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Great Falls Americans Press Release

**Contact: Kevin Scott, GF Americans Public Relations Coordinator
Phone: (406) 403-8146**

Hawks top Americans, 3-2 in Frontier Division overtime battle

By Kevin Scott

Box Score	Game Sheet	League Scoreboard	Americans Team Statistics
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GREAT FALLS, Mont., November 22, 2019 — In October 2019, the Great Falls Americans (16-2-2-0) played their first weekend series against the 2019-20 North American 3 Hockey League (NA3HL) inaugural team from Wyoming, the Sheridan Hawks (16-4-1) in Wyoming. Great Falls and Sheridan split their two-game series in the beginning of October (4-5). The Hawks took the first game 6-1 before Great Falls got revenge and shutout the newest member of the Frontier Division the following night, 4-0.

Great Falls was 10-0 since their last loss to the Helena Bighorns on October 12th. A trio of players lead coach Greg Sears' squad so far this season. Jack Olson, a forward from Minnesota, continues to pace the Americans with 26 assists and 31 points, Jake Hayes, a newcomer to this year's team, is from Anchorage, Alaska and leads the team with 16 goals scored (27 points). Goaltender Viktor Wennberg (11-1-1 record, 1.47 GAA) is the second-best goaltender in the North American 3 Hockey League behind the Texas Brahmas' Kayden Hargraves (6-0, 0.83 GAA).

Since their first matchup in early October, the Sheridan Hawks had won ten straight games before their November 15th home setback to the Yellowstone Quake. The Hawks, coached by Andy Scheib, have three players in the top ten in scoring with one of those players, Justin Schwartzmiller accruing 54 points (33 goals, 21 assists) and is the second leading scorer in the league. Logan Syrup, who is seventh in the NA3HL in points scored, currently has 44 points and Blake Billings (12th in points scored) has 39 points.

The #2 Americans tonight challenged the #3 Hawks on home ice for the first time in the Electric City. Who would come out on top?

The visiting Sheridan (WY) Hawks escaped the wrath of the Great Falls Americans on Friday night in Great Falls as they scored their third goal during the first 79 seconds of overtime to defeat the home team, 3-2 in front of 850 anxious fans at the Great Falls Ice Plex. Justin Schwartzmiller, second in the league with 54 points, scored his 33rd goal to hand Great Falls their fourth loss of the season.

The Sheridan Hawks came away with a 1-0 lead after the first twenty minutes thanks to Kamden Sengheiser sixth goal of the season with 6:31 remaining. The lone goal by either team was assisted by Stepan Ruta (Jaromer, Czech Republic) and McCaffrey Billings. The Americans attempted 14 shots but couldn't get any past Sheridan netminder Luke Fundator. Six shots were taken by the team from Wyoming in the penalty-free stanza.

Sheridan lit up the lamp at the 13:32 mark to start the scoring in the middle period. Peyton Kesselhon, a Wisconsin standout, delivered the second scoring opportunity for the Hawks. The scoring play put Sheridan ahead 2-0 and was set up by Trevor Timm, who gathered his 16th assist. Three minutes later, Great Falls got on the scoreboard with a goal provided by Jake Hayes with assists coming from Ivan Royo and Jack Olson. The host team evened up the contest, 2-2, with four minutes to go before the second intermission. Jake Hayes got the back-to-back goals for coach Greg Sears' team as Luke Richesin and Bryson Fletcher created the second scoring play. The Americans added 18 more shots while holding Sheridan to 10 to close out the second period.

Despite great offensive attacks by both Frontier Division teams, no goals were awarded during the final period of regulation, so a five-minute overtime was necessary to declare a winner. Great Falls had 11 of the 25 shots-on-goal in the last period of regulation.

It took 79 seconds in overtime for the visiting team to claim a 3-2 victory. Logan Syrup chipped in his 34 assist and Stepan Ruta created his 13th when they found an open Justin Schwartzmiller for the game-winning goal in the extra period. Schwartzmiller netted his 33rd goal of the season for Sheridan. Each team took two shot attempts.

Six total power play chances went unanswered during the sixty-minute contest. No penalties were accumulated in the first and overtime periods. The Americans and Hawks had four total penalties apiece in the second and third periods resulting in eight minutes of penalty time.

Luke Fundator, playing in his third junior hockey game for Sheridan, is now 3-0 on the season. The Las Vegas, Nevada product allowed just two second period scores by Jake Hayes as he finished with 43 saves in 61 minutes of action. Viktor Wennberg took just his second loss (11-1-1) in 13 games for Great Falls and his second setback to the Hawks. He added 29 saves in 61 minutes.

NOTES: The Americans made a few changes to their roster before tonight's contest. Hendrik Robel, a defenseman from the 2018-19 team, was released by the Americans. The Berlin, Germany player scored eight goals and dished out seven assists in 18 games this season. He had three goals and 19 assists last season for the Americans.

Chris Cantillo, a goaltender from Los Angeles, California, was also released and replaced by Matt Maniglia from Brooklyn, New York. Cantillo never appeared in any games this season. A pair of forwards from Alberta, Canada have been added to the roster. Twin brothers, Rhodes Buffalo (Maskwacis, Alberta) and Remington Buffalo (Edmonton, Alberta) are the newest members on the team. Last week, Great Falls picked up local product forward Clay Walker, who is enrolled at C.M. Russell High School ([Click here](#) to see Clay's story this week by ABC/FOX Montana's Leo Goldman on their "Student of the Week" segment).

Check out the updated roster by [clicking here](#).

We had a few family members in town watching including Mike Nyhuis watching his son Harley play and Scott and Alyssa Fletcher were in attendance watching forward Bryson Fletcher. Also, Kellen Harris' father, Steve Harris made the trip from Anchorage, Alaska to view the highly anticipated matchup. Russ and Lisa Silance of Alaska were at the Great Falls Ice Plex to watch, Nick Silance play as well.

NEXT CONTEST: The Great Falls Americans and Sheridan Hawks will tangle on the ice for the fourth time (out of six) this season on Saturday, November 23, 2019 at the Great Falls Ice Plex. The 7:30PM start will be the final time this season that Sheridan will be in Great Falls (unless they meet in the playoffs). The Hawks and Americans will meet for one more weekend (Feb. 7-8th) of regular season games in Wyoming. Jeremy Williamson, the Americans Play-By-Play Announcer, will have the pre-game show at 7:20PM on [HockeyTV](#) on Saturday evening.

CONTACT:

Greg Sears
Great Falls Americans Head Coach/General Manager
Cell Phone: 715-566-2811
Email: gsears@greatfallsamericans.com

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