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Great Falls Americans Press Release
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Frontier Division’s comeback bid falls short against the Central Division

By Kevin Scott

Central Division vs. Frontier Division			
Box Score	Game Sheet	Tourney Scoreboard	Rosters



ATTLEBORO, Mass., February 19, 2019 — The final day of competition at the 2019 Top Prospects Tournament saw each of the six division teams play one last time after playing two games on Monday.

The Frontier Division squad, under the direction of Helena Bighorns head coach Bob Richards and assisted by Americans head coach Greg Sears, finished the three-game tournament with a 1-1-0-1 record. On Monday morning, the Frontier team needed an extra period to down the Northeast squad, 2-1 with Americans forward scoring two goals and netminder Viktor Wennberg swatting away all 22 shots he encountered. The afternoon contest was won by the Coastal Division team who defeated the Frontier team in a shootout, 3-2. Payton McSharry secured his third goal of the tournament and Wennberg finished with 32 saves despite the loss.

The Central Division team raced out to a 5-2 advantage after two periods and hung on for a 6-4 victory despite a failed comeback attempt by the Frontier squad to close out the [2019 NA3HL Top Prospects Tournament](#) on Tuesday morning in Attleboro, Massachusetts.

Jack Radley (Peoria Mustangs) scored two first period goals and Austin Keil (Peoria Mustangs) assisted on both scoring drives for the Central Division. Cole Ford (Evansville Jr. Thunderbolts) answered with one of the two successful power play opportunities to lead 3-1 after the first stanza. Other assists for the Central Division went to Brandon Hay (Peoria Mustangs), Justin Schwartzmiller and Luke Hefty (Wisconsin Whalers). Three of the five Helena Bighorns on the team scored points on the one goal for the Frontier squad. Darren Donovan’s score came with 10:50 remaining and was assisted by Elliot Plourde and Ricards Groskops.

Milwaukee Power’s Logan Geisness and former Great Falls American and current forward for the Coulee Region Chill, Matt Janke chipped in goals to increase the lead to 5-1 for the Central Division. Four different players earned assists including Brandon Ratzloff (Coulee Region Chill) and Sean Hofstetter (St. Louis Jr. Blues), who added their first assist of the tournament, Chuck Bay (Milwaukee Power) added his Great Falls Americans Hockey

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second assist and Breezy Point North Stars standout Alex Kessler garnered his fourth assist. Gillette Wild's Gage Thompson cut into the Central Division's lead (5-2) with his first goal set up by his Wild teammate Coleman Varty and Missoula Jr. Bruins forward Trevor Prince before the end of the second period. Despite the Frontier Division trailing throughout the contest, they held a 32-26 advantage in the shots-on-goal category.

The comeback started 76 seconds into the final period of regulation when Luke Hartge (Yellowstone Quake) and Helena's Darren Donovan got the puck to Elliot Plourde of the Helena Bighorns and that goal was followed a few minutes later when Great Falls Americans forward Payton McSharry his fourth goal in three games for the Frontier Division. Americans teammate Jens Juliussen and Missoula Jr. Bruins' Connor Frye assisted to pull the with one goal (5-4 with 13 minutes remaining. The Central Division prevented any more scoring attempts by the Frontier team as Milwaukee Power teammates Chuck Bay scored off a pass by Logan Geisness to put the game away for the undefeated Central Division (3-0).

The Central scored on half of their power play chances (2-for-4) while the Frontier Division could not find the back of the net in their one opportunity. Five total infractions were called accounting for ten minutes in the penalty box.

The winning team took 16 shots in both the first and third periods to finish with 42. The Frontier Division was more active on the offensive side in the first two periods. They attempted 32 of their 39 before the second break.

Mikael Foucher of the St. Louis Jr. Blues finished off the tournament with a 2-0 record and produced 14 of his 40 saves in this contest. Aaron Dickstein of the Milwaukee Power started the contest and allowed one first period goal and finished with 21 saves in 1.5 periods of action. Michael Allman accumulated 17 saves to begin the game before Viktor Wennberg took over to finish with 19 saves.

Great Falls Americans were represented by four players in the Top Prospects Tournament who all saw action including Payton McSharry (4 goals, 4 points), Jens Juliussen (1 assist, 1 point), Nate Simpson played well but didn't score any points and goaltender Viktor Wennberg, the Sweden native, stopped 73 of the 77 shots taken by the opposing teams.

TOURNAMENT NOTES: For more information about the Top Prospects Tournament, please [click here](#). View the final day of action (box scores) by [clicking here](#) for the NA3HL article. [Click here](#) to view the tournament standings.

NEXT CONTEST: The Great Falls Americans and the rest of the North American 3 Hockey League (NA3HL) teams are down to the final three weeks of regular season action before the playoffs begin. The American are on the road for the next two weeks with games against the Bozeman Ice Dogs on Friday, February 22nd (7:30PM) and on Friday, March 1st against the Helena Bighorns (7:05PM) before closing out the regular season at home against the Butte Cobras on Saturday, March 9th (7:30PM).

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