

Seals Burn Toronto, 8-4

Third Straight Victory

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The Oakland Seals' scoring bonfire left the Toronto Maple Leafs in a pile of defenseless ashes last night when the incendiary Oaklanders trampled their Eastern visitors 8-4 at the Coliseum Arena.

Now on a blazing streak of three straight victories, the Seals had anxious moments when Toronto scored in the first minute and a half of the game.

But it turned out the Leafs were just blowing in the wind.

Oakland came back to score twice in the first period, a team hat trick of three goals in the second, and a final pair in the last two minutes of the offensive show.

With scoring like that (it tied the club record), the Seals seemed to be in good shape to take on the East's front running Montreal Canadiens in the Arena on Wednesday night.

This latest win for Oakland — there weren't any in the Seals' first 10 games — lifts the Seals to within a point of sixth place Pittsburgh in the West. Toronto, now 2-8, is still sixth in the East.

With such high scoring, two players came close to getting hat tricks. For Toronto, it was rookie Guy Trotter who had a pair of goals.

But for the 6,799 howling fans at the Arena, it was all little right wing Tony Featherstone's night. Featherstone handed Oakland a 6-2 bulge with his second goal of the night at 5:31 of the last period and then came within a whisker of shooting in that magical third one.

Midway through that final 20 minutes, Dennis Hextall circled behind the Leafs' cage and nudged the puck across a corner of the crease toward Featherstone. A volley of groans resounded from the crowd after Featherstone, off stride, couldn't get enough stick into the shot.

The Seals did get more action, though, at 8:14 Gerry Ehman recorded his first goal of the season, followed a minute later by Gary Croteau's fourth score of the year.

Passes were sloppy by both teams during the offensive parade, and the Seals were caught doing a half-step at the opening faceoff.

The Leafs didn't waste much time puncturing the Seals' defense. Jim Dorvy led Dave Keon across the blue line with a perfect pass and the Leafs' top scorer scooted a 20-foot pass into the slot in front of Seal goalie Gary Smith.

Gerry Monahan was all alone in front of the 6-4 Oakland netminder and whipped a 10-foot backhander into the Seals' net.

The shock of the quick goal apparently didn't faze the Seals that much. Twenty-five seconds later Carol Vadnais brushed a short shot under

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Leaf's goalie Bruce Gamble and the score was 1-1.

The Seals controlled the face-off and Featherstone passed back to his center, Dennis Hextall, who led the rush at Gamble. Vadnais, a defenseman, charged and put home Hextall's aiding pass.

At 5:19, the Seals' Billy Hicke carried the puck across center ice, faked Brian Glennie to the left after crossing the blue line and challenged Gamble with a 25-foot backhander that snaked into the far corner of the net.

Undaunted, the Leafs made it a 2-2 tie when Jim Harrison fired at Smith from 50 feet away. Harrison was off balance and the weak effort deflected off Guy Trotter's stick just enough to carry over Smith's outstretched arm.

The hinges on the Toronto defense began to buckle in the second period. Within two minutes Oakland was leading 4-2 and when defenseman Dick Mattiussi scored unassisted at 6:11 for 5-2, the Leafs were reeling.

Gary Jarrett beat Gamble on feeds from Billy Hicke and Harry Howell with 1:03 elapsed. Then, 55 seconds later, Featherstone outmuscled two Leafs to the side of the Toronto net, zoomed laterally in front of Gamble and scored his second goal.

Mattiussi's goal came after Brian Glennie's pass was short to the Leaf forwards crossing center ice. Glennie was shaken up in the action at the goal mouth on Jarrett's score and had just returned to the ice.

The Seals' defender snared the pass in full stride and whistled a 45-foot screamer that caught the near side of the net.