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Great Falls Americans Press Release

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Great Falls comeback fall short; Bozeman wins in shootout, 4-3

By Kevin Scott

Box Score	Game Sheet	League Scoreboard	Americans Team Statistics
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BOZEMAN, Mont., September 18, 2021 — In the third game of the 2021-22 season, the Great Falls Americans traveled to Bozeman, Montana looking for their second win in three games against the host team, the Bozeman Ice Dogs.

Great Falls is 1-1-0-1 on the season by splitting a pair of road games last weekend against the Yellowstone (WY) Quake. On Friday, September 10th, Great Falls was on the short end of the stick (5-3 loss) as Thomas Gazich (1 goal, 1 assist), Micah Serino (1 goal), and Henry Fusco (1 goal) all got into the scoring column for the visiting Montana team. Goaltenders Will Simpson and Ben Winkler combined for 33 saves. On Saturday, September 11th, Great Falls trailed throughout before tying the contest before the third period concluded. Thomas Gazich added the game-winning score in a 4-3 victory. Zac Hattan stopped 33 of the 36 shots in his first appearance of the season after having a great year last season in an Americans uniform.

Meanwhile, Bozeman (2-0-1-0) also split a pair of games against the Butte Cobras to start their season. Bozeman fell to the Cobras in overtime on September 11th 2-1 in Butte. Michael Schwartz scored the lone goal and Collin Soderholm recorded 43 saves for the Ice Dogs. Both squads played again, this time in Bozeman, on September 17th where Bozeman sought revenge and bested Butte, 6-1. Bozeman had six different players score goals while Liam Scott chipped in 14 saves.

During the 2020-21 season, Great Falls was victorious in three of their four meetings (3-0-1-0). The season series saw each team win in an extra frame while Great Falls outscored Bozeman, 13-7.

The Great Falls Americans were trailing the Bozeman Ice Dogs 3-0 in the second stanza and scored three consecutive goals to send the NA3HL junior hockey contest into overtime. After a scoreless five-minute extra period, the Bozeman Ice Dogs prevailed in a 4-3 shootout victory during Saturday's hockey contest at Haynes Pavilion in Bozeman, Montana. Ian Bowman and Nick Stevens outscored Great Falls 2-0 to claim their second win of the season.

Both teams played evenly during the opening stanza until the final five minutes where the home team scored twice in 25 seconds. Ian Bowman and Luke Hartmark scored the goals for coach Mike Perkins' squad. The Ice Dogs, with the roster full of many California and Colorado players, received assists from Nick Stevens, Forrest Musselman, Ian Bowman, and Cole Busher. The two-goal advantage saw Bozeman out-shoot Great Falls, 9-4 before the second intermission.

Early in the middle period, Bozeman's Luke Busher secured his second goal of the season on a play set up by Michael Schwartz and Luke Hartmark as the Ice Dogs increased the lead to 3-0. The Americans prevented a shutout as they cut the deficit to 3-1 midway through the second with AJ Benit's pass to Henry Fusco for the successful score over netminder Collin Soderholm for Fusco's second goal and Benit's second assist in three games.

As the second intermission ended, the Great Falls Americans offense needed eleven minutes into the final period of regulation to score twice to tie the contest at 3-3. Forwards Hunter Maschke and Dawson Bunch each registered their first goals of the season. Maschke's goal with ten minutes remaining off the stick of AJ Benit for his second assist of the night and third overall came on the power play. Minutes later, Bunch with help from Aaron Leaf scored the game-tying goal that eventually sent the game into an extra period.

The five-minute overtime came and went with neither squad having success on the offensive attack. A shootout was needed to declare a winning team.

Ian Bowman, a new player who was added to the Bozeman roster on Friday, and Nick Stevens scored the goals to help the Ice Dogs to their first victory over Great Falls and second victory of the season during the shootout. Great Falls' Sam Duelmier, Thomas Gazich and Hunter Maschke failed to convert their scoring plays for Great Falls.

Bozeman accrued 35 shot attempts on Americans goaltender Will Simpson with 14 coming in the second stanza. Great Falls finished with 29 with 26 coming before overtime.

A total of ten penalties between these two clubs resulted in 20 minutes of penalty time spent in the sin bin. The Americans spent just six minutes off the ice while the Ice Dogs infractions cost them 14 minutes. Hunter Maschke's third period goal that cut the deficit to 3-2 was the only successful power play opportunity in the contest.

Minnesota native Collin Soderholm picked up his first victory on Saturday night for the Ice Dogs (1-0-1-0). After coming off a 43 save performance against the Butte Cobras last week, he swatted away 26 of the 29 shots created by Great Falls. Will Simpson (0-1-0-1) completed his second game for the Americans and has amassed 51 total saves. The Alaska native redirected 31 of the 34 shots during Saturday's action in Bozeman.

NEXT CONTEST: The Great Falls Americans remain on the road for the third consecutive week to start the 2021-22 season when they make the trip to Gillette, Wyoming for two games against the Wild on Friday and Saturday (September 24th and 25th). The action starts at 7:05PM (MST) each night from the Spirit Hall Ice Arena. Fans can catch all the action on the NA3HL streaming service, [HockeyTV](#) for both nights of action.

NOTE: The Great Falls Americans were scheduled to open up their home season against the Gillette Wild for a pair of games next weekend (September 24-25) but the Great Falls Ice Plex is getting repaired

as the cooling pipes under the ice were leaking before the season when they were putting the ice in ([see story](#)). Great Falls hasn't been able to practice in Great Falls and has had to utilize other area arenas to hone their skills. As of now, Great Falls will open their home season against the Helena Bighorns on Thursday, September 30th at 7:30PM (MST) if the repairs are finished.

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