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Great Falls Americans Press Release

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Great Falls wins seventh straight contest with 4-2 win over Missoula

By Kevin Scott

Box Score	Game Sheet	League Scoreboard	Americans Team Statistics
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GREAT FALLS, Mont., October 25, 2020 — The 2020-21 Great Falls Americans are off to a fantastic start to the season as they have earned wins in each of their six contests coming into tonight's showdown with the Missoula Jr. Bruins for the first time since last February.

Goaltender Trever Mellen has won all seven contests this season including last Saturday's 5-4 win in a shootout for the Americans (7-0). The North Branch, Minnesota native has 206 saves and a save percentage of 0.941 and a Goals Against Average of 1.93, one of the highest in the NA3HL. Also leading the way for Coach Greg Sears' team is leading scorer is newcomer Alex Jackson, who leads the team in points (11) and goals scored (7). Returning defenseman Tommy Janes is the team leader with 7 assists to lead the Frontier Division leading Americans.

Meanwhile, the Missoula Junior Bruins (3-1-1), under new coach Emerson Etem, who has played with a handful of teams in the National Hockey League (NHL) begins his first season as the head mentor for the Bruins. Missoula had 9 returners from last season's 17-29-1-0 squad, who missed the playoffs. Great Falls won all six matchups last season while outscoring the Junior Bruins, 24-5. Two newcomers currently pace the 2020-21 team after five games with Liam Bland's ten points (8 goals, 2 assists) and Pablo Frank's seven points (3 goals, 4 assists). Just like Great Falls, the Bruins started the season with three straight games at home at the Glacier Ice Rink, with two back-to-back victories over the Yellowstone Quake and an overtime loss at the hands of reigning Frontier Division champion, Bozeman Ice Dogs. Their last game was two weeks ago when they downed the Helena Bighorns, 8-6.

Forward Jake Hayes earned assists on all four goals to help the Great Falls Americans, the top-ranked team in the Frontier Division, achieve a 4-2 victory over the Missoula Junior Bruins during Sunday evening's junior hockey contest at the Great Falls Ice Plex. Alex Jackson, Harley Nyhuis, Blake Nerney and Bryson Fletcher each racked one goal for the Americans. Kieran Christianson and Pablo Frank tallied the goals for the Bruins as they fell for the second time in five games.

The opening period remained scoreless until the final minute when Bryson Fletcher struck gold for the Americans thanks to help from forward Jake Hayes and defenseman Tommy Janes to put a tally before the first period expired. Both teams combined for 31 shots with one successful goal.

Canadian forward Kieran Christianson took 2:42 off the clock in the middle period before his shot sailed through Americans netminder Trever Mellen for the game-tying score. Returning defenseman Sam Skillestad and Trevor Prince each recorded their third assist of the season for first year coach Emerson Etem's squad. Six minutes later, Great Falls retook the lead as Blake Nerney racked up his second goal of the year with Jake Hayes collecting his second assist (4th overall) and Bryson Fletcher receiving the secondary assist on the power play opportunity. The Bruins outshot Great Falls in both periods to finish with 32 while Great Falls attempted 23.

Halfway through final period of regulation, Alex Jackson, the scoring leader for the Americans, netted his seventh successful scoring drive. Jake Hayes accrued his third assist of the contest and Brody Savoie added his second in four appearances as the Americans increased their lead to 3-1 over Missoula. The visiting team cut their deficit to 3-2 as Liam Bland's pass to Pablo Frank for the score three minutes after Great Falls chipped in their third tally. The Americans ensured their seventh consecutive win and kept their undefeated streak alive with a final goal by Harley Nyhuis set up by Jake Hayes and AJ Benit while the Bruins pulled their goalie to add another player on the ice in the final minute.

Missoula managed just two goals despite taking 44 shots after 60 minutes. Great Falls registered four goals on 33 shots.

The first meeting between these two clubs this season combined for 19 penalties resulting in 92 minutes in the sin bin. Great Falls' Blake Nerney scored the only successful power play opportunity of the contest in the second period with the host team going 1-for-8. Missoula could not find a way to take advantage of their six power play chances.

Trever Mellen took home his seventh consecutive victory for the Americans. The goaltender stopped 42 of the 44 shots allowed by Missoula's offense while allowing one goal each in the second and third periods. Missoula goaltender Maxim Currie, entering his first season with the Bruins, lost for the first time in three starts (2-1). The St. Albert, Alberta native now has a save percentage of 0.893 and 75 saves while giving up nine goals.

NOTE: Due to the severe winter weather conditions in Montana, the Great Falls Americans scheduled road game in Missoula, Montana on Saturday, October 24th against the Missoula Junior Bruins was postponed.

NEXT CONTEST: Great Falls will travel for just the second time in eight games when they head to Gillette, Wyoming for a two-game series against the Wild on Friday and Saturday, October 30-31 at 7:05PM each night. Tune into [HockeyTV](#) for all of the streaming coverage for all home and away contests this season.

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