

Seals' Outlook Glum

Bad Habit

Blues On Tap Tonight

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The Oakland Seals don't seem to be able to kick the losing habit and their prospects for doing it tonight are anything but bright.

Coming off last night's 4-3 loss to last place Los Angeles Kings, the Seals play tonight in St. Louis against the first NHL Western Division leaders. Oakland has only beaten the Blues once in more than two seasons of hockey.

To date the fifth place Seals have won six games, lost 14 and tied two.

Mike Corrigan, a 22-year-old rookie, scored a third period breakaway goal, his first tally in the NHL, to sink the Seals last night and to snap an 11-game Los Angeles winless streak. His score broke a 3-3 deadlock with less than six minutes to go.

Not only did the Seals fare badly on the ice, but they did poorly at the gate where a ladies' night attraction drew only 3,865 fans.

From the Seals' point of view, the only bright spots in the evening were a three-goal second period which gave them a temporary 3-3 lead and the performance of defenseman Harry Howell.

The 26-year-old NHL veteran, acquired in a deal with the New York Rangers last summer, made his first appearance of the season. He has been recovering from a spinal fusion operation. His presence gave the Seals some much needed stability on defense and augured well for the future.

After the game, Howell commented, "My back didn't bother me. I'm tired and my timing is off and I have to play my legs into shape."

An interference penalty to Howell, coming 12 seconds after an elbowing penalty to Carol Vadnais gave the Kings a two-man advantage and paved the way to a power play goal in the first period. Rookie Bob Goring tipped in a Corrigan pass for the counter.

Eddie Joyal, trailing on a play with Leon Rochefort, made it 2-0 for Los Angeles at 2:22 of the second period.

Bill Hicke fought his way through two Los Angeles rear-guarders to open a three-goal Seals' counterattack. Gary Jarrett, who was the best Seal on the ice last night, dug the puck out of the corner for Bert Marshall, who relayed it to Carol Vadnais for the Seals' second marker.

Jarrett added a third Oakland goal at 5:44. The Seals gave this one back when Ted Irvine slipped the puck between goalie Gary Smith's stick and the pipe.

This second period was enlivened by a fight between Eddie Shack and Vadnais. Players and officials ringed the faceoff circle in the Seals' end of the rink and let the two gladiators go at it. Neither landed any telling blows.

In the final period the Kings forechecked the Seals rigorously. In one of the few attacks behind the Kings' blue line, Corrigan moved the puck loose, streaked away from Howell and as Smith came out to cut down the angle picked the lower left-hand corner for the game-winning shot.

The Seals return to the Oakland Arena to meet the Philadelphia Flyers Friday night.