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**Great Falls Americans Press Release**

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**NA3HL Frontier Semi-Finals: Americans tame the Wild, 2-0**

**By Kevin Scott**

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GILLETTE, Wyo., April 1, 2021 — The North American 3 Hockey League's (NA3HL) Frontier Division finished up their 2020-21 regular season on March 27th after the COVID-19 pandemic postponed or cancelled many of their games forcing the season to end a few weeks later than normal so that most of the games could be made up.

When the regular season finished, only the top four teams (#1 Sheridan (WY) Hawks (39-1-0-0), #2 Great Falls Americans (28-11-2-0), #3 Gillette (WY) Wild (23-16-1-1), and the Missoula Jr. Bruins, 21-17-2-0) continued their season

advanced to the playoffs for a best-of-three Frontier Divisional Semi-Finals that begin this week.

Both the Sheridan Hawks and the Great Falls Americans have the home ice advantage in both of their respective best-of-three semifinal series. #2 Great Falls faces the #3 Gillette Wild and the top-seeded Sheridan Hawks will look to down the #4 Missoula Junior Bruins. (NOTE: It was announced earlier that the Bruins will not be back in Missoula, Montana starting with the 2021-22 season due to ongoing challenges including a non-renewed contract with the Missoula Youth Hockey Association Board. [Click here](#) to view the story).

Great Falls came out on top in three of their four meetings with Gillette this season. The series saw all games ended with a one-point separation except for the 3-0 opening game win by the Americans back in October. The Americans escaped with a 5-4 win in a shootout in their second October date with the Wyoming club. The two games in December saw Great Falls claim a 4-3 decision before losing their head-to-head finale 7-6 before the Christmas break.



The Americans, under the direction of third-year head coach and General Manager, Greg Sears, fared better while away from the Great Falls Ice Plex by winning 15 of their 19 games. Great Falls registered 12 victories with seven of their nine setbacks coming in regulation at home. Sears ended the regular season with 104 wins in three-years at the helm for the Americans. (Please [click here](#) for the news story from the local ABC/FOX Montana affiliate).

The Wild have a mentor that is familiar with Great Falls in first year head coach Ethan Hayes, who was an assistant coach for the Americans for the 2018-19 and the 2019-20 seasons. Gillette, one of three Wyoming teams in the NA3HL along with Sheridan (Hawks) and

the Yellowstone (Cody) Quake, compiled a regular season total of 23-15-1-1 that brought home 15 wins at home.

A pair of forwards each scored one goal as the #2 Great Falls Americans earned a 2-0 shutout road victory over the third-ranked Gillette Wild during Game 1 of the 2021 NA3HL Frontier Divisional Semi-Finals on Thursday night in Wyoming. Micah Serino and Jackson Henningsgard racked up the successful scoring drives for Great Falls. Great Falls takes a 1-0 series lead with a chance on Friday night at home to clinch the series and move on to the Frontier Divisional Finals next week.

Both teams put up a combined 28 shots during the first twenty minutes but only one goal was allowed by the visiting Americans. Micah Serino's shot lit up the lamp with 7:58 remaining in the first period. Harley Nyhuis and Tyler Lorring provided the assists off the first scoring drive of the game.

After a scoreless middle period that led to just 24 shots-on-goal being taken by both squads, the teams returned from the second intermission ready to finish strong.

Neither Gillette nor Great Falls put the biscuit in the basket for the first 18 minutes of the third period. Jackson Henningsgard's empty net score with 1:14 left ensure that the Americans needed just one more victory to move on to the Frontier Divisional Finals next week.

Despite scoring a pair of goals, Great Falls was outshot by Gillette, 48-31.

The Americans and Wild each were whistled for just four infractions with 27 minutes spent away from the ice. There were no power play opportunities that resulted from the penalties.

Trever Mellen earned the win in the net for the Americans. The Minnesota netminder redirected all 48 shots that he encountered on the night. This was his 20<sup>th</sup> win in 27 appearances this season for Great Falls (20-6-1-0). Cole Wheaton of Calgary, Alberta fell for the ninth time this season (9-8-1-0) but not before acquiring 29 saves for the Wild.

**NOTES:** The other semi-final series that features the #1 Sheridan (WY) Hawks with an NA3HL leading record of 39-1-0-0 will tangle on the ice with the #4 Missoula Junior Bruins (21-17-2-0) with their best-of-three series set to begin on Friday (April 2<sup>nd</sup>) at 7:30PM (MST) in Wyoming. The second game and an if necessary third contest will also be played at the Whitney Rink in the M&M's Center in Sheridan at 7:30PM (Saturday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>) and 4:00PM (Sunday, April 4<sup>th</sup>).

It was also announced earlier this week that first-year Great Falls American Assistant Coach Kirk Golden will assume the role of Head Coach and General Manager of the rival, Butte Cobras when the Americans season concludes. (Please [click here](#) to view the story).

**NEXT CONTEST:** The best-of-three Frontier Divisional Semi-Finals between Great Falls and Gillette will continue to roll on with Games Two and Three being played at the Great Falls Ice Plex on Friday, April 2<sup>nd</sup> and an if necessary third game on Saturday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>. The home games are set to begin at 7:30PM (MST).

The two winners of the Semi-Final round will meet in the 2021 Frontier Divisional Finals (best-of-three series) slated for April 8-11, 2021 with the top-seed getting the home ice advantage.

The five-division (Central, East, Frontier, South and West) winners plus a wild card team that has the highest winning percentage that lost in Divisional Finals will then head to the [2021 Fraser Cup \(National\) Tournament](#) this year held at the St. Peters Rec Plex in St. Peters, Missouri on April 15-19<sup>th</sup>. The national tournament includes two round-robin contests for each of the six teams followed by two semi-finals and the championship. The Fraser Cup will also coincide with this year's [Top Prospects Tournament](#) that will take place on Sunday and Monday (April 18-19). Schedules and rosters have not been announced by the league yet for the Top Prospects Tournament. Please [click here](#) for more information about the playoff format, Top Prospects Tourney, and the upcoming NA3HL Draft on April 28<sup>th</sup>.

To view the 2021 Playoff schedules for the 2021 Fraser Cup Championship tournament and the Top Prospects Tournament being played in Missouri, please [click here](#). [HockeyTV](#) provides the full coverage of every NA3HL playoff game via their paid streaming service.

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