



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**Great Falls Americans Press Release**

**Contact: Kevin Scott, GF Americans Public Relations Coordinator**

**Phone: (406) 403-8146**

**NA3HL Showcase: Sunagel's two goals lead Americans to win over the Mid Cities Jr. Stars**

**By Kevin Scott**

<a href="#">Box Score</a>	<a href="#">Game Sheet</a>	<a href="#">League Scoreboard</a>	<a href="#">Americans Team Statistics</a>
---------------------------	----------------------------	-----------------------------------	---

BLAINE, Minn., December 21, 2021 — The Great Falls Americans (14-11-3-1, 32 pts.) of the North American 3 Hockey League's (NA3HL) Frontier Division opened the first day of the 2021 NA3HL Showcase Tournament on Monday with a 6-0 shutout loss to the Willmar (MN) WarHawks, an NA3HL's West Division opponent.



Great Falls was hoping for better results on Tuesday morning when they took on the South Division's Mid Cities Jr. Stars (7-18-0-0), based out of Euless, Texas which is 19 miles outside of Dallas, in the second day of competition at the 2021 NA3HL Showcase Tournament.

Entering the tournament, the Jr. Stars who are coached by Tom Train, participate in the NA3HL's South Division, and currently sit in sixth place (out of eight teams).

On Monday, they faced a tough Minnesota Loons (Pequot Lakes, MN) team and fell 8-2. The NA3HL's West Division squad led 8-0 before giving up two goals to the Jr. Stars in the third stanza. The Loons are one of the teams struggling for wins this season (4-25-0-0) and are in last place (sixth) in their division.

Scouts from many of the major college and junior hockey programs around the nation including the North American Hockey League (NAHL) come out to watch what the NA3HL has to offer (talent-wise) at the three-day tournament that began on Monday and will conclude on Wednesday (December 22<sup>nd</sup>). Each of the 34 teams in the NA3HL plays three games in three days against teams in the other divisions with the games counting in the overall standings. The matchups pair up evenly matched teams against a team from another division (cross-division) based on current standings as of December 1st and is designed to have balanced competition. This tournament (except for the playoffs in March) are the only chances each team gets to play against the competition in the other divisions. Great Falls' contests on Monday against the Willmar WarHawks and today's game against the Mid Cities Jr. Stars are considered road contests and the Americans final game of the prestigious tournament on Wednesday against the New Jersey Titans (East Division) will be listed as a home game.

Tyler Sunagel scored the first and final goals for the Frontier Division's Great Falls Americans as they blanked the South Division's Mid Cities (TX) Jr. Stars on Tuesday morning, 4-0 during Day 2 of the 2021 NA3HL Showcase tournament that featured many college scouts in attendance at NSC Super Rink in Blaine, Minnesota. Goaltender Will Simpson was brilliant in the net by stopping all 27 shots sent his way by the Stars.



Before six minutes went off the clock in the first period, the visiting Great Falls Americans led 2-0 behind a pair of goals by Tyler Sunagel and Hunter Maschke. Sunagel scored sixty seconds into the contest off a pass by Great Falls defenseman Thomas Dalsin. Daniel Crutcher chipped in his tenth assist with 14:30 remaining in the period that helped Maschke receive his eleventh goal of the season. The Americans defense held Mid Cities scoreless for the remainder of the stanza. Great Falls attempted 15 of the 21 total shots before the first intermission.

The second period was quiet on the scoreboard with Jay Alford's power play goal thirteen minutes in being the only successful scoring chance for either team. Alford, a defenseman from Broomfield, Colorado, scored his fourth goal unassisted. Both teams claimed ten or more shots during the second twenty-minute period.

The Great Falls Americans scored their second power play goal 47 seconds into the third period when Jackson Henningsgard and Thomas Gazich each assisted on Tyler Sunagel's second goal (12<sup>th</sup> overall) of the game. Henningsgard now has 23 assists while Gazich now has 11 for the season. Despite 30 combined shots in the frame, each team skated around the final nineteen minutes without scoring.

Great Falls took a game-high of 19 shots in the third period to end the second game of the tournament with 47 shots being taken. The Jr. Stars compiled 21 of their 27 shots after the first intermission.

After accruing seven minor infractions in the loss against Willmar on Monday, Great Falls committed just one minor (two-minute) penalty for tripping in the middle period. Mid Cities was whistled for eight minors and one ten-minute unsportsmanlike conduct that resulted in 26 minutes in the sin bin.

Will Simpson earned his first shutout victory of the 2021-22 season by swatting away all 27 shots created by the Jr. Stars offense. Simpson, a first-year player for Great Falls, has now won five of his ten games (5-4-0-1) and is currently in the top 20 goaltenders in the league with a Goals Against Average (GAA) of 2.70. Mid Cities netminder Aaron Palos participated in his first contest with the Junior Stars after being added to the roster today. The McKinney, Texas standout goalie (0-1-0-0) acquired 43 saves in his season debut for the Texas NA3HL squad.

For more information about the tournament that will feature many college and junior scouts in attendance, please [click here](#). Fans can also see the league press release and full tournament results by [clicking here](#).

**NOTES:** As the second day ended at the Showcase Tournament, here is how the other seven teams did against their competition. View the box scores with the links below. In addition to Great Falls' win, the Yellowstone (WY) Quake and the Butte Cobras also racked up wins. The Quake scored seven goals to defeat the Austin Ice Bats, 7-2 ([box score](#)) and the Cobras downed the St. Louis Jr. Blues, 7-4 ([box score](#)). The Helena Bighorns ([lost for only second loss of the season to the Rochester Grizzlies, 4-0](#)), Bozeman Ice Dogs ([blanked 5-0 by the Peoria Mustangs](#)), Sheridan (WY) Hawks ([6-5 overtime](#)

[loss to the Minnesota Loons](#)), Gillette (WY) Wild ([2-1 overtime loss to the Oregon Tradesman](#)) and the Badlands (SD) Sabres ([4-2 setback to the Wausau Cyclones](#)) all fell to their competitors.

**FUN FACTS:** Great Falls and Mid Cities both met on the ice on December 17, 2017, at the 2017 NA3HL Showcase in Blaine, Minnesota where the Montana squad won easily, 5-1 ([game story](#)).

The Americans 14<sup>th</sup> win of the season came on Great Falls Americans Head Coach and General Manager, Greg Sears' birthday.

**NEXT CONTEST:** The Great Falls Americans will serve as the home team for the third and final day of competition at the [2021 NA3HL Showcase Tournament](#) on Wednesday morning, December 22<sup>nd</sup>. Their game against the New Jersey Titans (11-12-0-0, fourth place in East Division) from the NA3HL's East Division will begin around 10:45AM (MST) or 11:45AM (CST) from the NSC Super Rink in Blaine, Minnesota. New Jersey is hoping for their first win of the tournament after suffering two shutout setbacks against the Milwaukee Power (5-0) on Monday ([box score](#)) and Tuesday's 9-0 shellacking put on by the Willmar WarHawks ([box score](#)). Fans can continue to watch the Americans try for their second consecutive win in three days on the league's streaming service, [HockeyTV](#).

Great Falls is looking to finish with a 2-1 tournament record if they pick up the win against the Titans on Wednesday.

After Wednesday's competition, the Americans will resume their Frontier Division junior hockey season after the holiday break by hosting a pair of games at the Great Falls Ice Plex against the Butte Cobras on Friday, December 31<sup>st</sup> and Saturday, January 1, 2022, with the puck set to drop at 7:30PM (MST) each night.

**CONTACT:**

**Greg Sears**  
Great Falls Americans Head Coach/General Manager  
Cell Phone: 715-566-2811  
Email: [gsears@greatfallsamericans.com](mailto:gsears@greatfallsamericans.com)

Visit our website: <http://www.gfamericans.com>  
Join Us on Facebook:  
<https://www.facebook.com/greatfalls.americanshockey>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/gfamericans>

North American 3 Hockey League: <http://www.na3hl.com/>

