

Tales of Buzinski Help Pass Time

MONTREAL, April 8—A man can take just so much of this being a tight-lipped hockey writer, or even a steely eyed columnist. Then the mind begins to go. It wasn't so bad in the Stanley Cup semi-final when Leafs were playing Detroit. In that one, Alf Pike, coach of New York Rangers and father of eight (children, not Rangers) was along as resident bon vivant, expert observer, and narrator of Steve Buzinski stories.

When the pressure became unbearable down there in the hotel lobby, one could retire to one's room, shout at Pike through the wall of the Detroit Leland Hotel (faster than phoning) and settle back for an afternoon with Buzinski.

The Buzinski story I like best was of the night when he was felled in his goal-crease and lay there bleeding and seemingly unconscious (as you can see already, this one is really—REALLY hilarious). A curious crowd of players and officials immediately gathered around him. Nobody was paying much attention to Buzinski, except that Rangers were using him as Exhibit A.

"Should be a five-minute penalty," they demanded of the officials, pointing to his forlorn, unconscious form. "These dirty so-and-sos knocked him down with their sticks." "Ah-h-h-h-h," cried the dirty so-and-sos in question, "he got hit by the puck."

"He got hit by a stick," Rangers shouted. "He got hit by the puck," shouted their adversaries. At this point Buzinski, over whose prostrate body the argument was going on, sat bolt upright in the crease, opened his eyes, and glared around. "Like h - - - I got hit by the puck," he announced. "I got hit by a stick," and then closed his eyes and quickly lay down again.

For you young chaps, Buzinski played only briefly in the National Hockey League, and that during the war. Lester Patrick, that great judge of hockey talent, was very high on him, but Ott Heller, Pike and a few others did not feel that a goalkeeper's habitual position in the nets should be that of a man hiding from his creditors. Players were rather difficult to come by during the war, so when Ranger veterans heard that a better goalie named Jimmy Franks was available, they threatened a walkout unless Patrick benched Buzinski in favor of Franks.

Patrick did this, but kept Buzinski on the payroll. "He just sat around and played cards and got paid," Pike said. "No matter what we said to Lester, he wouldn't get rid of Buzinski entirely until one day when the New York Rangers were going to have a practice and they wanted a few of the Rangers to go over so they'd have enough men to run one that would do some good. I was going over, and Lester suggested to Buzinski that maybe he should, too."

"Buzinski looked up at Patrick and said his final words as a Ranger. 'Gee, I'd like to help you out, Mr. Patrick,' he said, 'but I've got a lot of letters to write.' The next train that left New York carried the former New York Ranger goalie, Steve Buzinski. Bless his hardy soul, I say, on a day like this."

This morning, with Buzinski in mind, and hoping for some funny story that would start the day off right for you stay-at-homes before you go out and mow the lawn (ha, ha) I cornered a noted representative of Toronto Maple Leafs.

"Are there any humorous chaps, or practical jokers on your club," I asked. He gazed at me narrowly. "You mean, like guys who will set the coach on fire, or bribe waiters to put liederkrantz cheese in Clancy's pockets, or whistle O Canada when Conn Smythe is walking by?"

"That's it," I said.

"Or will slap Olmstead on the back and try to make him laugh when we've just lost a game? Or will act out a little tableau, like Lester Pearson being barred from hockey television at the Gardens because HE has no influence with the Board of Broadcast Governors, at the moment."

"Exactly," I exclaimed.

"The answer is no," he said and added thoughtfully, "No. No."

So there you are, but anyway I tried.

Selke Sees Long Series; Or Is He Just Charitable?

By REX MacLEOD
Globe and Mail Reporter

Montreal, April 8 — Perhaps Frank Selke, managing director of Montreal Canadiens, was being charitable to visiting firemen when he suggested the Stanley Cup final involving his Canadiens and Toronto Maple Leafs would be a long series.

Canadiens won the first game of the best-of-seven final here Thursday, 4-2, although they seemed to flirt with fate after soaring into a 3-0 lead in the first period. Second game will be played here tomorrow night.

"I'm convinced it's going to be a long series," said Selke. "I'm serious. Leafs are the type of team that is capable of extending this series to the limit. It wasn't accidental that they finished in second place."

Canadiens' coach Toe Blake, who said he was confused, bewildered and disenchanted at all the experting requested of him; said merely that he had no idea which team would win the Stanley Cup.

"Probably nobody will believe this but I had a terrible record throughout the season trying to predict games," he explained. "I used to try to guess who would win the other games every weekend. If I had bet on my selections I would have lost a lot of money. I'm not too good at this predicting business. You might even say that I'm a failure."

"Everyone keeps asking me if we can win this in four games. I tell them, sure we can win it in four. I wouldn't be surprised. I won't be surprised if Leafs win the next four either."

"We put out Chicago in four games, but do you think I expected that? I was the most surprised guy when we won that series in four games. And we didn't look any better in the first game of that series than we did against Leafs here."

Thursday's opener here was scarcely a shiny spectacular. Canadiens, who built a 3-0 lead in the first period with consummate ease, played with a compassionate tolerance in the next 40 minutes and what started out as a rout became just a respectable loss for Leafs.

Leafs are capable of playing much better hockey than they

did in the first game. Fellows like Red Kelly, Frank Mahovlich, Bob Pulford and Allan Stanley did play with the vitality they had in the semi-final against Detroit Red Wings. And goalkeeper Johnny Bower was not as defiant in blocking shots which was to be expected. It was the opinion of many that Bower could not continue his amazing heroics indefinitely.

Whether a more dedicated effort by Leafs will confuse Canadiens in remaining games remains to be seen. Throughout the season it was typical of Canadiens (against Leafs) that they were content to play just well enough to win. They never gave the impression that they tried to make it embarrassing. They're almost humane in their deportment.

Notes: Kenny Reardon, vice-president of Canadiens, was impressed by the play of Leafs' big left-winger, Mahovlich. . . . "It looks to me as if Mahovlich has finally come of age," said Reardon. "The way he's playing is going make this Toronto team

mighty tough." . . . Selke wasn't surprised when Canadiens relaxed (?) after jumping into a 3-0 lead on Leafs. . . . "It's happened before," said Selke. "I've never seen a team that can change so thoroughly and completely as ours. Not just one player, but the whole team seems to relax at the same time." . . . It hasn't been officially announced but this is probably the last season for Canadiens' super-man, Maurice Richard. He will probably announce his retirement at the end of this series. . . . Selke was asked if Richard would decide all by himself that he had finally reached retirement age. . . . "No, the decision will be mine," said Selke. "I won't say that this is his last season. I'm not sure. I'll have a talk with him after the playoffs." . . . Henri Richard, Maurice's younger brother, scored 30 goals this season. Selke figures Henri could have led the league in scoring if he had not been so considerate in trying to set up scoring plays for Maurice. . . . "But that's the way it should be," said Selke. "The Rocket (Maurice) has done so much for this club that its only natural that the other players should try to help him out now."

MAPLE LEAF GARDENS

STANLEY CUP FINALS

Tuesday, April 12
(3rd Game)

Thursday, April 14
(4th Game)

8.00 p.m.

MONTREAL CANADIENS

VS

TORONTO MAPLE LEAFS

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Public Sale Opens at 10 a.m. Tuesday, April 12th, for Both Games.

PLEASE NOTE: Playoff #4 tickets are for April 12, Playoff #5 tickets for April 14.