

Seals Trying for 'Legal' Win

By HUGH McDONALD
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The Seals get a chance to win a game legally tomorrow at 2 p.m. in their matinee against the Minnesota North Stars at the Oakland Arena.

They failed to win despite some illegality last night when the Pittsburgh Penguins rallied from a two-goal deficit to tie them 5-5 and thereby keep their flickering play-off hopes alive.

With 80 seconds left in the game, Pittsburgh challenged the curvature in Seal Hilliard Graves' stick. Sure enough, it was half an inch over the allowable curves. Graves was assessed a two-minute minor penalty for his chicanery, but the Penguins were unable to punch home the winning goal.

Goals came in clusters in the first period, with neither goalie, Gilles Meloche for the Seals nor Andy Brown for the Penguins, distinguishing themselves.

As Seals coach Fred Glover conceded, Meloche was "cold"

and was "fighting the puck."

Penguins coach Ken Schinkel referred to the game as a "giveaway."

Meloche allowed Ron Schock's high shot to trickle off his glove

for the first Pittsburgh goal at 4:55. Just 20 seconds later he got an assist on a Seals goal by passing the puck to Graves, who took the puck down the ice and found Morris Mott in the slot.

McDonald's Ice Chips

Seals' Coach Fred Glover didn't have any sympathy for the \$200 it cost winger Hilliard Graves for being caught with an illegally curved stick in last night's game. "He'd been warned," said Glover. "So have the rest of them."

Glover hasn't much use for the curved sticks. He claims you can't pick up a pass with them. He notes that Bruins' Phil Esposito uses one of the broadest, straight blades in hockey and that the puck seems to hang onto his stick.

Gravits didn't seem too chastened by becoming the first Seal to be caught using a stick with an excessive curve.

"It's deductible," he quipped, referring to the \$200 fine.

If the Pittsburgh challenge of the curve had failed, it would have cost the Penguins \$100. If a curved stick challenge is made in the first two periods, it is done between periods, so as not to delay the game.

It can be done at any time in the third period.

"We spotted it on the first shift in the third period," said Pittsburgh coach Ken Schinkel. "We decided to wait and make the challenge if we needed it. I was mad because we couldn't get a line change to have our captain make the challenge with a full two minutes left in the game. As it was, we only had the manpower advantage for one minute and 20 seconds."

Seals are due to have a team meeting this afternoon with owner Charles O. Finley. It is presumed that some of the discontent by the players talking about jumping to the World Hockey Association will come out in the open.

The Seals suffered two casualties in the second period of last night's game. Morris Mott's cheek was cut and required five stitches. Eddie Shack's clearing shot caught Pete Laframboise behind the ear and raised a goose egg. On the same play, the tip of one of Pete's fingers was slashed by a skate. Both players returned to the ice in the third period.

It falls to the lot of various sports writers to pick three stars for each game and this isn't always easy the way the Seals have been playing, as well as some of their opponents, in a number of games.

The other night against Vancouver, suggested that the three stars should be the referee and two linesmen.

While Gilles Meloche wasn't having a good night in goal against the Penguins, Glover laid part of the blame on the defensemen who weren't taking out their man.

As usual, Fred wasn't happy with the refereeing.

"Show me the game that Pittsburgh only ends up with only two penalties," he grumbled.

Then he added, "We can do it. We're pacifists."

Mott's high shot beat Brown handily.

The Seals went ahead at 11 minutes even on a sharply-angled shot by Pete Laframboise. Twenty-five seconds later Lowell MacDonald took a good pass from Eddie Shack to make it two-all. Less than a minute later Rick Smith's 25-foot slap shot gave the Seals the lead again.

The Seals went two up at 9:07 of the second period when Reggie Leach got the puck over to Gary Croteau at the edge of the crease and Croteau poked it in.

With Seals' Joey Johnston off for tripping, Pittsburgh on a power play handled the puck 16 times without a Seal intercepting. Finally Greg Polis fired the puck between Meloche's legs.

At 3:54 of the third period the Seals went two up again when Graig Patrick scored on his own rebound.

A puck seemed to go off a skate and change direction for Pittsburgh's fourth goal at 5:17. Jim Shires made the shot

that scored.

With just under three minutes left in the game, Pittsburgh ganged the Seals net and Dave Burrows got the puck under Meloche's stick.

Meloche, in disgust, broke his stick over his net.

The game against the North Stars tomorrow afternoon will close out a four-game home stand in which the Seals have failed to win to date. They haven't defeated the North Stars this season.

First period—1. Pittsburgh, Schock 12 (Shires, Rupp) 4:55. 2. California, Mott 4 (Graves, Meloche) 5:15. 3. California, Laframboise 13 (McAneley) 11. 4. Pittsburgh, MacDonald 30 (Shack, Apps) 11:25. 5. California, Smith 9 (McKechnie, J. Johnston) 12:16. Penalty—Burrows, Pit., 13:44.

Second period—3. California, Croteau 4 (Leach, Weir) 9:07. 7. Pittsburgh, Polis 23 (Pronovost, Edestrand) 11:49. Penalties—J. Johnston, Cal. 10:28; Harbaruk, Pt., 13:28; M. Johnston, Cal. 13:33.

Third period—8. California, Patrick 17 (Bokiliev, Mott) 3:54; 9. Pittsburgh, Shires 1 (McDonough, Edestrand) 5:12; 10. Pittsburgh, Burrows 3 (Hexfall, MacDonald) 17:05. Penalty—Graves, Cal., 18:40. Shots on goal by:

Pittsburgh	5	14	14—37
California	12	8	14—34
Goals—Pittsburgh, Brown; California, Meloche.			
A—5,180. Score by periods:			
Pittsburgh	2	1	2—5
California	3	1	1—4