

Believable Progress

Seals Fool New York

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OAKLAND — Maybe, just maybe, this will be the season a team labelled as "the improved" California Seals will indeed be improved.

The Golden Ones knocked off the allegedly excellent New York Islanders 5-1 here last night on sheer aggression and now have won three of their last four games. This gives the townies six wins in 18 games this season; not necessarily a record of

brilliance, but one most assuredly improved. A season ago, the Seals did not win their sixth until Dec. 6. So figure it out.

Coach Jack Evans is not quick to say the Golden Ones have "jelled." He suggests the NHL season "is just too long to talk about a team jelling right now. But our system seems to be compatible with our talent."

Off the performance against the Islanders, who'd lost only two of their first 14 before arriving here, rookie

coach Evans is understating.

The Golden Ones made the upstart-hotshot Islanders look awful by persistent forechecking. New York never could get much going, and their big scorer, defenseman Dennis Potvin, was throttled. In fact, four of the Seals' five goals came with Potvin on the ice.

"Forechecking is always a key," said Evans, "because it means possession. It's the type of game you like to play."

The Seals played this one without truly improved defenseman Rick Hampton, who scored the gamer in L.A. on Tuesday but sustained a bruised shoulder, and without truly unimproved winger Dave Hrechkosy, who was benched and admitted he deserved it.

Hrechkosy's thunder of a season ago now has passed to rookie center Dennis Maruk, small, quite quick and only 19. The fans here have taken to bellowing his name whenever he gets the puck, and even from a crowd of 4,074 Maruk tends to sound like a moose mating chant.

The kid scored the stand-up goal at 5:40 of the second period while the Seals were short-handed. During an Islander power play, defenseman Jean Portvin slipped and fell just inside the Seal blue line. Al MacAdam scooted toward the other end with the puck, missed his shot and Maruk rebounded. Simple.

All the Golden One goals were rather lovely. Dave Gardner, benched last week, got the first on a tip at 13:06 of the first period. Gary Sabourin made it 3-0 at 9:00 in the second period when the Seals had a man advantage. Islander goalie Glenn Resch had stopped Gary's shot, but the puck just rolled off Resch's tummy and into the net.

Larry Patey picked up number four on a nice drive at 1:46 of the final period on a pass from ex-Blackhawk veteran Jim Pappin. Coach Evans says Pappin "is finally getting into good condition" after an early season holdout.

Apparently, At 10:54, Pappin hammered home the last Seal score, faking out Resch, the Islander defense and the entire Oakland Arena, feinting two or three passes and just shooting himself.

The only Islander goal, off Gary Simmons, was garbage. Simmons, switching his jersey number from 30 to 31 because he just turned 31 years old, was in a stack of bodies on the ice

when Bryan Trottier found a path to the net.

The Seals' power play is still not intimidating, but Evans isn't too concerned. "We don't have the worst power play in this league," he said. "And we do have good legs. We're coming right along."

N.Y. Islanders	0	1	0-1
California	1	2	2-5
First Period—1, California, Gardner 4 (Stewart, King), 13:06. Penalties—Frig, Cal, 4:31; Parise, NY, 4:31; Gillies, NY, 10:58; Drouin, NY, 12:44; Maruk, Cal, 12:44; Gilles, NY, minor-major, 18:19; Stewart, Cal, minor-major, 18:19; Marshall, NY, 19:33.			
Second Period—2, California, Maruk 3 (MacAdam), 5:40. 3, California, Sabourin 10 (Girard, Pesch), 9:00. 4, New York, Trottier 3 (Lewis, Harris), 11:58. Penalties—Hemms, NY, 1:16; Patey, Cal, 4:27; Trottier, NY, 5:43; Westall, NY, 7:10; Stewart, Cal, 16:22.			
Third Period—5, California, Patey 4 (Pappin), 1:46. 5, California, Pappin 2 (Patey, Holt), 12:54. Penalties—Marshall, NY, 2:52; Bourne, NY, 11:38; Patey, Cal, 11:38; D. Potvin, NY, 12:04; Maruk, Cal, double minor, 13:02; J. Potvin, NY, 16:36.			
Shots on goal: New York 89-13-32, California 11-16-22.			
Goalies: New York, Resch; California, Simmons, A. 4374.			