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Great Falls Americans Press Release

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Late goals spark Americans to victory over the Cobras, 6-4

By Kevin Scott

Box Score	Game Sheet	League Scoreboard	Americans Team Statistics
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GREAT FALLS, Mont., October 28, 2021 — Last Friday (October 22nd), the #3 Great Falls Americans (7-3-2-1) finally made their home debut after being on the road for the first six weeks of the season due to ice issues at the Great Falls Ice Plex that prolonged their opener from taking place.

The #6 Butte Cobras (3-9-2-0) came to town for the home season opener, and it was the home team coming away with an easy 4-1 win. The battle of last year's Americans coaching staff met for the first time this season as opponents. Current Great Falls Americans Coach Greg Sears' squad outplayed former Americans Associate Coach and current Cobras head coach, Kirk Golden's squad throughout the contest. After Butte led 1-0 early in the first period, Great Falls scored four unanswered goals in the first and second periods to declare victory. Great Falls was led by Jackson Henningsgard with one goal and one assist while starting netminder Ben Winkler stopped 27 of 28 shots. Earlier this week, Henningsgard and Winkler were named as Frontier Division Honorable Mention Stars of the Week (SOTW) for their play last week ([see article](#)).

In their second meeting of the season on Thursday evening, Great Falls was looking for a similar result against the Butte Junior A team. With a pair of road victories against the Sheridan (WY) Hawks the week before, the Americans are currently riding a three-game win streak and looking to make it four with another win with the home fans in attendance.

The #3 Great Falls Americans and the #6 Butte Cobras traded goals during the first two periods before the Great Falls Americans pulled away during the final 12 minutes to earn a 6-4 hard-fought victory during Thursday's NA3HL junior hockey action at the Great Falls Ice Plex. Forwards Daniel Crutcher and Tae Evans each scored twice to lead Great Falls to victory. With the win, Great Falls won their fourth consecutive game after winning just three of their nine road games to begin the 2021-22 season.

Although many shots were taken in the opening stanza, only the Butte Cobras responded with a goal of their own. Luke Schleusner's pass to Nick Bradshaw for the tally with six minutes left gave the visiting

team the one-goal lead going into the locker room after the first period. Cade Wessman received the secondary assist. A total of 25 shots created just one tally with each team being called for one infraction apiece.

After a slow start for the Americans in the first stanza, the Americans scored twice during the first eight minutes into the second frame. Thomas Dalsin, a first-year player for Great Falls, recorded his first score while Thomas Gazich added his eighth of the season during a quick two-goal scoring drive during a 44 second span that gave Great Falls a 2-1 advantage. But the Cobras would bounce back as Nick Bradshaw gathered his second goal (sixth overall) of the game to even the game at 2-2. Three minutes later, Butte regained the lead (3-2) as Luke Schleusner created his second assist of the night when his pass to Fabian Vik lit up the lamp. Vik, a Norwegian, secured his seventh goal with 5:51 left. Before the second intermission, Tae Evans made sure the Cobras wouldn't take the lead before the second break. His fifth goal was assisted by Hunter Maschke, who added his eighth assist and AJ Benit, who provided his eighth helper. Six different Americans players earned assists in the second including Tyler Sunagel, Noel Rahn, Daniel Crutcher, Petr Van Voorhis, Hunter Maschke and AJ Benit. Meanwhile, Cade Wessman, Caleb Manson, Ross Biggerstaff and Luke Schleusner assisted on Bradshaw and Vik's goals. The home team outshot the visitors 25-15.

Three goals were tallied eleven minutes into the final period with Great Falls finding the back of the net twice during a 37-second span. Butte's Cade Wessman put the biscuit in the basket first as the Cobras capitalized on their second power play scoring opportunity of the night (the first was Nick Bradshaw's second goal on the night in the middle period). Ross Biggerstaff collected his second assist in as many periods and Nick Bradshaw accumulated his first and fifth overall for the returning forward from Jefferson, South Dakota. The visiting team led 4-3 but their lead quickly evaporated as the Americans finished the game strong on the offensive end by scoring the final three goals to pick up their seventh victory of the season. Daniel Crutcher scored two goals and Tae Evans tallied his second of the game. Micah Serino and Henry Fusco, two returners from last year's playoff squad, assisted on both of Crutcher's scoring plays. Hunter Maschke and Thomas Gazich assisted on Evans' lamplighter.

A 44-shot difference in shot attempts (68-24) was a key to success for the Americans. The host team attempted over 20 shots in each period while holding Butte to 15 in the second period.

Just ten minor penalties between these two clubs were issued with six of them coming in the middle stanza. Two of the Cobras power plays were converted into goals (2-for-4). Great Falls failed to get their six power play chances in the net.

Will Simpson of Anchorage, Alaska picked up this third win in six games played (3-2-0-1 record) as the goaltender for the third-place team in the NA3HL's Frontier Division. Simpson had 20 saves on the night for a total of 155 saves for the season. Caleb Cross was flawless in the net during the first period but allowed three goals each in the second and third periods. The Minnesota native accrued 62 saves for his fifth regulation loss (3-5-1-0 record).

NOTES: Due to a scheduling conflict with the University of Providence (MT) men's hockey game at the Great Falls Ice Plex on Friday, October 29, 2021, and the unavailability of referees for a 12:30PM start, the Great Falls Americans home hockey contest against the Bozeman Ice Dogs has been changed to **9:30PM (MST)** on Friday.

The University of Providence (UP) Argonauts men's hockey game is scheduled to play the University of Mary at 7:00PM (MST) on Friday at the Great Falls Ice Plex. The Americans will play right after the

University of Providence game concludes approximately between 9:30PM and 10:00PM.

Jeff Heimel, UP's head coach, was in attendance scouting both squads before his home game against the University of Mary prior to Friday's Americans game against the Bozeman Ice Dogs.

Also, as the only game in the Frontier Division tonight, the Great Falls Americans (temporarily) moved up a spot in the standings to #3 with the win.

NEXT CONTEST: The next opponent for the Great Falls Americans is the Bozeman Ice Dogs, who will be in town for a single game starting around 9:30PM (or 20 minutes after the Argonauts game) at the Great Falls Ice Plex on Friday, October 29th. See the above notes for more details. Great Falls will then travel to Butte, Montana for the first time this season when the Cobras will host them at the Butte Community Ice Center for a 7:00PM (MST) matchup on Saturday, October 30th. [HockeyTV](#) will provide the live coverage each night from Great Falls and Butte, Montana.

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