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**Great Falls Americans Press Release**

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**NA3HL Frontier Finals: Americans outlast the Hawks; set up Game 3 Saturday night**

By Kevin Scott

<a href="#">Box Score</a>	<a href="#">Game Sheet</a>	<a href="#">League Scoreboard (Playoffs)</a>	<a href="#">Americans Team Statistics</a>
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SHERIDAN, Wyo., April 9, 2021 — The #1 Sheridan (WY) Hawks (42-1-0-0) looked like a team that would be hard to beat on Friday evening during Game 1 of the best-of-three Frontier Divisional Finals in Great Falls.

Nathan Gilleshammer scored two goals while teammate Simon Herz added a goal and dished out two assists as the Hawks scored the first three goals on their way to a 4-1 victory over the #2 Great Falls Americans to send both teams to Wyoming for Game 2 ready with Sheridan on the verge to try to clinch the series.

On Saturday night, Great Falls was trying to escape with a road win to keep the series alive and play another night. They did just that.

The second-ranked Great Falls Americans took a 5-1 lead over the NA3HL's best team, the Sheridan (WY) Hawks after two periods to outlast them, 7-3 during Game 2 of the 2021 NA3H Frontier Division Finals Friday evening in Sheridan, Wyoming. Micah Serino and Bryson Fletcher each scored twice, Thomas Gazich recorded four assists and goaltender Ben Winkler made 42 saves to help the Americans tie the series 1-1 and ensure a Game 3 on Saturday night. The winner of Saturday's contest gets the automatic berth to the 2021 Fraser Cup (National) Tournament next week in St. Peters, Missouri.



Great Falls started out the first period by scoring two of the three goals. Micah Serino scored the first of his two goals 8:24 into the stanza. Sheridan scored 44 seconds after Serino's goal as Nick Wieben and Brice French set up Nathan Gilleshammer's third goal in two games. Later in the frame, Alex Jackson scored his second goal of the playoffs. Thomas Gazich assisted on both scoring plays along with one assist apiece by Tommy Janes and Lucas Gudz. The shots were even as both teams racked up 13.

After the first intermission, Great Falls outscored the host team, 3-0. Micah Serino, Garret Weisenburger, and Bryson Fletcher all lit up the lamp for coach Greg Sears' squad as they took a surprising 5-1 lead with one regulation period left. Thomas Gazich assisted on two scoring opportunities, Zach Crawley, Hunter Maschke and Alex Jackson also assisted. Lucas Gudz chipped in his second assist in two periods. The Americans took four more shots (15-11) than the Hawks did in the middle period.

During the third period, Great Falls added two more goals to increase their lead to 7-1. Two goals were awarded to the visiting team six minutes after the second intermission and both scoring drives came 20

seconds apart. Jake Hayes scored on an unassisted tally while the Hawks were in the penalty box followed by a second power play goal 20 seconds later when Micah Serino and Henry Chavez saw their pass to Bryson Fletcher become successful in the net. Before the game concluded, the Hawks cut the deficit to four with a pair of goals during the last 10:57 but they would get no closer. Brice French and Jacob Cummings tallied the power play goals for coach Andy Scheib's team. The assists went to Jacob Cummings, Nathan Gilleshammer, Blake Billings, and Nick Wieben.

Great Falls was held to just seven shots in third to finish with 35 on the night after taking 28 in the first and second periods. Sheridan attempted 21 shots in the final period to finish Game 2 with 45.

Eight minor penalties were whistled on Great Falls that resulted in 16 minutes spent off the ice while Sheridan committed nine, but the home team spent 39 minutes of penalty time after having a major and a game misconduct.

Ben Winkler accrued his first playoff win (after an 3-2 overtime loss to the Gillette (WY) Wild last Friday in the Frontier Divisional Semi-Finals in his first appearance in the postseason) as a member of the Great Falls Americans. Winkler swatted away 42 shots and allowed three goals.

Sheridan's Christian Wong-Ramos got the start again tonight after the 4-1 road win last night in Montana but lasted just 21 minutes after the Americans gained a 3-0 advantage. He was replaced by backup James Downie, who took the loss and ended the night with 16 saves.

**NEXT CONTEST:** The three-game series comes to an end on Saturday, April 10<sup>th</sup> with the third and decisive Game 3 being played at Sheridan's Whitney Rink in the M&M's Center with a start time of 7:30PM. [HockeyTV](#) will provide live coverage with the winning team moving on the Fraser Cup Tournament next week.

The five-division (Central, East, Frontier, South and West) winners plus a wild card team that has the highest winning percentage that loses in the Divisional Finals will 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 contests.

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 playoff action.

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