

Whalers extend Nationals' losing st

By GERRY REDMOND

Ottawa Nationals had their second largest turnout of the season last night at the Civic Centre and played their second worst hockey game.

When Winnipeg Jets came in with Bobby Hull the Nats drew a little more than 5,000 fans and responded with a lacklustre effort and were bombed.

With 4,439 in the rink last night they lost to New England Whalers by a 4-2 count for their fourth straight loss and this was not a good hockey game.

Nationals did not play very

well and the reason it was 4-2 was because Whalers didn't play either.

This was a slow moving hockey game, close checking and scrambling. Passes didn't click, hitters didn't hit, and most of it was a yawn.

At that Nationals could have won it because they had more scoring chances than the Whalers and the big difference was Al Smith in the New England nets.

'STEALS' GAME

New England coach Jack Kelley admitted the Whalers "stole" this one. He claimed his club was dog tired and they sure enough looked it.

Still Nationals couldn't generate much in a skating way

either and when they did take control of the play they couldn't get the puck by Smith.

Tom Webster picked up a pass from Terry Caffery and roared in alone on Les Binkley for the first New England goal and while Binkley got a piece of the puck he didn't get enough and it trickled in for Webster's 35th of the season.

In the final minute of the opening period Bob Charlebois put Nats on the scoreboard with a power play goal just seven seconds after Brit Selby was chased for interference.

Big Wayne Carleton made the play for Charlebois but that was the only thing Carleton did right all night.

Not that Carleton played

badly. He was one of the few skating and he had chances galore but couldn't buy a goal.

Webster scored again in the second on a rebound with Nats' Steve Warr in the penalty box but Nats got that back with another fast power play goal.

Eight seconds after Jim Dorey was penalized Tom Martin blasted one from the point that Rick Senten tipped by Smith.

Nats made their big move then to win the hockey game with Carleton being robbed a couple of times by Smith as Ottawa applied the pressure with Laary Pleau in the penalty box late in the period.

The Ottawa club fired five good shots at Smith during

that two minute stretch and Smith came up with them all.

Then Nats gave the hockey game away in the opening seconds of the third period, a thing that's been happening to them time after time.

BEHIND TO STAY

Terry Caffery roared down the right wing side, picked the corner on Binkley from 30 feet out and with only 11 seconds gone in the period Nationals were behind to stay.

Carleton had two great chances to tie it in the third but was beaten by Smith with a great stop on one and messed the other up himself.

Both times he was in alone, the second time on a penalty shot. Paul Hurley dragged

streak to four

h and
m all.
hockey
pening
riod, a
ning to

Y
down
ed the
30 feet
econds
tionals

great
e third
h with
d mes-
f.

alone,
penalty
ragged

Carleton down from behind on a breakaway at 11.32 and referee Ray Thomas awarded the big centre a penalty shot.

Carleton swooped in from centre, took dead aim at the open top corner and missed the net by lots.

On his earlier break he got in too close but then made a great move to pull Smith but somehow the New England goalkeeper managed to get his stick in front of Carleton's backhand.

Whalers wrapped it up with a goal by John Danby at the 18.50 mark.

So Carleton spent a frustrating night as did the Nats and now they face another game tonight in Minnesota and a Sunday night engagement

with Bobby Hull and Jets in the Civic Centre Sunday.

"If we're going to catch a playoff spot we're going to have to get going soon," coach Billy Harris said last night. "The kids have been carrying us but now it's up to the veterans.

"We have to get Binkley healthy and stopping pucks, we have to get Carleton scoring again and we need some big goals from Guy Trottier."

But Binkley is still hurting, Carleton couldn't buy a goal and neither could Trottier last night.

"Without those three going well for us we're in trouble," Harris said.

Nats were in trouble all last night.