

PRIDE ON THE LINE

After the '17 Cup final, Seattle and Montreal played a rematch series in San Francisco.

season. The Canadiens won the opener 5-4 in overtime, powered by three goals from their star Newsy Lalonde. The match "was witnessed by a capacity crowd," read a report in the *Ottawa Citizen*. "San Francisco people appeared tickled over the play of both teams."

Seattle evened the series with a 5-2 win in Game 2 April 2. Bernie Morris had a hat trick and assisted on one of two goals by Cully Wilson. Game 3 on April 4 was a 6-2 romp by the Canadiens. Despite the Stanley Cup loss, owner George Kennedy felt the series proved his Canadiens were kings. "We finished in a blaze of glory," he said. "We have the better team - the finest aggregation playing hockey today."

The *Citizen* reported on the possibility of San Francisco joining the PCHA, though Kennedy felt otherwise. "Frisco fans were swept off their feet," he told the *Vancouver Sun*. "The rink there is an excellent one, but it only holds 1,800 people."

Kennedy envisioned a different hockey future for the state. He spoke of a four-team circuit with teams in San Francisco, Oakland, Sacramento and California. Los Angeles. There was just one problem. "I see no reason why other California towns shouldn't relish the fastest sport on Earth also," he said. "It would take an outlay of several hundred thousand dollars to build four rinks and get the game started. The question is - who is going to take the gamble? It might be a highly paying one at that." **THN**

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California Dreamin'

Just before the dawn of the NHL, San Francisco fans witnessed a clash of champions in an epic exhibition showdown

BY ERIC ZWEIG

Natives of the Golden State got their first glimpse of championship teams long before the Los Angeles Kings or the Anaheim Ducks won the Stanley Cup. "For the first time in history," reported the *San Francisco Chronicle* March 30, 1917, "world series hockey championships will be played in California."

With the formation of the NHL still eight months away, San Francisco hosted the National Hockey Association champion Montreal Canadiens and the Pacific Coast Hockey Association champion Seattle Metropolitans. Just days earlier in Seattle, the Mets had become the first American-based team to win the Stanley Cup, defeating the Canadiens three games to one in a best-of-five series.

After a final exhibition game in Seattle, the two

teams headed south for a three-game exhibition series. (The *Seattle Times* reported both teams were onboard a Great Northern train, but later said they arrived by boat.) At stake was a \$5,000 purse, with 60 percent to be shared by the players on the winning team and 40 percent going to the losers. It was this cash guarantee, the *Chronicle* reported, that had allowed San Francisco's Winter Garden to outbid New York's St. Nicholas Arena to host the games. (Eastern-based Canadian teams had been visiting New York since the 1890s.)

The Winter Garden - located on Pierce Street between Sutter and Post streets in what is today the Lower Pacific Heights district - opened Oct 10 1916. It was essentially for pleasure skating and ice carnivals. However, local amateur teams took advantage of its 210-by-90-foot ice

surface to play hockey there.

Stanford University made its hockey debut Dec. 8, 1916, in a game against San Francisco's Olympic Club at the Winter Garden. Stanford took on the University of California there Feb. 16, 1917, in the state's first competitive collegiate game. The appearance of the Canadiens and Seattle marked California's first professional hockey games. Tickets ranged from 50 cents to \$1.50 and the public was invited to skate on the ice when the games finished.

Frisco fans were swept off their feet

- George Kennedy

All three games of the series were played under PCHA rules, which meant seven-man hockey including a rover. The Canadiens were allowed to use Reg Noble, who had been declared ineligible for the Stanley Cup series because he had been acquired by Montreal too late in the