



## Pro-file Seals' image change

By Dick O'Connor

The California Golden Seals are losing their built-in advantage in the National Hockey League.

Earlier in the season, other teams came to Oakland and took the Seals lightly. It didn't make any difference because the Seals were so inept they lost anyway.

"The Seals may be the most improved team in the league," coach Fred Shero of the World Champion Philadelphia Flyers said after Sunday night's game.

Shero had just watched in horror as the Seals outmuscled his team to win 5-1.

"I play harder against a team like Philadelphia," Seals center Larry Patey said. "Maybe we should play the good teams all the time.

"We do very well against Boston, Montreal and Philadelphia. We have trouble against some of the weaker teams," he added.

Patey credits the improvement in the Seals to depth. "At the start of the season we didn't have enough good players. When someone got hurt, there wasn't anyone to replace him.

"Now we have some very good replacements. We're going to be even better when we get our injured players back."

The Seals beat the Flyers Sunday night without leading goal scorer Dave Hrechkosy and play maker Ron Huston.

Patey made another interesting observation.

"Maybe I shouldn't say this but there were some guys on our team who weren't playing as hard as they could. They knew there wasn't anyone to replace them so they didn't play as hard as they should have," he said.

"Now when someone gets hurt, we have a good player to replace him."

Since the start of the season the Seals have added Butch Williams and Dave Gardner in a trade with St. Louis, brought up Charlie Simmer from the minor leagues, and got George Pesut from the Flyers to complete an earlier deal.

Pesut was involved in two fights with Philadelphia players Sunday night.

"They were my friends when I played on that team," he said. "But they are not my friends anymore."

Pesut squared off with burly Dave Schultz in the first period. They snarled at each other but no blows were struck.

That probably saved Pesut a large dental bill. Schultz is one of the hardest punchers in the league.

In the third period, Pesut got in a scuffle with Gary Dornhoefer. There were no punches thrown until Rick McLeish of Philadelphia hurried to the scene.

"I knew I didn't have to fight Dornhoefer," Pesut said afterward. "I knew it would be McLeish. He was mad because he said I did something to him earlier in the game."

Pesut scored a TKO over McLeish with a series of chopping right hand punches that put the Flyer on the ice.

"You have to be aggressive when you play a team like Philadelphia," Pesut said. "Otherwise they will take advantage of you."

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Coach Marshall Johnston of the Seals doesn't condone rough play but he doesn't want his players to back off either.

"I think Philadelphia gets away with it because they have big players. You can play rough when you are big. But people forget that the Flyers also have lots of very good hockey players," he said.

Did he see a trend toward roughness because the Flyers won the Stanley Cup last year with their bullying tactics?

"Maybe a little more," Johnston said. "But I think a team has to do what it can do best to win. You can't play rough if you don't have rough players."

"There are lots of different kinds of teams that win."

Johnston credits the Seals sudden surge to an unselfish attitude of his players.

"There always is an ego thing in sports. The quarterbacks get all the recognition in football. And the home run hitters get it in baseball.

"In hockey, the big stars are the guys who score goals. On our team everyone does their job. The guys who are scoring goals know the defense is helping us win just as much."

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Two unsung heroes for the Seals are Brian Lavender and Morris Mott — the penalty killers. They go on the ice when the Seals are shorthanded because of a penalty.

It's their job to kill time until the Seals are back at full strength.

Of the last 20 penalties called against the Seals, the opposition has scored only three goals. That is very impressive.

The Seals "power play" also has improved. Early in the season, they appeared least able to score when they had a man advantage.

Sunday night against Philadelphia the Seals scored three power play goals.

Because of the added depth, the penalty killers, and the improved power play, the Seals have a very good chance to make the playoffs this season.