

Hampson Fights a Slump

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Ted Hampson, the high-scoring, forechecking demon of the Oakland Seals, is off to the slowest start of his career — one point in seven games — it's bugging nobody more than Ted Hampson himself.

"I don't know what's wrong," says the popular Seal captain. "I'm working just as hard as I always have, but our line just isn't getting the points."

During training camp, Ted was the leading scorer with seven points in nine games, but when the National Hockey League season opened he hit a completely unexpected slump. Why?

The biggest reason, perhaps, was the injury to second line center Eari Ingarfield, who still remains out with a cut wrist. Add to that the equally slow starts of wings Don O'Donoghue, a rookie, and Gerry Ehman and Gary Jarrett, both veterans, and

the problem gains some perspective.

With Ingarfield out, Hampson has shouldered the additional responsibility of penalty-killing, along with power-play and regular shift duty. In other words, he's doing everything.

But play-making is his biggest forte, and, with wings who are failing to connect when the chances do come, Teddy's playmaking is wasted. The result is that Teddy is

pressing harder and harder to make things go.

O'Donoghue, a fine rookie prospect, has had trouble adjusting to the speed of the NHL; Ehman has had a bothersome knee injury, and Jarrett, a West Division all-star last year, just can't seem to convert those little rebounds around the net at which he was so skillful last season.

"Yes," says coach Fred Glover, "Teddy is having problems. He's trying to do

too much. He feels a great responsibility to this team, and when things are going bad he tries that much harder.

"But at the same time, there are a few others with problems, too. Solving Teddy's situation is just a matter of working with him, setting him down and correcting his thinking a little. Then things will start to come for him. But right now it's a little difficult to concentrate on straightening out one guy. The injuries we've had have com-

plicated things considerably. I'm not really that concerned about Teddy, anyway. He'll be all right."

General manager Frank Selke sees the problem this way:

"When we put O'Donoghue with Ted at the start of the season, for some reason Hampson felt he had to do Don's job as well as his own. He got a little confused trying to do both jobs at once. Then

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when we switched Jarrett in for O'Donoghue, the problem carried over.

"I think that if Teddy had let O'Donoghue play his own game and not worried so much about him, he wouldn't have gotten himself into this mixup. But again it was a matter of Teddy caring so much that Don did well he was trying to play two positions at once and that can't be done. Once he adjusts to that he'll be just fine."

With an attitude that is so typical of Hampson, the digging centerman refuses to blame anybody for the slump, particularly O'Donoghue, Ehman or Jarrett.

"Of course I'm not too pleased with the way things are going. It seems as though I can't get that little extra jump. But I'm feeling better and I'm encouraged by the way things have been going, especially in the last few games. The problems have certainly not been caused by my linemates. Once I get started, I'll be all right," Hampson believes.



TED HAMPSON
Caught in slump

When the Seals and Chicago Black Hawks square off tomorrow night at the Coliseum Arena, Teddy will be looking for his first goal of the campaign.

But if Hampson has been off in his start, big Mike Laughton has been right on.

Working with Brian Perry

on the left side and veteran Billy Hicke on the right, Laughton has led the attack in each of the three Seal wins so far. Mike has accounted for four goals, including two game-winners. Hicke has the other game-winner, and the line itself has accounted for 20 scoring points.

Even rookie Joe Hardy, the lanky Frenchman who took Joe Scara's job from him during training camp, has led a six-goal burst by the third line. His wings are Norm Ferguson and Bob Dillabough.

Thus Laughton, or even Hardy for that matter, must be the keystone in the Seal offense in the time it takes for Hampson to get going again.

A center like Hampson, who scored 75 points, including 26 goals, in 76 games last year and gained all-star honors and the Bill Masterton Trophy as the league's "Unsung Hero," is a vital performer for the Seals.

And when Teddy stops spreading himself too thin and tightens up with more wingers, the goals will come and so will the Seals.