

Sabres give Seals another lift

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BUFFALO — At a time when it seemed most unlikely, the California Golden Seals overcame their bad habits and their history.

Backed by the strong goaltending of Gilles Meloche, who made 27 saves in blanking the Sabres here last night, 2-0, the Seals finally played the kind of game they must to make the National Hockey League Stanley Cup playoffs.

The bad habits, spotty checking and erratic shooting easily explain why the Golden Ones are in last place in the Western Division. The history had been an 0-7 road record this season.

Fortunately for coach Fred Glover and his team, the Sabres continue to provide moral lifts. The Seals are now 2-1 against the team which made the playoffs last year in the East and now might enjoy the prospect of a successful road trip.

Glover was clearly pleased by his team's play, particularly the defense.

"I had a little talk with Ted Murray and Ray McKay before the game, and they played better, particularly Murray. I also thought we were sharper in our own end."

In the Seals' 2-1 loss to the Philadelphia Flyers at the Oakland Coliseum Arena Friday night, both Philadelphia goals were set up after defensive mistakes by — yes — Murray and McKay.

The Seals, now 4-11-1 and seven points out of fourth place in the West, have been criticized all season because of poor defense around their



SEALS' GILES MELOCHE MAKES ONE OF MANY KEY SAVES AT BUFFALO
Goalie resisted all Sabre attempts as Seals triumphed 2-0

—UPI Photo

own net. Murray, McKay, Ted McAneeley, Marshall Johnston and Bobby Stewart kept Sabre forwards out of the slot.

Meloche's shutout was his first of the season, and lowered his goals-against average to 3.73. He was called upon to make only two really difficult saves, on Rene Robert in the first period and on Craig Ramsay in the third.

Ivan Boldirev got the Seals started at 7:59 of the first period. The second line center took a pass off the boards from Craig Patrick

and beat Buffalo goalie Roger Crozier, making only his third start of the season, on a backhand from the face-off circle.

Hilly Graves got the insurance goal in the second period when he broke in alone on Crozier and took a perfect pass from Stan Weir, scoring from 12 feet out.

The Seals complete the road trip with games against the Rangers in New York Wednesday, the North Stars in Minnesota Saturday and the Red Wings in Detroit Sunday.

They return home for a re-

match against the North Stars Nov. 28.