oakland Chamber of Commerce.

After Joseph W. Knowland, editor and publisher of The Tribune, made some welcoming remarks to the crowd, the Seals said hello to the Leafs with two goals from Ron

Huston and Larry Patey for a 2-0 lead in the first period.

Toronto sliced that to 2-1 on Inge Hammarstrom's solo effort, but Dave Hrechkosy ran it up to 3-1 with a minute left in the period.

Dave Gardner's line, which made little impression in the opening period, connected twice in the second and once in the final to give the Seals scoring from all three lines.

Joey Johnston, who's taking his lumps from a few fans who might not realize he's playing with an injured wrist, scored his 11th goal and rookie Frank Spring snared his first two ever in the National Hockey League.

"Spring is an anchorman for that line," said McCreary. "He's with two good offensive players, and as it turned out, it worked well tonight."

The second time the Wrecking Crew hit the ice for the Seals things were going well.

Strong forechecking earned Huston a faceoff deep in the Toronto

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zone. After the draw, Jim Neilson wound up with the puck on the point and his shot was sent halfway to the net before it was blocked.

Huston slipped between two defenders, took the puck and stuffed his 11th goal past goalie Doug Favell, burned eight times the night before in Los Angeles, for 1-0 after six minutes.

Patey, another rookie center, made it 2-0 with a bullet for his 14th from the slot at 11:22. Stan Weir, converted to left wing because John Stewart was out with a groin injury, held the puck long enough at the blueline to suck in the defense and let Patey catch up for a perfect set-up pass to the middle.

Nine seconds later, Inge Hammarstrom, who really plays for Toronto but was receiving Seals' passes quite often, took the puck from defenseman George Pesut and cut across the middle to beat Gary Simmons with a back-hander.

"If you have to lose a shut-out," said Simmons, who made his best saves in the third period, "that's the way to lose it—early and on a good goal."

Dave Hrechkosy thought he had a good goal for his 20th this season in the 18th minute on a back-hander in the slot, but Favell made the save of the night. Undaunted, The Wrecker blasted it in from 45 feet on the next rush after Butch Williams' pass took a fortuitous right angle off the boards.

Pesut slipped the puck off the Leafs in the second period to send Johnston across the middle for a back-handed goal at 8:49.

It was enough for Favell, who was replaced in goal with Dunc Wilson.

The replacement found out what it was like after just 25 seconds when Spring put a third rebound into his net.

Early in the third period Spring came out of the corner looking to make a pass in front, then swept the puck between Wilson's legs for his second of the night.

"This team has a great attitude," said Spring, the club's newest member. "I don't know if it's always like that, but I think we've got a bunch of winners."

"The crowd was just great for us. I hope they are always there for us because it means a lot," he said.

The Seals leave today for Chicago and a game with the Black Hawks tomorrow. Rookie defenseman Rick Hampton, used less and less, may be sent to Salt Lake City in exchange for Brent Meekie.

Regular Seals defenseman Bob Stewart, whose crushing check sent Lanny McDonald of Toronto to the dressing room with a bruised shoulder, had an impressive game.

"If you're going to ask me if we can make the playoffs," said Stewart before anyone could ask him, "the answer is yes. If we win in Toronto, it's even a stronger yes."

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