

# Sputtering Seals Hit Rock Bottom

By JOHN PORTER  
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LANDOVER, Md.—The Washington Capitals are so bad that they never had scored more than four goals in a game.

The Capitals are so bad that they had been shut out five times in 15 games. They had one win and hadn't won in their last 14 tries.

Most of the names on their roster—Cowick, Gryp, Bloom, Brooks, Hryciuk—don't scare anybody because no one has heard of them.

The club is hurting so much that it's ready to deal its first-round draft choice.

The California Seals lost 6-4

to the Caps last night.

"We're no powerhouse," agreed Pete Laframboise, a marginal player with the Seals last season, who scored one of the Caps' goals. "The Seals are in the same boat as us and this is our rink.

"It felt kind of nice to beat them because they told me I didn't fit into their plans."

Somebody with the Seals will have to do some emergency planning. The game cost the Seals defenseman Mike Christie, who caught his skate in a rut while killing a penalty in the first period.

Christie ripped something in his knee and Bill Mikkelsen was left free and ripped a screened shot past goalie Gilles Meloche for 1-0.

"The doctor at the hospital said they'll probably have to open up the knee. He thinks something is torn and I'll be out three to four months," said the rookie defenseman, who will return home today with a cast on the leg.

Jim Neilson will stay with the Seals, but he couldn't play last night because of a bruise on his right knee. A Cortisone shot earlier in the day was no help.

The Seals are traveling with an extra forward, but no spare defensemen. They were

down to three blue-liners after Christie's accident.

Morris Mott filled in as best he could, but was on the ice for three of the Washington goals.

Bill McCreary, director of hockey operations, attended the game. Afterwards, he went into the dressing room and kicked a garbage can, then left for Toledo to watch one of the Seals' farm teams.

He'll probably call up at least one defenseman from Salt Lake. Terry Murray and Teddy McAneehey, sent down because McCreary said they couldn't crack the lineup, may be in Boston tomorrow night when the Seals continue their aid program that has dispensed 11 wins and a tie to teams around the National Hockey League.

Washington was up 3-1 in the second period before Jim Moxey collected his first big league goal and Dave Hrechko, with the outstanding individual effort of the night, scored while killing a penalty to make it 3-3 after two periods.

Rookie defenseman Rick Hampton, lucky to get three shifts a game, played more than half of this one and scored a pretty goal with a back-hand flip from the middle in the first period, but held the puck too long inside his blue line in the third and lost it to Denis Dupere for the winner.