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Great Falls Americans Press Release

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Helena remains undefeated after 17 games with 4-2 win over Great Falls

By Kevin Scott

Box Score	Game Sheet	League Scoreboard	Americans Team Statistics
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GREAT FALLS, Mont., November 14, 2021 — After a pair of victories last weekend against the #8 Sheridan (WY) Hawks (3-17-0-0), the #4 Great Falls Americans (9-6-2-1) are looking to add to their two-game win streak on Sunday against their closest rivals, the #1 Helena Bighorns (17-0-0-0), who are now in first place with the Gillette (WY) Wild (16-0-0-0) sitting in second. The only game in the NA3HL's Frontier Division today.

In their earlier two-game series with the Bighorns (October 8-9) taking place in the Helena Ice Arena, the Americans came up two-goals short each night (6-4, [box score](#)) and (5-3, [box score](#)) setbacks) in Helena, Montana. Forward Thomas Gazich led the way for the Americans in scoring by scoring two goals and getting three assists in the series. Helena's Andrew MacCallum scored twice and dished off two assists for the winning side.

Four different Helena Bighorns players received goals as the Helena Bighorns, one of the top teams in the NA3HL, scored three goals in the third period to upend the Great Falls Americans, 4-2 and keep their undefeated streak alive during Sunday afternoon's NA3HL junior hockey contest at the Great Falls Ice Plex. All six goals were made after the first intermission. Thomas Dalsin and Daniel Crutcher scored both second periods scores for the host team.

Neither team was able to put the biscuit in the basket before the first intermission. Great Falls and Helena combined for 25 shots with Great Falls attempting eight. The first period went quickly as with just one minor infraction called on the Americans.

It took 28 minutes of game time before the first score of the game appeared on the scoreboard. Tyler Sunagel and Garrett Weisenburger took advantage of Helena being in the penalty box as their pass to Thomas Dalsin gave the Americans the early lead with eight minutes remaining in the second stanza. Two minutes later, Helena's Harlan Wojtusik lit up the lamp for his fifth score of the season to even the score at 1-1. Eric Gibboney added his 19th assist with 5:32 remaining. The tie game last just ten seconds

when the Americans drove down to the other end of the ice quickly and took their second lead of the game (2-1) when Daniel Crutcher found the back of the net over Helena goalie Eric Buchholz. Hunter Maschke was credited with his 12th assist and AJ Benit accumulated his ninth. Helena produced 18 second period shots while Great Falls took 13.

Tyler Alldrege recorded his fourth goal six minutes into the final period of regulation for the Bighorns as the visiting team evened the score (2-2). Wyatt Barton collected his 12th assist while Taber Gutschick collected his 34th assist. Gutschick is in a three-way tie for the most points scored in the league this season along with teammate Tylor Greene with 38. Later in the period, the Bighorns, one of just a few teams that are undefeated so far in the NA3HL, took the lead for the first time (3-2) on a goal by Adam Harvey. Wyatt Barton and Andrew MacCallum earned the assists. Great Falls defense could not stop Helena's offense in the third as Corbin Skinner tallied the final goal with under two minutes left to seal the seventeenth consecutive victory for Helena. Eric Gibboney added his second assist (20th overall) of the night and Samuel Feamster chipped in his first. The final two scoring plays for the visitors came on power play chances.

The second and third periods were filled with penalties (13 to be exact) along with one first period infraction. Helena's five minor penalties resulted in ten minutes spent off the ice. Great Falls' nine penalties had the Americans accrue 52 minutes of penalty time. The winning squad scored on two of their four power play opportunities while Great Falls connected on just one of their three chances.

The Bighorns took 35 of their 38 shots before the second intermission. Great Falls registered 13 of their 21 in the middle frame.

Eric Buchholz was the game-winning netminder with 19 saves on 21 shots. The Colorado Springs, Colorado native had a flawless first and third periods but allowed two in the middle stanza. He is now 9-0-0 on the season in his first season with the Bighorns. Will Simpson (3-3-0-1) did not allow Helena to score in the first frame but allowed four (goals) in the final forty minutes. The Alaska netminder finished with 34 saves.

NOTES: Former Americans goaltender [Viktor Wennberg](#) (2018-2020) picked up his first victory and shutout win on Saturday as Northland College (Ashland, Wisconsin) Lumberjacks (2-2-1-0) defeated Hamline University (St. Paul, Minnesota) Pipers (1-3-0-0), 1-0 ([game story](#)). The Sweden netminder had 29 saves in the win.

[Trever Mellen](#), who played goaltender for the Americans for two seasons (2019-21), has joined the coaching staff for Head Coach Greg Sears' squad this week as the Goaltenders Coach. He amassed 1,747 saves in the net (including the playoffs) as a player.

The #4 Americans (9-6-2-1, 21 pts.) loss keeps the Bozeman Ice Dogs in third place with a 10-6-2-0 record (22 pts.) in the Frontier Division standings in the North American 3 Hockey League (NA3HL). For a look at the rest of the league standings, please [click here](#).

NEXT CONTEST: The undefeated Gillette (WY) Wild will be hosting the Great Falls Americans for a weekend series on (Friday) November 19th and (Saturday) November 20th with the action on the ice beginning each night at 7:05PM (MST) from Wyoming's Spirit Hall Ice Arena.

Great Falls will return to the friendly confines of the Great Falls Ice Plex on Thanksgiving Weekend for a series against the Frontier Division's newest member, the Badlands (Rapid City, SD) Sabres, the team

that replaced the Missoula Junior Bruins this season. The home hockey games will start at 7:30PM (MST) on November 26th-27th. If fans can't make it to any of the games, please check out [HockeyTV](#) for the broadcast.

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