

Leafs turn blahs to smiles

By NEIL STEVENS
The Canadian Press
There is little left of the player-management squabbling and trade talk that dogged Toronto Maple Leafs during their mid-November blahs.

The dressing room frowns that typified the Leafs' discontent as they struggled through the early-season doldrums have turned to smiles.

The Leafs have a new winning knack and coach Floyd Smith says the club's 52 National Hockey League conquest Wednesday night of Montreal Canadiens has given it the respectability it lacked just a month ago.

"Maybe people will take a look at us now and consider us a serious hockey club," Smith said. "It was our biggest win of the year."

It was an all-round team effort and the Leafs' first win over the defending Stanley Cup champions in regular season or playoff action since Nov. 17, 1976. The win extended Toronto's unbeaten streak to five games, while the

Canadians have won only once in their last six, by three and losing two in that stretch.

Elsewhere, Buffalo Sabres whipped Atlanta Flames 6-1, Vancouver Canucks tied Pittsburgh Penguins 3-3, Minnesota North Stars crushed Edmonton Oilers 8-1, Detroit Red Wings outlasted Winnipeg Jets 6-4 and Chicago Black Hawks rallied to the New York Rangers 3-2.

The two points Toronto gained were the result of an opportunistic power play, solid goalkeeping by Mike Palmateer, the scoring punch of Toronto's "kid line" of John Anderson, Laurie Boschman and Rocky Saganuk and the stalwart defensive performance by the Leafs' checking line of Walt McKechnie, Dan Maloney and Ron Ellis.

HELD IN CHECK
Maloney held the Canadiens' high-scoring Guy Lafleur in check most of the night.

Montreal coach Bernie Geoffrion didn't blame the line of Lafleur, Pierre Larouche and Steve Shutt for the lack of Montreal scoring. The line had a total of seven shots on Palmateer, and most were harmless.

"They stopped the big line, but we've got three more lines after that one and the other guys have got to score some goals one in a while," said Geoffrion.

Anderson, Saganuk and Lanny McDonald scored for the Leafs, Pierre Mondou and Serge Savard replied for the Canadiens.

Montreal took two penalties in the first period and the Leafs took advantage of both for a 2-0 lead.

McDonald scored his 13th of the season at 7:35 on a wrist

shot from the faceoff circle with a crowd in front of Montreal goalie Michel Larocque.

Saganuk, parked eight feet in front of Larocque, took a pass from Dave Williams and slid the puck along the ice and behind the Montreal goaltender to make it 2-0 at 16:25.

Mondou got one back for Montreal late in the period when he found himself alone in front of Palmateer. He took a pass from behind the goal by Mark Napier and lifted the puck over Palmateer's glove hand into the top corner.

The Leafs regained their two-goal advantage midway through the second period when Anderson scored his seventh of the season while being manhandled by two Montreal defenders at the edge of the crease.

Toronto took two consecutive minor penalties later in the period, but the Canadians, who entered the game with the NHL's most productive power play, could not beat Palmateer.

Neither team could mount much of an offence in the third period, with the Leafs stressing tight checking and during their defensive shell.

Montreal began to press with five minutes left and Savard's goal at 19:39 drew the Canadians close — but not close enough.

Sabres 3 Flames 1
Rick Martin, Craig Ramsay and Richie Dunn scored Buffalo goals during a 2-1-0

span early in the second period as the Sabres extended their consecutive-game winning streak to six. They have won nine of their last 10 and have 37 points — second only to Philadelphia Flyers, with 40, in the overall standings.

Martin had two goals and an assist, while team-mate Ric Belling had a goal and two assists.

Canucks 5 Penguins 3
Brent Ashton's second goal of the game at 9:07 of the third period earned Vancouver the tie with Pittsburgh. Ashton, whose first goal had tied it 2-2 late in the second, got his second just 31 seconds after Ross Lonsberry had put the Penguins ahead.

North Stars 6 Oilers 1
Steve Payne and Tim Young each scored twice as Minnesota snipped a five-game winless streak that had included two losses and three ties. Payne added two assists to go along with his 18th and 19th goals of the season and Young also had one assist.

Red Wings 6 Jets 4
Patrick O'Donnovan's key snipped a 2-2 tie in the second period and later added a goal and two assists to extend Detroit's unbeaten streak to five — two victories and three ties.

Willy Lindstrom scored twice for Winnipeg.

Rangers 3 Black Hawks 3
Grant Mulvey sandwiched a pair of scores between one by Reg Kerr in a span of 2:08 in the third period as Chicago rallied to the New York Steve

Vickers had scored the 200th goal of his eight-season career and rookie Claude Larose collected his first in the Rangers' three-goal second period.

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Blazers, Clippers rebound

By THE CANADIAN PRESS
Bellingham Blazers and Nanaimo Clippers rebounded from previous night losses Wednesday to show why they are leading the Coastal Division of the British Columbia Junior Hockey League.

First-place Bellingham corralled Chilliwack Cougars 6-2 while the second-place Clippers kept pace, 10 points behind the Blazers, by downing the Caps 5-4 in North Vancouver.

In Bellingham, Perry Braun scored two goals to lead the Blazers while Evan Williams, Dave Anderson, Henri Gronroos and Bob Bates scored the others before 100 fans. Doug Miles and Alf McVey replied for Chilliwack which was outshot 43-24.

Mickey Willgress and Dave Wheelodon each had two goals to lead the Clippers past the hapless Caps who had only four wins in 31 games.

Also scoring for Nanaimo were Gerry Begie, Mike Johnson, Tom Irving and John Newberry, who fired his 50th goal this season, top in the league.

Geoff Harrigan and Duane Fotsakis each scored twice for the Caps who got their other goals from Steve Charbonneau and Glen Smith before 120 fans.

Abbotsford Flyers begin an Interior Division swing tonight against the Centennials in Merritt.

McDonald scored his 13th of the season at 7:35 on a wrist

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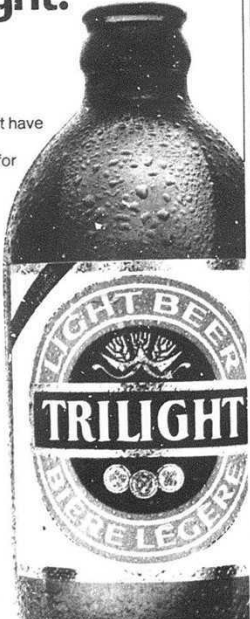
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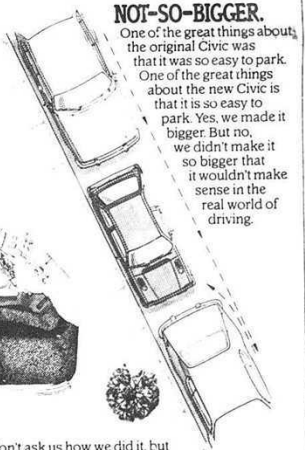


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