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Great Falls Americans Press Release

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Boyce and Mellen team up to help Great Falls race out to 6-1 win over Gillette

By Kevin Scott

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| Box Score | Game Sheet | League Scoreboard | Americans Team Statistics |
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GILLETTE, Wyo., January 3, 2020 — The Great Falls Americans (24-3-4) have prevented the Gillette Wild (15-16-0), one of three teams from Wyoming represented in the NA3HL's Frontier Division, from gathering more than two goals in their previous four meetings this season. All four games including the first two that opened the 2019-20 season in September were hosted by the Americans at the Great Falls Ice Plex. Great Falls was victorious in three of the four games.

The Great Falls Americans remained in first place in the Frontier Division by posting a 6-1 victory over the Gillette (WY) Wild on Friday evening in Gillette, Wyoming. Great Falls notched their 24th victory behind a two-goal effort by Brody Boyce and solid performance by goaltender Trever Mellen, who stopped 27 of the 28 shots by Gillette's offense.

Nick Ramstad and Levi Mese, returning forwards from last year's playoff squad, dished off to Brody Boyce for his 14th goal of the season 80 seconds into the opening period of the Americans first appearance at the Spirit Hall Ice Arena this season. The Great Falls offense would score two more goals before the first intermission to take a 3-0 advantage over the home team. Jake Hayes, the Americans leading goal scorer, secured his 22nd goal at the midpoint of the period. Dylan Olson and Ivan Royo set up the second scoring drive with 8:53 remaining. Bryson Fletcher, off a pass from Nick Torres and Harley Nyhuis, tallied the third goal with under three minutes left in the period. Fletcher, in his first season for Great Falls, accumulated his 11th goal. The Wyoming squad was held to just five shots while Great Falls registered 26 in the first twenty minutes.

The three-goal lead by the visiting Americans lasted for the first 15 minutes of the middle period. Levi Mese connected on a dish by Jake Hayes, who ranks second on the team in assists, and Ivan Royo for the 4-0 lead by the Montana team. The Americans and Wild traded goals in the final 97 seconds of the stanza. Texas native Pablo Palos scored the first successful goal for the host squad with Jacob Sundgren and Hunter Beckett receiving the assists for coach Taylor Shaw's fourth place team. Kellen Harris put the visitors back up by four goals (5-1) 25 seconds after Gillette's lone score thanks to assistance from Jack Olson and Jake Hayes. The shots-on-goal were much closer with the Americans edging the Wild, 19-16.

Brody Boyce accrued his second goal of the night and 15th overall with three minutes left in the Americans 11th road game of the season. Bryson Fletcher (16) and Harley Nyhuis (12) added to their season assist totals on the Boyce scoring drive.

Twenty-three total shots were attempted by both teams in the third period with two of the nine minor penalties occurring during the last period of regulation. The game saw six power play opportunities that were denied by the opposing defenses.

Great Falls produced 35 of the 61 shots during the second and third periods. Gillette took 16 of their 28 shots in the middle period.

Great Falls' Brody Boyce led all scorers with two goals and Jake Hayes contributed three points (1 goal, 2 assists).

Trever Mellen started the new year with his eighth win in 14 appearances (8-1-3). The Minnesota native acquired 27 save in 60 minutes of action. Gillette utilized two goaltenders with Shane Philips playing the first period while backup Brad Muzzarelli seeing action in the second and third periods. Phillips, 7-6 record, garnered 23 saves but gave up three goals to the Americans in the first stanza. Muzzarelli added 32 saves while also allowing three goals.

NOTE: Despite both the Bozeman Ice Dogs (25-5-0-1) and Sheridan (WY) Hawks (25-6-1-0) each picking up victories, the Great Falls Americans maintained a one-point advantage (52-51) over Bozeman and Sheridan, who both share second place in the Frontier Division. The Hawks and Ice Dogs picked up road victories over the Missoula Junior Bruins (**4-2 win**) and Butte Cobras (**7-1 win**) on Friday night.

NEXT CONTEST: The Great Falls Americans will play one more contest on Saturday evening (January 4th) in Gillette, Wyoming. This will be the final regular season matchup between these two Frontier Division teams. Great Falls will be looking for their fourth consecutive victory. The game from the Spirit Hall Ice Arena will commence at 7:05PM with live action on **HockeyTV**.

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