

By Scott Young

No Joy at All In Loserville

MONTREAL, APRIL 10—A man in the dressing room was standing in the path of Bert Olmstead, walking wet from the shower through the litter of equipment. The man said, "What do you say, Bert?" What Olmstead said was six or seven quiet words that curled the toes of the man who had greeted him. Then Olmstead stood alone, towelling himself, glaring out above the heads of the people around him, meeting no one's eyes.

Bob Baun, the young defenseman, spoke harshly over something at the other end of the room. It must have had something to do with Carl Brewer, his younger partner. Brewer, without rising from where he was leaning over to untie his skates, bestowed upon Baun a long and searching look that was full of tension.

George Imlach, the coach, was sitting on a bench bravely making the noises that a coach has to make even when he has lost. "If we play that well in Toronto, we'll win," he said.

A loss in a hockey game, even a second consecutive loss in the world championship series for the Stanley Cup, does not signal the twilight of civilization.

But the air of the loser is as bitter as if it did.

Especially so, I think, when the loser is Toronto and the winner is Montreal, because this is the young bull beaten once again by the old bull, which, as any young bull will tell you, is a dashed exasperating way to spend an evening.

I THOUGHT at the end of the first period that Leafs would win it. Once again they had spotted the vastly talented Canadiens a couple of goals (in the first game, it was three).

Once again Canadiens were sitting on the lead like a bunch of stand-pat old poker players; outplayed—but coming up with exactly what was needed.

Jacques Plante had only nine saves in the second period, but these included the one great save of the period—a sliding, sideways, out-rushing pad save on Ron Stewart.

In the third, Frank Mahovlich, playing another strong game, went the length of the ice and through the entire Montreal team—but wound up beaten by a rolling puck, Plante, and the fact that he was still a little off balance from his perilous passage through the defense.

Johnny Wilson shot one from right wing that rolled under Plante, hit the post, and twirled back along the goal-line when a breath would have pushed it in.

But in the last minute Canadiens showed for the final time in the game that they could provide what was needed to hold this win.

Toronto wanted to get Bower off the ice for a sixth attacker.

They couldn't get the face-off that they wanted (in the Montreal end) to accomplish this neatly, and some inspired fore-checking by Phil Goyette prevented them even from getting the puck out of their end, and Bower off, until it was too late to do any damage.

A CHARTERED bus was waiting at the side of the Forum after the game. It would take them to a chartered plane. Players dressed and carried their baggage out there. John Bower, the goalkeeper, was one of the first. As they waited for the others, Bower sat in the seat behind the driver. Baun knelt on the driver's seat. The talk was less bitter now, in a kind of inside, or shorthand, of the game.

"I knew he'd be back there," Baun said. "I moved as close as I could. He must have got his stick between me and the post."

Bower: "He hangs around the post all the time."

(This was about the first goal, Dick Moore's, a deflection of Henri Richard's shot from an almost impossible corner angle.)

Bower (pulling on a cigaret): "How'd he get the puck for the second goal?"

Baun: "I don't know."

Gerry James (sitting one seat back, across the aisle): "Second goal? Somebody poked it off Geoffrion's stick right on to Bellevue's."

Bower (after a long pause): "They were just gambling on that one goal."

Baun (after another pause): "You made a hell of a stop on the Pocket." This was in the third period.

Bower (a most reluctant hero at all times): "He didn't get hold of that."

From back in the bus, Imlach: "Who are we waiting for?"

Olmstead came in, face set, and walked to the back. There was a crowd around the bus outside. Faces at the windows. Programs being poked through the door for autographs. From out there scraps of argument could be heard; the names of Doug Harvey, Don Marshall, Jacques Plante.

Allan Stanley came in and inquired, "Is Pully here?" Pullyford came in a minute later. Then Bob Haggert, the trainer, and Tom Naylor, the skate-sharpener.

As the bus pulled away, in front of a night-club across the road was a cardboard carton overflowing with old ice-rubbers, with a large sign behind it.

A player back in the bus read the sign aloud: "Get your playoff rubbers here!"

At this show of public service to the Montreal fans, who like to throw rubbers, someone chuckled.

First chuckle since the final whistle.



Rocket Rolls—Montreal Canadiens' famed veteran, Maurice (Rocket) Richard showed plenty of youthful zip in the second game of Stanley Cup final in Montreal Saturday. Here he has bowled over Toronto Maple Leaf defenseman Bobby Baun in pursuit of puck in Leaf zone. Baun's partner, Carl Brewer, moves in to block Richard from further play.