

Top Seal crowd goes ape

By Glenn Schwarz

Fans of the California Golden Seals, desperately looking for somebody to identify with until the Seals stop taking their annual skate to oblivion, seem to have made their choice.

The appearance of the Philadelphia Flyers stamped it as a rare night at the Oakland Coliseum Arena. People actually had to wait in long lines to buy a ticket for a Seals' game. By the time everyone was seated, there were 10,776 in the building, or the equivalent of three poor Seals' crowds.

And even though it wasn't much of a game last night, the Flyers bullying their way to a 5-0 victory, most of the fans got what they came to see.

Too bad so little of it took place on the ice.

The Flyers appeal is not that they usually win, but how they usually win. Their pugnacious approach to hockey has turned the Flyers into the National Hockey League's No. 1 draw and, judging by the spectators' behavior last night, its No. 1 inciters.

The Seals' largest home crowd of the season, thirsting for right crosses and left hooks like the Seals and Flyers exchanged in previous matches, grew restless early. The timid Seals showed no inclination to trade body checks with the aggressive Flyers and the only altercation, involving Seal Morris Mott and Flyer Bob Kelly, ended quickly after Kelly sneaked in a right to the cheek when Mott wasn't looking.

And when two periods had passed and wild man Dave Schultz still hadn't coaxed a Seal into a fight, one fan tried to stir up the NHL's most penalized player.

While Schultz was leaving the ice after the middle period, some guy poured a full cup of beer on him from the elevated stands. The drenched Schultz, perhaps thinking what a waste of good alcohol that was, unsuccessfully tried to reach the taunting fan with his stick. This time, the Coliseum security police prevented bloodshed.

By that point, however, many fans who had been putting their beer to better use than the one who had spilled his on Schultz were pretending they were Flyers. First a scuffle broke out in the reserved seats, then one in the loges, then another nearby.

Unofficial count had five fights in the stands, including one involving, among others, a feisty, red-haired woman. The Flyers stopped skating to watch that one admiringly.

With so much action all around them, the Flyers did not bother to dare the Seals

any longer. There were no penalties in the third period.

After the game, Seals' coach Fred Glover criticized his players for their reluctance to hit. He talked as though he was tempted to call down some of the better belters from the stands to play for him.

"They played like a bunch of pacifists all night," said Glover of his players. "If you use your body like the Flyers do, you usually wind up with the puck.

"The people paid to see them play and they deserved a better performance."

Of course the Flyers are not leading the Western Division only because they are rough. They have big scorers like Bobby Clarke and Rick MacLeish and All-Star defensemen like Ed Van Impe and Joe Watson. To say nothing of probably the league's best goaltender in Bernie Parent.

Last night's shutout, constructed on 33 saves, was the 10th for Parent. This put him five games behind Tony Esposito's record pace for shutouts in a season (15 in 1969-70).

"Face it, we got whipped

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Most Seal action in the stands

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by a much better team," said the Seals' Stan Gilbertson. "The Flyers don't have to fight to win."

Keep it quiet, Stan. Maintaining an image is not always that easy.

FIRST PERIOD

SCORING — 1, Philadelphia, Dornhoefer 6 (Lonsberry, DuPont) 9:15.

PENALTIES — Clarke (P) 5:15; Kelly (P) 13:55; Schultz (P) and Graves (S) 18:24.

SHOTS ON GOAL — Seals 14, Philadelphia 15.

SECOND PERIOD

SCORING — 2, Philadelphia, MacLeish 18 (Dornhoefer, Lonsberry) 1:31; 3 Philadelphia, Crisp 7 (Saleski, Van Impe) 18:59.

PENALTIES — Mott (S) major 10:57; Kelly (P) major and minor, 19:57; Van Impe (P) 12:33; Crisp (P) 19:39.

SHOTS ON GOAL — Seals 10, Philadelphia 14.

THIRD PERIOD

SCORING — 4, Philadelphia, Schultz 12 (Saleski) 13:57; 5, Philadelphia, Lonsberry 16 (Dornhoefer) 17:09.

PENALTIES — None.

SHOTS ON GOAL — Seals 9, Philadelphia 30.

TOTAL SHOTS — Seals 33, Philadelphia 49.

GOALIES — Seals, Melocher; Philadelphia, Parent.

ATTENDANCE — 10,776.

REFEREE — Lloyd Gilman