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**Great Falls Americans Press Release**

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**Americans notch 30<sup>th</sup> win by downing Missoula, 3-2 on the road**

**By Kevin Scott**

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MISSOULA, Mont., February 21, 2020 — Eleven weeks ago was the last time the #3 Great Falls Americans (30-9-4-1) and the #6 Missoula Junior Bruins (16-27-1-0) encountered each other on the ice.

The Americans had home ice on all four meetings that resulted in four wins for the home team. Great Falls scored five goals in each of the four games while allowing only three goals by the Bruins.

Four players continue to lead the Great Falls Americans this season including forwards Jack Olson and Jake Hayes along with two goaltenders who are both in the top ten in the league (Viktor Wennberg and Trevor Mellen). Olson, who is a second-year player for Great Falls and is from White Bear Lake, Minnesota, is the team leader in points (56) and assists (42) while Hayes, from Anchorage, Alaska, has contributed 27 goals this season. Both Olson and Hayes were selected to play in the 2020 Top Prospects Tournament earlier this week as members of the Frontier Division squad. Viktor Wennberg (Stockholm, Sweden) is ranked sixth in the NA3HL with a Goals-Against-Average (GAA) of 1.97 and a save percentage of 0.935. He has 19 wins in 25 appearances. Trevor Mellen (North Branch, MN) is 10-3-3-1 this season in the net and is eight in the NA3HL with a GAA of 2.20.

Missoula is led this season by defenseman Trevor Prince (Anchorage, AK) with 44 points, defenseman Connor Frye (Mansfield, TX) has dished out 30 assists and Cayce Balk (West Olive, MI) has scored 26 goals. Colorado goaltender Larkin Dolan is 5-11-0 on the season for coach Cliff Cook and a 4.11 GAA.

Henry Chavez, Brody Boyce, and Blake Nerney all scored goals as the Great Falls Americans edged the Missoula Junior Bruins 3-2 for their 13<sup>th</sup> road victory (30<sup>th</sup> overall) of the 2019-20 season on Friday night in the Garden City. Missouri native Blake Nerney broke the tie and scored the eventually game-winning tally with 4:09 remaining in the third period at Missoula's Glacier Ice Rink.

Great Falls and Missoula each created ten shots but no goals in the opening stanza as they played their first game of the season in Missoula, Montana.

In the second to last weekend of the regular season, the Americans and Bruins traded goals in the middle period. Great Falls' Henry Chavez scored his seventh goal of the season off the stick of Luke Richesin, who earned NA3HL Stars of the Week Honorable Mention honors for his play last week against the Yellowstone (WY) Quake, received his 14<sup>th</sup> assist on the power play scoring drive. The early lead would last just 16 seconds before the host team evened up the game on a Zane Cluphf slapshot. The forward Great Falls Americans Hockey

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from Lake Stevens, Washington accrued his 15<sup>th</sup> goal in his first season in a Bruins uniform as Missoula's first goal was set up by Bjorn Waugaman and Wyatt Ploot of Kalispell, Montana. Missoula amassed 19 shots while Great Falls took eight shots during the 20-minute stanza.

After the second intermission, Great Falls and Missoula each scored a goal early in the period. Bryson Fletcher's pass to Brody Boyce helped Great Falls reclaim the lead during the first 6:11. Missoula tied the contest 73 seconds later when Keegan Rosas found an open Cayce Balk for their second scoring drive in the game. Both squads skated until the final four minutes when Blake Nerney broke the tie for the game-winning score as Jack Olson and Nick Ramstad earned the assists. The visiting Americans controlled much of the offense during the final period as they took 19 of the 22 total shots.

Great Falls and Missoula each took over ten shots in two of the three periods. The Americans had 29 of their 37 in the first and third periods. Missoula had 29 before the second intermission but managed to attempt just three shots in the final period.

The fast-paced two-hour matchup saw three penalties called on each team that resulted in six minutes of time spent in the penalty box. The Americans were the only team that was successfully able to capitalize on the power play in the first period (1-for-3) while the Bruins couldn't find a way to turn their three power plays into scoring drives.

New York's Matt Maniglia gathered his first win of the season in three appearances. He allowed just one goal each in the final two periods of play to finish with 30 saves. Seth Daniel, the second-year goaltender on the roster Cliff Cook, Daniel's sixth loss in 15 tries came on home ice as he swatted away 34 of the 37 shot attempts.

**NEXT CONTEST:** After not having a home game in a month, the Great Falls Americans will play their final regular season contest in Great Falls against the #1 Bozeman Ice Dogs on Saturday, February 22<sup>nd</sup> with the puck slated to drop at 7:30PM on **HockeyTV**. Only one week remains in the regular season for the Frontier Division (the other divisions have one extra week to play) before the postseason starts. The Bozeman (Ice Dogs), Great Falls (Americans) and Sheridan (WY) Hawks have clinched three of the six playoff spots that begin with the Frontier Division Play-In Series the first week in March.

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