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**Great Falls Americans Press Release**

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**#3 Great Falls Americans pull off 1-0 upset over the top-ranked Bozeman Ice Dogs**

**By Kevin Scott**

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GREAT FALLS, Mont., February 22, 2020 — The #3 Great Falls Americans (31-9-4-1) have had a very successful 2019-20 season on the ice again as the season has just one more week remaining before the postseason begins.

But first, the Great Falls Americans had to face an opponent that they have had trouble defeating this season. The Bozeman Ice Dogs (37-7-0-1) have been one of the hottest teams in the entire North American 3 Hockey League (NA3HL) and have remained the No. 1 team for most of the season.

Previously, Great Falls and Bozeman have played each other five times this season with all of them coming in January and February. The Ice Dogs have won all five meetings and outscored the Americans 22-7. The closest game was a 4-3 win by Bozeman in Great Falls on January 25<sup>th</sup>.

Would the #3 Great Falls Americans pull off the upset against the #1 Bozeman Ice Dogs at the Great Falls Ice Plex on Saturday evening?



In one of the most exciting and memorable games of the season, the Great Falls Americans closed out their home portion of the 2019-20 NA3HL regular season by pulling out a 1-0 upset over the top-ranked Bozeman Ice Dogs during Saturday's action at the Great Falls Ice Plex. Jack Olson's first period goal was the difference maker of the game that had the 1,189 spectators sitting on the edge of their seats throughout the entire sixty-minute showdown for the first win against the Ice Dogs this season. The boisterous crowd saw goaltender Viktor Wennberg get his sixth shutout of the season.

The Great Falls Americans got the first and only goal of the first period for both squads. Jack Olson (15<sup>th</sup> goal) broke the scoreless tie 13:50 into the stanza as Blake Nerney (19<sup>th</sup> assist) and Nick Torres (9<sup>th</sup> assist) helped deliver the first (and only) goal against the top-ranked Ice Dogs. The home team attempted 14 of the 19 shots.

Great Falls and Bozeman battled it out in the middle stanza as a total of 27 shots were taken but neither team lit up the lamp for any scoring despite five power play opportunities. During the extended second intermission, many photo opportunities occurred when the billet families were introduced on the ice with their hosted players.

The third frame was one of the most exciting and highly anticipated periods of the season as both goaltenders, Bozeman's Conan Hayton and Great Falls' Viktor Wennberg, accumulated many successful save opportunities and kept the puck out of the net. Great Falls' offense was outstanding as they led in the shots-on-goal category in each of the three periods.

The home team had 16 of their 48 shot attempts in the final twenty minutes. The visiting Ice Dogs had one period (third) where they attempted over ten shots as the Americans defense held the Bozeman offense to a total of 14 shots in the first two periods. Bozeman finished with 29 in just their eighth loss in 45 games.

In an emotionally filled contest against these two fierce rivals, the game saw two ten-minute unsportsmanlike conduct penalties called against the Ice Dogs. A total of 13 infractions that went against Bozeman resulted in 42 minutes of time spent in the sin bin. The Americans settled for eight penalties with 16 minutes of time spent off the ice. Nine power play opportunities were denied thanks to outstanding play by both netminders.

Jack Olson received the first star of the game for the game-winning tally and Blake Nerney picked up the third star for his assist on the play.

Viktor Wennberg obtained the second star of the game as he had another extraordinary game in the net for Great Falls. The Swedish goaltender swatted away all 29 shots sent his way to earn his 20<sup>th</sup> win in 26 tries (20-5-1 record). Bozeman's Conan Hayton had his first loss since a January 17<sup>th</sup> 4-2 setback to the Helena Bighorns on the road. Hayton, who calls Denver, Colorado home, witnessed his record fall to 17-5 with the Ice Dogs after going 0-4-1 in six games to begin the season with the NA3HL's West Division team, the Breezy Point North Stars out of Minnesota. Hayton amassed 47 saves in the loss.

Great Falls finished out the regular season in front of the home crowd with a record of 18-2-3. Coach Greg Sears' squad is 13-7-1-1 away from home with two more road games left in Missoula (Jr. Bruins) and Butte (Cobras) next Friday and Saturday (February 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>), respectively.

With one week remaining and only one playoff spot yet to be claimed, the #3 Great Falls Americans along with top-ranked Bozeman (Ice Dogs) and the second-place Sheridan (WY) Hawks are awaiting their opponents for the playoffs that begin in two weeks. The Frontier Division's other two clubs from Wyoming, the #4 Yellowstone Quake and the #5 Gillette Wild are also playoff bound. The sixth and final slot in the Frontier playoffs will go to either the Missoula Junior Bruins or the Helena Bighorns after the regular season concludes next weekend.



**NOTES:** Before the Americans and Ice Dogs took to the ice tonight, there was a moment of silence for Lucas Mikesh, a cousin of Great Falls Americans forward Nick Ramstad, who has terminal cancer in Minnesota. In Lucas' honor, the Great Falls Americans wore green stickers on their helmets during tonight's home finale.



The Great Falls Americans final home game of the season means that it was Family Billet Night at the Great Falls Ice Plex on Saturday evening. During the second intermission, the players and the billet (host) families were recognized and introduced on the ice. The Americans would like to thank all the billet families for hosting our athletes.

<b>2019-20 Great Falls Americans Host Families</b>	
<b>Host Family Name</b>	<b>GF Americans Players</b>
Dawn and Jamie Boyer	Trever Mellen, Harley Nyhuis, Bryson Fletcher
Tammy Stubbs	Levi Mese, Jack Olson
Krista and Ryan Smith	Kellen Harris, Blake Nerney, Matt Maniglia, Henry Chavez
Bob and Wendy Dick	Henry Fusco, Nick Ramstad, Nick Torres, Dylan Olson
Leslie	Braydon Rachow, Logan Rachow
Jenn and Mike Fines	Brody Boyce
Vicki and Dave Bertelsen	Luke Richesin, Brandon Peterson
Dane and Donna Garton	Jake Hayes, Tommy Janes, Nick Silance
Josh and Megan Lewis	Cody Benjamin, Vincent Marroni
Greg and Serena Sears	Brody Savoï, Viktor Wennberg, Ivan Royo

**NEXT CONTEST:** The eight-team NA3HL Frontier Division will wrap up the 2019-20 North American 3 Hockey League (NA3HL) regular season next weekend. The Bozeman Ice Dogs, Butte Cobras, Gillette (WY) Wild, Great Falls Americans, Helena Bighorns, Missoula Junior Bruins, Sheridan (WY) Hawks and the Yellowstone (WY) Quake will all play their final games on Saturday, February 29<sup>th</sup>. After starting their season at a home with a pair of games against the Gillette Wild in September, the Great Falls Americans will play their final games on the road against the Missoula Junior Bruins (Friday, February 28<sup>th</sup>) and the following night against the Butte Cobras (Saturday, February 29<sup>th</sup>). Both games can be seen on **HockeyTV** with a game time set for 7:05PM each night.

After next Saturday's game (February 29<sup>th</sup>), fans can check back on the **Great Falls Americans** website for dates and times for the upcoming 2020 NA3HL Frontier Division Play-In (First Round) best-of-three series taking place during the first week of March (5-8).

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