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**Great Falls Americans Press Release**

**Contact: Kevin Scott, GF Americans Public Relations Coordinator**

**Phone: (406) 403-8146**

**Americans record drops to 0-4 against the Ice Dogs to close out January**

**By Kevin Scott**

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BOZEMAN, Mont., January 31, 2020 — The Great Falls Americans (27-7-4-0) started out the new year with four victories and three losses before tonight's fourth meeting between the Americans and the Bozeman Ice Dogs (31-6-0-1).

#3 Great Falls started off 2020 with a pair of road victories against the #4 Gillette Wild (18-21-0) on the weekend of January 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>. Then the first of three setbacks to the #1 Bozeman Ice Dogs followed by a narrow 5-4 shootout win at home against the #7 Helena Bighorns (11-25-1-1). Then sandwiched in the middle of two more losses to Bozeman was a 4-3 win in overtime to Helena. This wasn't something the Americans were used to doing as they have only lost in ten contests this season with four of them going into an extra period.

In the first seven games of 2020, the Bozeman Ice Dogs were victorious in six of them. Surprisingly, the #7 Helena Bighorns downed the Ice Dogs, 4-2 on January 17<sup>th</sup>. In addition to three wins against Great Falls, the Ice Dogs won easily twice over the #8 Butte Cobras and once against the Missoula Junior Bruins in January.

Great Falls was trying to break their three-game losing streak against the Bozeman Ice Dogs on Friday night in Bozeman, Montana.

Unfortunately, the streak continues.

The #1 Bozeman Ice Dogs scored three in the second and added two additional goals in the third period enroute to a commanding 5-1 win against the #3 Great Falls Americans at Haynes Pavilion during Friday's NA3HL action in Bozeman, Montana. Luke Hartge, a returning forward from last year's Bozeman squad, scored two goals while goaltender Conan Hayton stopped 34 of 35 shots sent his way. Braydon Rachow scored the lone goal for Great Falls in the middle period.

After a scoreless first period saw 17 combined shots, the offenses from both NA3HL clubs started to find the back of the net during the second period.

The host team opened the second period by taking a 2-0 lead after the first 4:32 of the stanza. Luke Hartge scored the first of his two goals after Max Schumacher got the Ice Dogs on the scoreboard with 17:39 remaining before the second intermission. Duncan McGarrah and Christian Veneruzzo each

assisted for the 33<sup>rd</sup> time this season. Meanwhile, Hartge's scoring drive was assisted by the Ice Dogs assist leader, Will Kutch (49 assists) early in the period. Tadeas Aulehla, a first-year player from Czech Republic, also assisted. Before the period concluded, each squad swapped goals. Caleb Brownell, playing in just his fourth game for Bozeman, received his first goal as a member of the Montana team after coming over from the Willmar (Minnesota) WarHawks in a trade earlier this month. The assists went to Luke Hartge and Kady Fennell. Bozeman's three-goal advantage lasted for nearly six minutes before the Americans lit up the lamp with 50 seconds to go. Bryson Fletcher and Nick Ramstad fed Braydon Rachow for this third tally of the season. Despite trailing after two periods, Great Falls accumulated 29 shots while Bozeman chipped in 22.

The Americans defense in the final stanza allowed two goals as the offense couldn't get the puck in the net. Luke Hartge and Will Kutch accrued the goals while Hazen McKay and Kady Fennell earned the assists as they ran their record to 4-0 against Great Falls. The final goal by Kutch came via a one-on-one successful penalty shot over Americans netminder Trever Mellen with 4:35 on the clock.

Luke Hartge (2 goals, 1 assist), Will Kutch (1 goal, 1 assist), Kady Fennell (2 assists) led the Ice Dogs to their 31<sup>st</sup> regular season win. Braydon Rachow scored the first and only goal for the Americans with under a minute left in the second period. Trever Mellen had 30 saves for the Americans.

Bozeman outshot Great Falls 18-10 in the third period after the Americans took seven more shots after the first forty minutes (29-22).

The final score could have been much higher if either team converted any of the 16 total power play opportunities. The small crowd of 295 saw 20 infractions resulting in 43 minutes of penalty time.

Conan Hayton is now 4-0 in the net versus Great Falls. He added 34 saves for a season total of 867 and the Colorado native has won 13 of 17 games with Bozeman after making six appearances (0-4-1 record) to start the 2019-20 season with the Breezy Point (MN) North Stars. Meanwhile, Trever Mellen, currently ranked tenth in the league with a Goals-Against-Average (GAA) of 2.36, lost for the sixth time in 17 contests for the playoff-bound Americans. Mellen had 30 saves before backup Vincent Marroni came in during the final minutes of the game. Marroni finished with five saves.

**NEXT CONTEST:** Great Falls will remain in Bozeman, Montana on Saturday, February 1st as they play for the final time this season at Haynes Pavilion. The Americans second game (of a seven game road trip) starts at 7:30PM and can be seen on [HockeyTV](#).

#### **CONTACT:**

**Greg Sears**  
Great Falls Americans Head Coach/General Manager  
Cell Phone: 715-566-2811  
Email: [gsears@greatfallsamericans.com](mailto:gsears@greatfallsamericans.com)

Visit our website: <http://www.gfamericans.com>  
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