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Great Falls Americans Press Release

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Americans remain perfect with home win over Bozeman

By Kevin Scott

Box Score	Game Sheet	League Scoreboard	Americans Team Statistics
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GREAT FALLS, Mont., November 7, 2020 — Between Mother Nature and the world-wide Coronavirus (COVID-19), sporting events around the world including the North American 3 Hockey League (NA3HL) have had tough times getting their games completed.

The Great Falls Americans, the only team in the Frontier Division, without a blemish on their record (8-0-0-0), should be playing their eleventh game of their 43-game schedule this week but instead they are participating in just their eighth regular season contest. Their October 24th game in Missoula, Montana was called off due to extreme snowy and icy road conditions (although both teams were able to play in Great Falls the following day for a single game). Last weekend (October 30-31), the two-game series in Gillette, Wyoming against the Gillette Wild was postponed due to COVID-19 issues in Wyoming.

Great Falls currently has won all eight of their contests to begin their 2020-21 season. All the wins came in the month of October with Great Falls defeating Butte (Cobras) and Gillette (Wild) twice and one victory apiece against the Helena Bighorns, Bozeman Ice Dogs, and the Missoula Junior Bruins. Great Falls has had six of their previous seven games in the friendly confines of the Great Falls Ice Plex. Their only (successful) road trip was back on October 10th (4-2 win for the Americans) when they traveled to tonight's opponent, the defending Frontier Division champion, Bozeman Ice Dogs, who have won six of their ten games with eight returning members from last year's squad coming back. Butte's October 3rd contest in Great Falls was a home game for the Cobras in the official stats as they started the season with some rink playing surface issues inside the Butte Community Ice Center.

The Bozeman Ice Dogs (6-4-0-0) have won four straight leading up to tonight's contest with the Americans after starting out at 2-3 to begin the new season. Coach Rainer Londino-Green's squad split their series with the Sheridan (WY) Hawks in the first two games of their season and have enjoyed single victories over Missoula, Helena and Butte, two wins and one setback to the Yellowstone (WY) Quake and a loss to Great Falls in Bozeman on October 10th.

Will Great Falls remain undefeated or will Bozeman spoil their chances for an eighth straight victory?

The Great Falls Americans took advantage of three of their power plays, five different players wound up in the scoring column and another impressive outing by netminder Trever Mellen to easily defeat the Bozeman Ice Dogs for the second time this season. The 5-1 victory saw a low turnout of fans at the Great Falls Ice Plex as Great Falls was blanketed with a few inches of snow on Saturday evening that made traveling treacherous.

Great Falls scored first and last in the opening period and took the early lead against Bozeman. Minnesota native Cole Komarek, in his first year with the Americans, scored the first goal for either team just 32 seconds into the contest. His fifth tally of the season was assisted by Alex Jackson and Jake Hayes. The Ice Dogs waited until there was 8:47 remaining to even the score (1-1) with assistance from Hunter Maschke and Luke McKay, Kadyn Fennell found the open net over Great Falls starting goaltender Trever Mellen. Seven minutes later, Henry Chavez put the host team back out in front before the end of the stanza as the Americans were on a power play. Connor Doyle and Tommy Janes, who this week was named as an Honorable Mention candidate for the Bauer Hockey Defenseman of the Month by the NA3HL, each assisted on the second tally of the game. The Americans offense took control for most of the period by attempting 20 of the 27 total shots.

Just like the first period, Great Falls scored during the first minute of the middle period. Forward Jake Hayes secured his third goal with helpers from Alex Jackson and Cole Komarek on the Americans second successful power play opportunity to increase the lead for the Frontier Division's top-ranked team. Coach Greg Sears' squad was not done scoring yet as two Great Falls Americans players earned their first goals in a Great Falls uniform during a four-minute scoring span. Forward Garret Weisenburger and defenseman Connor Doyle each lit up the lamp before the second intermission with assists going to Kellen Harris, Blake Nerney, Jake Hayes, and Alex Jackson. Doyle's power play goal helped put the game out of reach at 5-1. After Doyle's scoring drive, Bozeman replaced starting goalie AJ Cohen with backup Evan Wittchow for the rest of the junior hockey contest. The Americans racked up a 4-goal advantage heading into the final stanza. The host team added 27 shots and continued to dominate on the offensive side after forty minutes of play by leading 47-12 in the shots-on-goal category.

Both teams skated during the last period by taking 11 shots apiece but could not find a way to put the biscuit in the basket.

The Americans continued to find numerous ways to win as they scored five goals on 58 shots doubling the Ice Dogs' output of one goal on 23 shots. Great Falls also made 60% (3-for-5) of their power play chances while Bozeman failed to convert their only power play opportunity. The Americans and Ice Dogs' second meeting saw 13 infractions accounting for 70 total minutes of off-ice time.

Trever Mellen remained stellar in the net for the winning side. The second-year goaltender swatted away 22 of the 23 shots that the Bozeman offense produced and picked up his eighth consecutive victory (8-0). Mellen continues to be one of the goaltending leaders in the league as he was named as one of the twelve goalies in the 31-team league that received Honorable Mention as the Vaughn NA3HL Goaltender of the Month for October. Bozeman's goaltending duo of AJ Cohen and Evan Wittchow didn't fare to well against a tough Great Falls offense. They combined for 53 saves but allowed five goals between them. Cohen took the loss for the first time in three tries after coming over earlier this season from the NA3HL West Division's New Ulm (MN) Steel.

NEXT CONTEST: The Americans are scheduled for a two-game road trip to Cody, Wyoming next weekend (November 13-14) for a 7:30PM performance each night at the Riley Arena. Fans can stream the game on [HockeyTV](#) as they can do for the entire season.

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