

NHL Approves Transfer Of Golden Seals To Cleveland

CHICAGO (UPI) — The Finance Committee of the National Hockey League early today finalized the transfer of the California Golden Seals to Cleveland.

The committee, acting for the NHL Board of Governors, announced shortly after 1:00 a.m. CDT that the transfer of the Seals was approved unanimously.

"I'm very pleased and I think that the Cleveland area is going to be a great opportunity for us," Seals' owner Mel Swig said after the approval was announced.

"I think the fans already have shown great enthusiasm."

The NHL tonight planned to consider the sale and transfer of the Kansas City Scouts to a Denver-based group headed by Bud Palmer, who put forth a motion to buy the team at a Board of Governors' meeting here June 30. Palmer was told to get his group together and work out final arrangements concerning a lease on an arena.

Swig, principle owner and chairman of the board of the Golden Seals, also applied for the transfer to Cleveland at the June 30 board meeting.

"It's been very obvious to everyone who followed hockey—and certainly obvious to us—that the club simply was not drawing people into the Oakland Coliseum," NHL Vice President Don Ruck after announcing the transfer approval. "They were losing money, they have lost money and in every year of operation there since they commenced in the season 1967-68 it did not improve. The outlook was not that rosy and it was a case, really, of survival."

Ruck said California averaged approximately 6,500 fans per game last year, among the lowest in the league.

The team will play in the Richfield Coliseum, which houses the National Basketball Association Cleveland Cavaliers and seats 18,000 for hockey.

"The league is happy things

worked out because Cleveland has had an extremely successful history in hockey, albeit it has been in the minor leagues," Ruck said.

Swig said he considers the Seals "one of the fine young clubs of the league and we should do nothing but get better and play good, competitive hockey."

At present, there has been no discussion regarding the realignment of divisions.

Last year the Golden Seals, based in Oakland, played in the Conn Smyth Division. Toronto is also a member of that division and it is hoped the addition of Cleveland will create a natural rivalry.