

Why Glover Fired?

By JOHN PORTER
Tribune Sports Writer

The big question concerning the Oakland Seals is not whether they will win their first game of the season tonight when they cross sticks with the Pittsburgh Penguins in the Arena at 7 o'clock.

Why was Fred Glover fired? That's the big question.

The Oakland coach received his walking papers just hours before the Seals started strong and finished weakly Friday night in losing 9-6 to Vancouver. New coach Vic Stasiuk was behind the Seals' bench.

For the record, general manager Garry Young said the decision to fire Glover was his, but declined to give a specific reason for bouncing the coach.

He did say the team will be using a new system on the ice, sending the centerman back to help the defensemen while the wings cover the points when the puck is in the Seals' end.

Glover said he was not told why he was fired and owner Charlie Finley, whose baseball Athletics have had 11 managers in 11 seasons, confirmed that the change was left up to Young.

Last season, as the Seals grew worse, Finley emphasized that in no way was Glover to blame. "Fred Glover is my coach," the owner said on one occasion. "He's a fine gentleman."

No longer the coach, Glover was still a gentleman at the Arena Friday night, refusing to answer reporters' questions as to why he was sacked.

It was small consolation for him to be reminded that Al MacNeil, the coach who led Montreal to the Stanley Cup last season, also got the axe.

Several Seal players last season, none of whom are still with the club, complained that Glover lacked the necessary coach-player rapport.

Both Young and the ex-coach refused to comment.

There was criticism of the choice of lines Glover put on the ice at the end of two games this season in which the Seals lost one and were tied in the last minute and a half.

Again Young and Glover maintained public silence.

Bert Olmstead and Gordon

Fashoway were the Seals' coaches in the first National Hockey League year (1967-68) for Oakland. Glover came in the next season and was named Coach of the Year after the team finished second in the West.

Of the 12 NHL coaches who began the 1968-69 season, Billy Reay (Chicago) and Glover were the only ones to open this year's schedule with the same team. Now Reay is the lone survivor in the league's continuous juggling of coaches.

Stasiuk, who was released by Philadelphia after last season, hasn't decided to take a one or two-year contract. Glover was starting the last of his two-year pact.

Changes already are taking place. Last night Stasiuk was in Los Angeles to watch the Kings play Philadelphia.

"We'll be doing a lot of that

kind of scouting," said Young last night. "We need a book on all the other teams in the league."

Following an hour and a half team meeting yesterday, it was decided to abandon the afternoon light skate on game days and the traditional team steak dinner on road game days.

NOTES: Defenseman Dick Redmond (sprained shoulder) is likely to dress for tonight's game, the Seals in trouble with just four healthy blueliners . . . Capt. Carol Vadnais is still sidelined with a sprained ankle . . . Lyle Carter is to start his first National Hockey League game in the Seals' nets tonight . . . An interesting matchup to watch: ex-Seal Billy Hicke, now with the Penguins, against younger brother Ernie of the Seals.