



Coach Punch Imlach Surprised His Players by Calling a Pre-Playoff Practice and Pep-Talk at the Gardens Yesterday. Leafs, who open playoffs against Detroit here Wednesday, will spend rest of week at their Peterborough training headquarters.

Relaxed Wings Set To Give Leafs Woe

By REX MacLEOD
Globe and Mail Reporter
Detroit, March 21 — Jack Adams, general manager of Detroit Red Wings, insists it will be an upset if his Wings should accidentally eliminate Toronto Maple Leafs in their Stanley Cup series which begins in Toronto Wednesday.

Adams, surprisingly jovial despite his desolate outlook, lauded Leafs as a well-balanced team that might be more formidable than anticipated — if Johnny Bower continues his great goaltending.

"It will definitely be an upset if we get past Leafs," chuckled Adams here today. "They're probably better balanced than we are. And that Bower. In our statistics we keep track of all shots on goal—plus the near misses. Do you know how many shots we fired at him

Sunday? Eighty-seven. And we only get two goals.

"But we're not too worried this year. In other years with some of our good clubs, I used to worry about getting knocked off by a weaker team. This year we're just happy to get in."

This happiness kick will probably stay with Adams until approximately 8 p.m., Wednesday. After that strangers should approach him with caution, preferably with a bodyguard waving a white flag.

Leafs will probably be favored to eliminate Wings because of past performance charts. During the schedule Leafs won nine, lost four and tied one with Wings. But it was Bower's amazing goaltending that gave Leafs a 3-2 win here in the schedule finale.

Bower has had a successful season, especially for an old-timer, but to ask him to do a repeat of his Sunday heroics here is like asking a baseball pitcher to pitch another no-hitter.

Sid Abel, Wings' coach, agrees with his boss, Adams, that Leafs appear to be a stronger team. But don't think for a second that old Boonose has thrown in the towel.

"Leafs have the team, there's no doubt about that," said Abel—and he was serious. "But our fellows are relaxed now. They were pretty tight for a few games but that's all over now that they're in."

"I know one thing. We have not had any breaks all season. It might sound corny but the puck hasn't been bouncing for us. We lost several games that we should have won because of the breaks. But our guys are getting more confidence all the time and I think we might pull a surprise or two before this is through."

Wings will fly out of here tomorrow and they will remain in Toronto, rather than a sylvan retreat, for the first two games of the best-of-seven series.

Physically, Wings are in good shape. Defenseman Marc Reaume and right-winger Jack McKenzie are the only players with injuries and Marc who missed the last game of the season because of an injured knee, is expected to be ready for Wednesday's game.

"We don't expect to have McKenzie back until the final," observed Adams.

Wings worked out lightly in the Olympia here today, devoting most of their drill to skating and shooting. And one of their hardest-working players was a fellow named Gord Howe.

And, incidentally, why is everyone dismissing Wings so lightly when they have the great Gordon, a gifted chapple who can monopolize the puck for 58 minutes or so per game — if he feels inspired?

Imlach Sees 5-Game Set

Leafs Sojourn in Peterborough

By JIM VIPOND
Punch Imlach, rapidly establishing a reputation as a chameleon, steadied away long enough yesterday to proclaim his Leafs would win one game of their semi-final series in Detroit.

That's a slight departure from last season's straightforward "We'll win in six," but somewhat understandable from the pressurized coach who recently added door locking to the normal avocation of opening and shutting gates.

On a sleepless return journey from Detroit Sunday night, Imlach not only changed his mind about secret practices in a far-off rendezvous, but paused long enough to explain his change of pace in the forecasting department.

This explanation came over coffee after he had put his charges through a long workout at the Gardens (in Toronto) while most of the hockey reading public thought he was working behind locked doors in Peterborough.

His explanation is interpreted (some may call it second guessing) thusly: Imlach figures that he'll win the first two games here, Wednesday and Saturday, split the two games in Detroit next week and then wrap up the round in front of the home-town fans a week from Saturday.

He left himself a bit of an

out by suggesting a sixth game might be necessary to be rid of the challenge of a Detroit team that worked through a most unpredictable season.

There was humor attached to yesterday's confusion concerning the Leafs' whereabouts. One ingenious reporter telephoned the wives of Leafs' players to find out where the husbands had gone.

On the first call he heard a masculine voice roar from the background: "Tell him I'm not in. I'm out of town."

A morning call to Peterborough produced the information that the arena doors were locked.

ed. An afternoon call uncovered news that Leafs had booked practice time, but hadn't shown up.

It also produced a statement that, although the team hadn't arrived, Imlach was certainly in Peterborough. Inasmuch as this news was relayed 10 minutes after Imlach had left the Gardens kaffee klatch, it was presumed the Peterborough news was somewhat in error.

But the Leafs are in Peterborough this morning. They'll hold morning and afternoon workouts between games and there'll be film study sessions and pep talks galore. It's a strict training routine with players in their rooms by 11 p.m. and lights out at 11:30 p.m. Breakfast will be at 8 a.m., followed by a nice long walk to the arena. No hitch-hiking permitted.

This afternoon Maple Leafs will break in their spanking new home uniforms and Thursday afternoon, the day after the opening clash with Detroit, their spanking new road uniforms will be given a sweat . . . er airing.

Will the press be welcome? Mr. Imlach was asked and the look of surprised innocence that anyone should think otherwise left a few mystified bodies wondering about the hazards of coaching.