

Outlook For Seals Brightens

By SPENCE CONLEY
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If you don't think things are on the upswing with the Oakland Seals, consider these items:

After 52 games, the Seals have racked up 18 wins and seven ties for 43 points, or more wins and more points that they had all last season and they've got a fairly firm grip on second place in the National Hockey League's West Division.

Fred Glover, the popular bench boss, is a prime candi-

Continued Page 38, Col. 3

Seals' Prospects Looking Brighter

Continued from 1st Sports Page

date for the NHL's Coach of the Year award.

Seal captain Teddy Hampson, with 15 goals and 46 points and just four penalty minutes, is locked in a three way scramble for the Lady Byng Trophy, which goes annually to the "player who shows the best sportsmanship and gentlemanly conduct combined with a high standard of playing ability."

(The other candidates are Boston's Johnny Bucyk with 41 points and four penalty minutes, and Detroit's Alex Delvecchio with 54 points and six minutes.)

And Hampson and wings Bill Hicke and Gary Jarrett were voted places on the West Division's all-star team.

Defenseman Carol Vadnais was selected to fill in for Jarrett in the first NHL East-West battle after Gary injured his eye in practice. All three Seals accredited themselves very well in the battle against hockey's greatest talent.

But Vadnais, the big French-Canadian performer, has a chance to distinguish himself by becoming the first defenseman in 25 years to crack the 20-goal mark. Both he and Bobby Orr of Boston are currently tied with 13 goals apiece with 25 games to play.

And then there's Norm Ferguson, the Seals' only 20-goal scorer so far, who is the leading candidate for the Calder Trophy as the NHL's best rookie.

Fergie, a pint-sized version of Chicago's Bobby Hull, has the club's only three-goal "hat trick", too.

Even attendance for the games at the Coliseum Arena has topped the 100,000 mark, giving the Seals a better per-game average this season than last and considerably more money in the till because of sounder ticket management.

"We've really got a lot of things going for us now," says a happy Billy Torrey, the club's top executive.

"I think we've headed in the right direction. We are getting

the quality on the ice from individual players and we are winning a good share of our games. I think it's only a matter of time before we will have area-wide acceptance of our team and our game.

"The crowds we had for the Boston and Toronto games last week were some of the most enthusiastic we've had. We gave them something to cheer about and they did. It's a tremendous boost for team morale to have the fans really making a lot of noise in their favor."

Torrey said that another good crowd — perhaps the best of the season — will be on hand tomorrow night, too, when the Seals host Montreal in the Canadiens' last appearance this season in the Coliseum Arena.

"I know that we are going to make the playoffs," says Torrey confidently. "Fred Glover has done an absolutely outstanding job in getting the best from our players. He has to be the Coach of the Year this season.

"And Hampson has given our squad great leadership, not only the way he plays but in his association with each player," Torrey added.

His club is on the upswing and success on the ice will bring success at the gate — which is, after all, where it counts most for the struggling franchise.

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