

Westfall's Goal Seals Islander's 3d Win, 4-2

By Wes Gaffer

Guess who turned out to be Basement Bertha's true sweetheart last night when the Islanders and the California (Oakland) Seals battled each other at the Nassau Coliseum to avoid her embrace? The Seals, that's who, blowing a 2-0, then 2-1 first period lead to halt the Islanders' skid at eight games.

The last goal in a 4-2 New York win went to Eddie Westfall and there's poetry in that. For it was the ex-Bruin, celebrating his return from purgatory, who kept the Islanders in the game when the going was extremely rough. Last night when he took the ice, Eddie skated over to the right wing position instead of the backline where he has played the past seven games, all losses through no fault of his.

To be sure, there were other heroes, Brian Lavender putting the New Yorkers back into the game on a first period tally; self-sacrificing Terry Crisp enjoying fortune's smile at last with his first goal of the season,

the second period 2-2 knotted; Brian Spencer, tallying the winner with wife Linda, for the first time, present among the 11,037 fans; and Gerry Desjardins enjoying a victory for a change after endless bombardments.

Fortunately, the Seals hold up the National Hockey League's Western or easier division. They have 10 points, or one less than seventh place St. Louis. The Islanders are the Eastern Division supports with seven points, or eight less than those accumulated by Toronto.

But back to pleasant matters for a change. The victory, the second over the Seals (New York won, 7-3, in Oakland two and a half weeks ago) was even sweeter for general manager Bill Torrey. Once, in a lower reincarnation, Torrey served as the Seals' GM.

And Phil Goyette? His voice still didn't rise above a whisper but some of the tension lines were gone from his face as he quietly accepted congratulations and said, "It was a long, long time in coming."

Desjardins, who turned aside

21 of the Seals' 23 shots, was far more explicit. "We never lost sight of the game, even when we were down 2-0. I knew we were coming back because the guys knew they were going to win this one before they got out on the ice."

If you were there at the beginning, you would have found Gerry's faith rather touching. The game was only 32 seconds old when Ken Murray put the Islanders in a hole, catching a tripping penalty. Joey Johnston capitalized on the break, deflecting home a cross-crease pass from Walt McKechnie 19 seconds later.

The game took on the semblance of a runaway at 9:12. Dick Redmond, checked, off balance and falling to the ice straight out and 50 feet away from the goal, scored on a low, medium-speed shot that went in off an Islander would-be defender.

Somehow the Islanders, lethargic through most of the period, caught fire. Thanks to aggressive play by Bryan Lefley and Lorne Henning, Brian Lavender was able to narrow the margin with 22 seconds left in the period. In

indignation, Seals goalie Marv Edwards slashed Lavender as the light flashed on, signaling a power-play goal.

For some reason the Seals went into a shell in the second period, a retirement that infuriated coach and general manager, Freddy Glover, who closed his dressing room to the press after the game as he wordlessly paced and glared at the Seals malfactors.

Crisp, a left wing who hasn't played that position with any regularity since the season started, was rewarded for the devotion to duty that had him sacrificing himself at center. At 18:32 Terry climaxed the uphill struggle, tipping in Bill Mikkelsen's blue-line blazer.

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| California | 2 | 0 | 6-2 |
| ISLANDERS | 1 | 1 | 2-4 |

FIRST PERIOD: Scoring—J. Johnston (McKechnie, Patrick) 0:51; Redmond (Leach, Weir) 9:12; Lavender (Henning, Lefley) 19:20. Penalties—Murray 8:32; Murray 9:34; McKechnie 17:39. Shots—Seals 12, ISLANDERS 7.

SECOND PERIOD: Scoring—Crisp (Mikkelsen, Lavender) 18:22. Penalties—Lefley 3:33; M. Edwards 3:33; R. Smith 5:41; Croteau 8:28. Shots—Seals 5, ISLANDERS 18.

THIRD PERIOD: Scoring—Spencer (Miller, Westfall) 12:42; Westfall (Spencer, Miller) 18:01. Penalty—Lefley 6:39. Shots—Seals 12, S. 6-23; ISLANDERS 7, 12, 14-33.