

SPORTS SLANTS

- By Ray Shank

I've written a paragraph or two previously in this column, trying to explain how the National Hockey League will operate, starting next season.

But now I have all the facts I need to fully explain the operation.

One thing certain about the setup, if it's adopted as scheduled and remains the same for years to come, Montreal Canadiens won't have to worry about missing the playoffs.

The Canadiens are in Division II with four other teams - Los Angeles Kings, Detroit Red Wings, Pittsburgh Penguins and Washington Watchamacallits.

The toughest division will be Division IV, where Boston Bruins, Toronto Maple Leafs, Buffalo Sabres and California Golden Seals will participate. It's not very likely the Seals will make the playoffs for some time, with that kind of competition.

Division I could also be interesting, with Philadelphia, N.Y. Rangers, Atlanta and N.Y. Islanders participating. Three of the teams are already established clubs, and the Islanders might surprise a lot of teams in another year or two.

The five teams in Division III will be Chicago, Minnesota, St. Louis, Vancouver and Kansas City.

As previously mentioned, the top team in each division will automatically get into the playoffs. Matter of fact, those division winners will get a bye into the quarter-finals

The first round of playoffs will involve the top eight clubs (excluding the division winners) and they will be picked on a total points basis at the end of the regular schedule. This means that no matter where a team ranked in its division (except first), it might miss the playoffs. A team could finish second in its division, yet be 13th in league point totals and thus miss the playoffs. On the other hand, a team could wind up fourth in its division but still qualify for the playoffs because it has more points than six of the other clubs.

Confusing? I guess it is and so I've made a projected list of what could happen in 1974-75, the first season this new operation will go into effect.

The first four playoff series, involving the eight teams who followed the division winners, will all be best-of-three series. From then on, all series will be best-of-seven affairs.

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Moose Bingo

Thurs., JAN. 17 - 8 p.m.
Moose Hall

- HIDDEN NUMBER - \$ 95.00
- JACKPOT - \$110.00

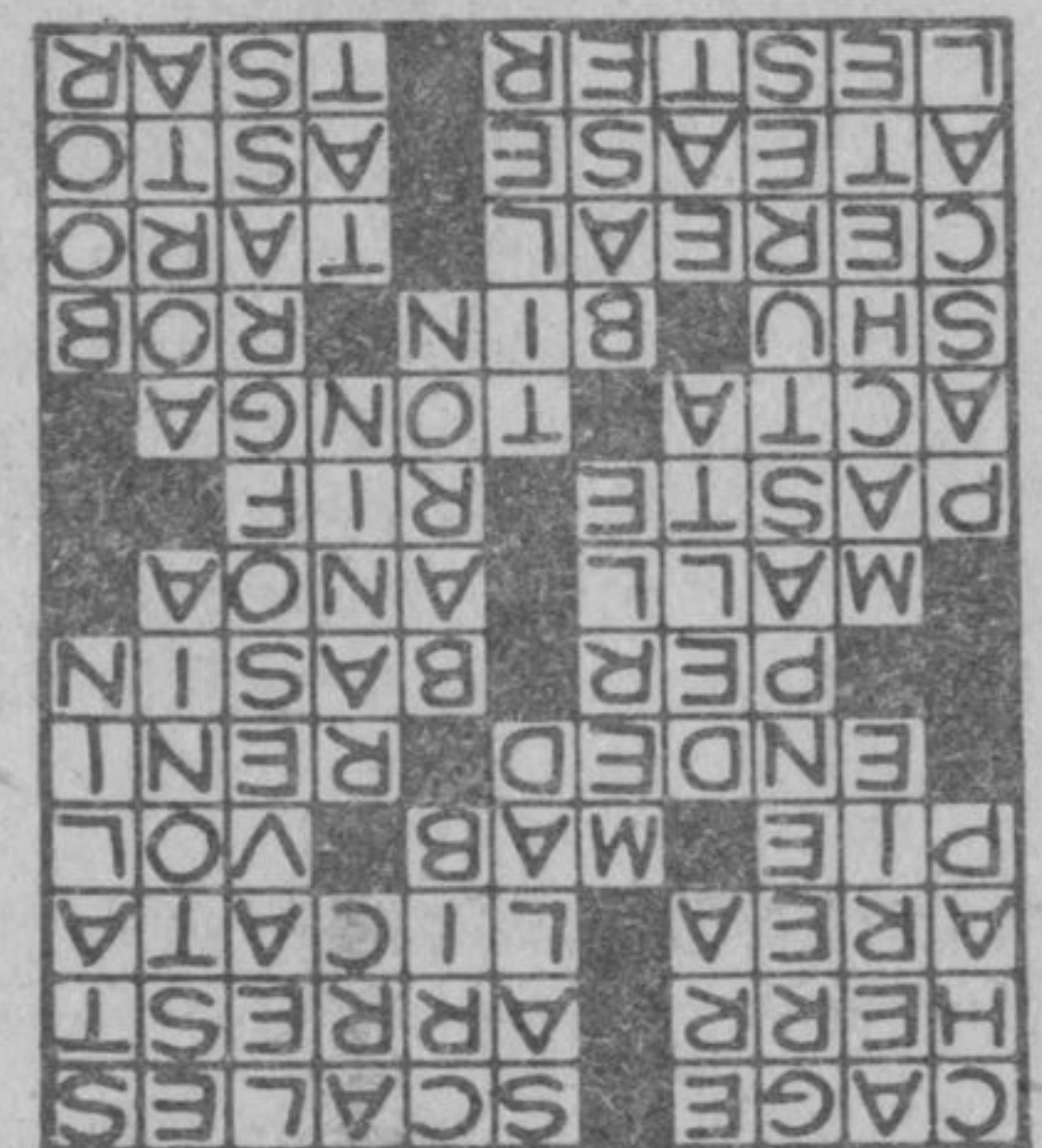
BUS LEAVES SCHREIBER AT 7:10 P.M.

SORRY NO MINORS ALLOWED

Come and See George's balls bouncing in the new machine!

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

TODAY'S ANSWER



ACROSS

- 1. Cashier's cubicle
- 5. Climbs
- 11. Mister in Munich
- 12. Take prisoner
- 13. "Diamonds — Girl's Best Friend" (2 wds.)
- 14. Sicilian seaport
- 15. Bakery goody
- 16. Fairy queen
- 17. One of a Tennessee eleven
- 18. Closed
- 20. Italian painter
- 21. Apiece
- 22. Dock
- 23. Promenade
- 24. Celebes ox
- 25. Mucilage
- 26. Moroccan mountain region
- 27. Court minutes
- 28. Friendly Islands
- 30. Old Chinese kingdom
- 31. Storage box
- 32. Filch
- 34. Breakfast fare
- 36. Elephant's ear
- 37. Military command (2 wds.)

38. Regarding (2 wds.)

39. Jeeter of "Tobacco Road"

40. Russian ruler

- ### DOWN
- 1. Fellow
 - 2. Condor's nest
 - 3. Marc Connelly's "The —" (2 wds.)
 - 4. Pitcher's statistic
 - 5. Caesar or Waldorf
 - 6. Nursery fixture
 - 7. Curve
 - 8. Walt Whitman book of poems (3 wds.)

9. Baltic Sea republic

10. He annexed 9 Down

16. Oberon

19. Airplane-wing shape

20. Paid a hurried visit (2 wds.)

22. Nobleman

23. Sugar-cane cutter

25. Blaise —

28. Gate-keeper

29. Main artery

31. Vulgar

33. Rustic

35. Break bread

36. Do needlepoint

