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Great Falls Americans Press Release

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Henningsgard's shootout goal lifts Americans to victory over Helena

By Kevin Scott

Box Score	Game Sheet	League Scoreboard	Americans Team Statistics
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GREAT FALLS, Mont., February 27, 2021 — There is nothing better than a rivalry game; just ask team members of the #2 Great Falls Americans (22-11-2-0) and the #5 Helena Bighorns (15-16-1-1) as they battled it out on the ice for the sixth time this season during Saturday's NA3HL contest. Great Falls held a 3-2 series advantage before tonight's contest.

Great Falls' closest opponent is Helena, and those two squads are separated by just 90 miles on Interstate 15.

Since their last matchup on January 2nd where Great Falls picked up a 4-2 win, the Americans have won just five of their last 12 contests. The Bighorns have fared better with nine victories, three regulation losses and an overtime setback.

This week, Great Falls edged the third-ranked Missoula Junior Bruins in Missoula on Friday night, 2-1 with all three scoring opportunities coming in the second period. The Helena Bighorns made the short trip (60 miles) to Butte, Montana to face the Cobras on Friday but the junior hockey contest ended up not being played as some bad ice conditions inside the Butte Community Ice Center delayed the contest for an hour and 40-minutes before the league officials postponed it for a later date.

Jackson Henningsgard, one of the Frontier Division's Stars of the Week last week, had the only successful score during the shootout to lift the #2 Great Falls Americans to a 2-1 victory over the #5 Helena Bighorns during the final home contest of the season for the Americans. The 675 spectators saw the Americans taste victory for the 22nd time this season.

The Bighorns produced the first score of the game nearly 17 minutes into the first period. Johnny Baird's pass to Alex Bailey gave the visiting team the early lead and the only score from either squad during the first twenty minutes.

Defense was the key ingredient in the middle stanza as both offenses were shut out despite taking 31 shots-on-goal. Great Falls racked up 30 shots after two periods while Helena wasn't far behind with 29.

Great Falls bounced back and evened up the score (1-1) when Daniel Crutcher lit up the lamp as Jay Alford and Connor Chesner earned the assists. The game-tying goal came 3:23 into the third frame. Crutcher from North Pole, Alaska, scored his fourth goal of the season.

A five-minute overtime was needed as neither squad was able to find the back of the net.

Despite nine shot attempts, Great Falls and Helena headed for a shootout as both defenses held up after the extra frame.

Thomas Gazich and Jackson Henningsgard, two of the newest team members for Great Falls, had their moment to shine in the shootout as they went one-on-one with Helena goaltender Anthony Adleman. Gazich was unsuccessful but Henningsgard got the puck in the net for the game-winning score. Helena forwards Andrew MacCallum and Gavyn Galloway and defenseman Dylan Ferreira failed to produce any goals against Americans standout netminder Trever Mellen.

The rivalry contest saw seven minor infractions resulting in 14 minutes of penalty time between these two competitors. Each team couldn't convert their three power play chances into goals.

The winning goaltender was Trever Mellen (17-6-1-0), who gathered his 17th win by redirecting 35 of the 36 shots made by Helena. Anthony Adelman added his first shootout loss of the season, finished with 54 saves in 65 minutes of action. The Wisconsin native dropped his record to 12-9-1-1.

NOTES: Tonight's contest would be the final time the Great Falls Americans fans would see their team until the 2021 NA3HL Playoffs begin in April as the Americans will play their final four games in three weeks on the road with two separate stops in Helena (March 5th and 13th) along with a March 6th date with the Bozeman Ice Dogs and the season finale against the Missoula Junior Bruins in Missoula on March 20th.

NEXT CONTEST: The Great Falls Americans will see action next weekend where they will travel to Helena and Bozeman, Montana. On Friday, March 5th, the Americans will make the trek to Helena where the puck will drop at 7:05PM (MST) live from the Helena Ice Arena. The #6 Bozeman Ice Dogs (12-17-2-1) will play host to the Americans at Haynes Pavilion on Saturday, March 6th with a 7:30PM start time. [HockeyTV](#) will provide the NA3HL online streaming coverage for both nights.

UPDATE (03/04/21): The Great Falls Americans have postponed their upcoming road hockey games that were supposed to occur the weekend of March 5-6, 2021 against the Helena Bighorns and the Bozeman Ice Dogs due to an unspecified illness.

Both contests will be made up prior to the 2021 NA3HL Playoffs, which start on April 1, 2021.

The next scheduled game is Saturday (March 13th) when the Americans make the 90-mile bus trip to Helena, Montana to face the Bighorns. The action at the Helena Ice Arena is slated to start at 7:05PM. Catch the action on [Hockey TV](#) or follow along on the [game stats](#) during the game.

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