

Joey's Hat Trick Foils Sabres

By HUGH McDONALD

Hobbling into the dressing room on a crutch, a big grin on his face, Bert Marshall exulted, "My first win as captain."

The veteran defenseman, appointed team captain on February 23 when Carol Vadnais was traded to Boston, twisted a knee against Chicago last Friday and won't be able to play for three weeks. But he was with his team all the way last night as they came through with a "must win," 6-3 decision over the Buffalo Sabres at Oakland Arena.

Most of the kudos went to center Joey Johnston who scored his first major league hat trick and was promptly rewarded with \$300 of owner Charley Finley's money by General Manager Gary Young.

"It took me four years in the minors to score a hat trick (he scored two with Cleveland of the AHL last year) and one year in the majors," commented Johnston, who was obviously, but quietly, pleased with his effort.

"The guy you should be talking to is Reggie Leach," he said modestly. "Ask him about coming out to play when he was sick with tonsillitis."

Leach gave the Seals their fourth goal, which proved the turning point of the game in the third period, and admitted he had been sick in bed for the past two days.

The former Boston Bruin said, "I felt better this afternoon and about 4 o'clock I phoned the doctor. He didn't think I should play, but he said it was OK if



FOOTBALL STYLE HOCKEY—This first period action in last night's National Hockey League game in Oakland Arena looks like football with the Buffalo Sabres' Mike

Robitaille dumping the Seals' Bobby Sheehan unceremoniously on the ice near the redline.

(AP Wirephoto)

Garry Young would let me."

Since Leach came to the team in the Boston trade, his fine playmaking has helped establish the checking line on which he plays with Johnston and Gary Croteau as the Seals' best scoring trio.

Last night they accounted for five of the team's six goals.

The victory kept the Seals in contention for a play-off spot.

They had not won in 16 previous outings, although they had obtained five ties. They remain in fifth place, one point behind Philadelphia who defeated Vancouver 6-5 last night. Pittsburgh lost 5-4 to Montreal and trail the Seals by three points, who are the same distance behind third place St. Louis.

The Seals opened the scoring at 4:18 of the first period on a

ganging attack finished off by Johnston as a delayed cross checking penalty was about to be called on Sabres' Jim Watson.

Buffalo replied at 5:40 when Don Luce rounded the Seals' goal and one-handed a pass out to Danny Lawson. Sixteen seconds later Croteau let go a drive which dribbled off goalie Dave Dryden's glove into the net.

That was all for Dryden who was replaced by Buffalo's No. 1 netminder, Roger Crozier, who made his presence felt when he slid out to block a shot from Gerry Pinder who had taken a goalmouth pass from Stan Gilbertson.

Johnston scored his second goal at 19:12 with a snap shot from the faceoff.

The Seals gave this one back with only five seconds left in the period. Larry Hillman was left untouched behind the net by any Seals' defenseman and with Seals' goalie looking every which way, Hillman darted out in front and swept the puck behind the confused netminder.

Buffalo outshot the Seals 16-6 in the second period, but there was no scoring.

A penalty to Buffalo's Tracy Pratt led to the Seals' fourth goal. During the power play, Leach took the puck from Watson and gave Crozier no chance with a shot from 10 feet out.

Bobby Sheehan set Wayne Carleton up with a clearing pass and Carleton went in to out-guess Crozier for the fifth Seals' goal at 14:23.

Just over a minute later, Buffalo rookie John Gould, playing in his first NHL game, scored his first major league goal.

Croteau set Johnston up with a pass for the latter's hat trick at 15:57.

The Seals will be away for games with Toronto on Saturday and New York on Sunday before returning to Oakland next Wednesday to play the Los Angeles Kings.