

\$7 million bid for Seals gets NHL rebuff

S.D. OFFER

By Bob Brachman

No matter its desire to see someone other than controversial Charles O. Finley as owner of the California Golden Seals, the National Hockey League made it clear today it is willing to go to expensive lengths to assure that the team remains in the San Francisco Bay area.

A \$7 million offer to Finley by Peter Graham, operator of the San Diego Sports Arena, has been rejected by the league, according to the wealthy Vancouver, B.C. resident today. The offer was contingent upon the financially floundering franchise's move to San Diego.

"The National Hockey League won't approve the sale," Graham said. "The NHL wants to pay Finley \$6.5 million for the California Seals and keep the team in the Bay Area."

Graham, who has not been involved in sports management other than in the San Diego Arena, can readily produce the \$7 million.

Caretaker of a Canadian family fortune and a commuter between San Diego and Vancouver, Graham owns a restaurant chain and other properties. His personal wealth was estimated at more than \$40 million when he purchased rights to operate the San Diego Arena three years ago from the city.

He has repeatedly tried, without success, to buy National Hockey League and National Basketball Association teams.

Two months ago, Finley flatly refused a reported \$6.5 million offer for the Seals from the league.

There also was a story that Finley wanted to move the team to Indianapolis.

Finley, who reportedly spent \$4.5 million for the Seals three years ago, said he has suffered \$2.5 million in losses since then.

In any event, with today's development, the National Hockey League has reiterated its unwavering stand—"Finley can move his club anywhere as long as it is within the 50-mile corporate limits of the cities of San Francisco and Oakland," to quote NHL president Clarence Campbell.

1-1 TIE

By Glenn Schwarz

It was Fred Glover's intention to put all these new lines together and wake up all these slumbering hockey players and, well, just do something, ANYTHING, to win another game.

Fortunately for coach Glover and the California Golden Seals, some players were left alone.

Pleased with the way Morris Mott and Rick Kessell had been killing penalties, Glover continued to send them over the boards when the Seals were skating a man short last night against the Chicago Black Hawks. But with all the defensive-minded Seals playing as if they were killing penalties the entire game, it became the responsibility of Mott and Kessell to think offense, too.

And although their work wasn't enough to produce the desired victory, Mott's third period goal, set up by a Kessell steal, did provide the Seals a 1-1 tie. At least, that six-game losing streak is now behind them.

"I guess we have to be happy with the tie," said Mott, who did not have to ponder how he felt about picking up his first point of the season.

Nor did Kessell have to think long about his first assist that came within a puck's-width of being a goal. He also liked the increased ice time.

"When a team's going poorly, I guess the fourth line gets in more time," said Kessell, a member of the group that normally takes only one or two shifts on the ice, but last night had more like five.

Kessell's big moment, though, came after teammate Ted McAneeley was whistled to the penalty box, less than eight minutes from the finish.

Following a faceoff, Chicago's Dick Redmond controlled the puck—for a second, Kessell stole a pass, skated in alone on Black Hawk goalie Tony Esposito and fired. Too wide. But the puck bounced off the post and there was Mott and a couple of feet of open net.

It was a slow-paced game through the first period and a half.

Summary, Page 62