

Seals, L.A. Play 0-0 Tie

By SPENCE CONLEY
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The Oakland Seals and goalie Gary Smith picked up their third shutout of the season last night, but the problem is so did the Los Angeles Kings and rookie netminder Gerry DesJardins.

The 0-0 standoff between the two squads didn't solve a whole lot in the scramble for second place in the National Hockey League's West Division, but for both clubs it put a little more room between them and the slumping tailenders — Minnesota and Pittsburgh.

"Scoreless hockey games can be pretty dull," observed Seal general manager Frank Selke, "but this one was a pretty good one. Both goalies had to make some real good stops.

"Smitty certainly had the more difficult time of it, particularly in the first period. But he played a great game.

"We were a little flat offensively," he added, "but we should come out of it all right. There was some awfully good defense by both clubs last

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Seals, L.A. Battle to 0-0 Tie

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night. If we get that kind of effort every night then we aren't going to lose many hockey games. But that's what we have to do from here on out."

The Seals will leave later this week for another of those busy road trips — three games in four nights, starting Thursday in Montreal and ending with weekend battles in Detroit and Pittsburgh.

But if anything, the schedule in the second half of the campaign should be a little kinder to the Oaklanders since they will enjoy a greater frequency of games against the West Division, and specifically against L.A., Minnesota, and Pittsburgh.

DesJardins, the 24-year-old L.A. rookie, is probably wondering what has happened to his club's offense. He has played shutout hockey in two consecutive games, but the Kings haven't scored either. Last Wednesday, the Kings and St. Louis played a 0-0 tie.

Although the Seals were on the short-end of a 25-20 shooting performance, they missed plenty of chances just by failing to hit the net.

On the other hand, Los Angeles turned on the steam right at the start and enjoyed nearly four consecutive minutes of a power-play advantage in the first period, but the Seal penalty killers — Bryan Watson, Gerry Odrowski, Bob Dillabough, and George Swarbrick — prevented any damage.

The Kings outshot Oakland 13-5 in the opener, but began to slow down as the Seals got stronger.

Still both clubs had perfect opportunities to win the game in the third period when L.A.'s Ron Anderson missed a wide-open net from six feet out and Bill Hicke was the victim of a beautiful DesJardins save on a breakaway.

"I just ran out of room," said Hicke. "He came out to cut off the angle and made a good play. I couldn't get the puck up over him or even switch over to my forehand."

Earlier in the game, DesJardins had to make dazzling saves on Carol Vadnais and Doug Roberts who had targeted difficult shots from the Kings' blueline.

Big Smitty guarded the Oakland net with considerable authority, using his 6-4, 225-pound frame to great advantage in standing up confidently to face the Kings' attack.

Because of him, the Seals took a point out of the Coliseum Arena and retained their two-point hold on second place over Los Angeles.

But more importantly, the Seals gained on both the Penguins and the North Stars, who lost last night.