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Great Falls Americans Press Release

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Great Falls ends 2020 on a winning note, blanks Butte 7-0

By Kevin Scott

Box Score	Game Sheet	League Scoreboard	Americans Team Statistics
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GREAT FALLS, Mont., December 31, 2020 — After an 11-day Christmas break, the Great Falls Americans (15-5-0-0), now back in first place two points ahead 30-28) of runner-up Sheridan (WY) Hawks at 14-1-0-0, were looking to continue to maintain their winning ways after starting the 2020-21 campaign by winning their first ten contests before a November 20th setback against the Missoula Junior Bruins (4-2 loss). That game was played at the Helena Ice Arena (home of the Helena Bighorns) due to strict COVID-19 restrictions in Missoula, Montana. Since

November 20th, the Americans have gone just 3-5 (not counting tonight) with the last victory coming in Gillette, WY by edging the Gillette Wild, 4-3 on December 18th.

The #8 Butte Cobras (3-19-1-0) came to town to close out 2020 for a Thursday night affair in Great Falls on New Year's Eve. Entering tonight, the Americans were 3-0 against Butte as they opened the season back in October with two wins over the Cobras and escaped with a 3-2 overtime win on November 27th. Coming into Thursday's meeting, the Americans have outscored the Cobras 17-5.

How has Butte fared this season? The Cobras, coached by Chris Shadow, have had another rebuilding season as they started the year with a 0-12-0-0 record before picking up their first victory last month with a narrow 6-5 win over the Bozeman Ice Dogs in a game that was played in Helena, Montana. Since their first victory, they have won twice in nine games with both victories coming against the Missoula Junior Bruins in December.

The Great Falls Americans scored multiple goals in each period to blank the visiting Butte Cobras, 7-0 on New Year's Eve at the Great Falls Ice Plex. This was the second shutout of the season for the Americans. The first shutout came against the Gillette (WY) Wild (3-0 win) on October 16th in Great Falls. Bryson Fletcher scored two goals and dished out one assist while netminder Trever Mellen had an impressive 31 saves.

Micah Serino chipped in his ninth goal of the season and teammate Garret Weisenberger collected his fourth goal during first period action as the home team took the early lead 2-0 after the first twenty minutes. Jake Hayes earned the assist on Serino's scoring drive six minutes into the period while Tommy Janes and Connor Doyle set up the goal for Weisenberger's score that occurred with 12:49 remaining. The penalty-free first stanza saw Great Falls and Butte combine for 25 shots-on-goal.

Great Falls started out with two successful scoring drives seven seconds apart eight minutes into the second period to increase the lead to 4-0. Henry Chavez and Jake Hayes, two returning forwards from last year's squad, tallied the goals for coach Greg Sears' squad. Kellen Harris, Daniel Crutcher, Micah Serino, and Bryson Fletcher each recorded an assist. Bryson Fletcher, a forward from Rancho Santa Margarita, California, secured his sixth goal in 18 contests with 7:40 remaining in the period off the pass from Connor Doyle via Harley Nyhuis. Doyle assisted for the second time in as many periods during the power play for Great Falls. The first penalty of the game was costly for the Cobras as the Americans stretched their advantage to 5-0. Great Falls' offense dominated after the first intermission accruing 32 shots while holding Butte to 11 for the second consecutive period.

Late in the third stanza, Bryson Fletcher drove around one Butte defender and scored the sixth goal for the Americans as the host team's offense continued to impress. Two minutes later, the Americans added their seventh goal when Brindamour Beard, playing in his first game for Great Falls, scored the final goal over Butte netminder Skyler Coard with 5:13 left in the contest.

The top team in the Frontier Division doubled the shots over the eighth-place team, 67-31 with 32 shots coming during the middle period.

Each team had two power play opportunities, but Great Falls was the only team that took advantage and scored against their Montana opponent. Great Falls went 1-for-2. All four total penalties came after the first intermission. Great Falls and Butte committed two penalties each accounting for four minutes in the penalty box.

Bryson Fletcher scored three points for Great Falls (two goals, one assist) and Connor Doyle accumulated two assists for the winning squad. Great Falls goaltender, Trever Mellen, swatted away all 31 shots sent by the Cobras offense. Mellen, who started out with ten straight wins, has a 13-3-0-0 record in 16 games played.

Butte netminder Skyler Coard, a North Carolina product, finished with 60 saves but gave up seven goals. Coard, who started the season with the NA3HL's Louisiana Drillers, is now 1-4-0-0 including three losses in three games for Butte.

NOTE: The last game that concluded before the holiday break, the Great Falls Americans dropped to second place behind the Sheridan (WY) Hawks but after tonight's contest, the Americans are back on top with 30 points. Sheridan, who defeated their Wyoming rivals, the Yellowstone Quake 9-5 tonight in Cody, Wyoming, now has 28 points for second place.

NEXT CONTEST: The Great Falls Americans begin 2021 with a New Year's Night (January 1st) contest at home against the Missoula Junior Bruins. The action at the Great Falls Ice Plex starts at 7:30PM (MST). Great Falls ends their three-game homestand with the Helena Bighorns coming to the Great Falls Ice Plex on Saturday, January 2nd with the puck dropping at 7:30PM (MST).

[HockeyTV](#), which can be found on a variety of devices including some Smart TV's, Roku, Amazon Fire, Apple TV, Android devices, and web browsers including Google Chrome, FireFox and Safari, airs all home and away games for each team in the North American 3 Hockey League with a paid subscription.

[Click here](#) if you would like more information about subscribing to Hockey TV (All Access). This is the only way fans can view the games since spectators are still not yet allowed into the home games in Great Falls due to COVID-19 restrictions put in place by the Cascade County Health Board.

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