

Seals Try to End Blues Jinx Again

By SPENCE CONLEY
Tribune Sports Writer

ST. LOUIS — Montreal beats St. Louis regularly, and if it isn't in regular National Hockey League season play, it's in the finals of the Stanley Cup playoffs.

The Oakland Seals beat Montreal, the defending playoff champs, regularly, at least more than any other West Division team, and it's never in the playoff finals since the Seals haven't gotten that far — yet.

So, by comparative scores fans, you have to figure that the Oakland Seals ought to beat the St. Louis Blues at least as often as they beat Montreal. Right?

Wrong.

The Blues have dominated the Seals like no other team in the West — they've lost to the Seals like no other team in over two-and-a-half seasons.

The Seals would like to bring that kind of goings on to a screeching halt and tonight would do just fine, thank you, when the two clubs meet at Blues Arena.

Coach Fred Glover's squad is coming off a resounding 5-2 win over Montreal, while St. Louis returns home after a 1-0 loss to Toronto — a team the

Seals whipped 6-3 recently.

Several things seem to be happening in Oakland's favor these days:

As a result of that Montreal win, they grabbed a piece of fourth place in the West. That's a playoff position and the potential cash rewards to be won in the April playoffs ought to be incentive enough

to hang on.

There's also the improved play of defenseman Bert Marshall and rookie Don O'Donoghue, the greater scoring threat mounted by Earl Ingarfield's return to a line with Carol Vadnais and Ted Hampson, and — best of all — the super work of goalie Gary Smith.

Seals End Drought In St. Louis, 2-1

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ST. LOUIS — Goalie Gary Smith, wing Norm Ferguson, and defenseman Harry Howell and Bert Marshall teamed in perfect concert last night to accomplish what was beginning to appear impossible — victory over the St. Louis Blues.

But Fergie scored two quick first period goals, Smitty made them hold up, and Marshall and Howell foiled the Blues' offensive patterns with amazing and timely regularity.

The result: a stunning 2-1 win.

It was only the second Oakland win over St. Louis in two-and-a-half years and 23 games in National Hockey League play.

It was the first time it had ever won in St. Louis and the first time this year that a West Division team had beaten St. Louis at home.

So the Seals headed into Toronto today, winners of two straight and in sole possession of fourth place in the West — two points ahead of now fifth-place Minnesota.

And what a finish. It had the sold-out Blues' Arera crowd of 16,162 on its feet wildly, urging for the tie.

The Blues were being out-

played at every turn. The Seal forecheckers had them off balance most of the night, and they applied pressure at the St. Louis end when they had to.

But with 4:19 to play, Frank St. Marseille tipped in a little

rebound of a foiled Phil Goyette shot and the pressure-cooker started boiling over.

The Blues attacked relentlessly, and finally, with less than a minute to play, coach

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Ferguson Delivers Twice, Seals Win

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Scotty Bowman fielded the most potent power play in the NFL — six deadly scorers and an empty net.

But the Seals were not about to be had and hung on, vaulting ahead of the slumping North Stars, who were idle.

Tonight's game with the Maple Leafs (KGO, 6 p.m.) ends this two-game road trip and sends the Seals back home for a five-game stand, which might well decide their fate in the race for the playoffs.

But if last night's game is any indication, the Seals are going to make it with room to spare.

The Seals, normally slow starters challenged the Blues immediately, and by the time the first period was over, Ferlead and Smith did a beautiful job of protecting it.

Ferguson's goals, his 10th and 11th of the season came on his first shift of the game and his first two shots at the net on nearly identical plays.

On the first, Mike Laughton fed perfectly to the little right winger breaking by Blues' de-

fenseman Barclay Plager, whose face was masked by a football-type helmet with bars to protect a broken nose.

Fergie had Plager beat all the way and smashed a 25-footer past Goalie Glenn Hall at 4:44.

On the second, Howie Menard drilled a similar feed pass to Fergie, a little off line, but he got it under control with his skates kicking it to his stick, beat Barclay's brother Bob and slammed it home between Hall's knees at 5:37.

The rest of the period was all St. Louis, but big Smitty was up to it, and got great penalty-killing support after three straight infractions were called on his teammates.

Hall noted for his affinity for pre-game nausea, couldn't hold up any longer. He became ill at the first intermission and was replaced by sub Ernie Wakely.

And the Blues, a little sick the way things were going, picked it up in the middle period, putting considerable pressure on the Seals, keeping the play in the Oakland zone most of the time.

But excellent backchecking by the forwards and steady defensive play by Howell and

Marshall, kept the Seals from blowing their cool.

Smith made a great save on Red Berenson on a semi-breakaway, refusing to commit himself to Berenson's fakes and then blocking the shot as the skilled St. Louis centerman tried to slide it in next to the pipe.

Weakely came up big himself when Ted Hampson and Earl Ingarfield stormed the net. He made a good stop on Teddy, and then smothered Earl's attempt to convert the rebound.

First period—1, Oakland, Ferguson 10 (Laughton, Jarrett) 4:44, 2, Oakland, Ferguson 11 (Menard, O'Donoghue) 5:37. Penalties Joakn Ecclestone 5:11, 5:54, Joakn 6:44, Marshall, Oak. 10:43, Enman, Oak, 15:17; Berenson, STL, 16:14. Original List — — — — — ST. LOUIS—Add NHL — — — — — Second period—None, Penalties—None. Third period—3, St. Louis, St. Marseille 16 (Goyette, McDonald) 5:71. Penalties —Mattiussi, Oak, 2:38, St. Louis bench 6:49; R. Plager 8:47. Shots on goal by: St. Louis ————— 17 9 8—29 Oakland ————— 10 13 13—33 Goalies—Oakland, Smith; St. Louis, (Hall, Wakely. A—16,162.