



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Great Falls Americans Press Release

Contact: Kevin Scott, GF Americans Public Relations Coordinator

Phone: (406) 403-8146

NA3HL Showcase: Americans down the Titans 6-2 to conclude the Showcase Tournament

By Kevin Scott

Box Score	Game Sheet	League Scoreboard	Americans Team Statistics
---------------------------	----------------------------	-----------------------------------	---



BLAINE, Minn., December 22, 2021 — The Great Falls Americans finished off the 2021 North American 3 Hockey League's Showcase Tournament in Blaine, Minnesota on Wednesday afternoon at the National Sports Center (NSC) Super Rink.

During the three-day prestigious tournament, the Great Falls Americans (15-11-3-1, 34 pts., Frontier Division) faced three other divisional teams including the Willmar (MN) WarHawks (West Division), Mid Cities (TX) Jr. Stars (South Division) and the New Jersey Titans (East Division). Great Falls was the better team on the scoreboard in two out of three games and playing at the Minnesota tournament should pave the way for the rest of the season as they challenge the other Frontier Division teams in January and February.

On the opening day on Monday afternoon, the Americans were the visiting team against the West Division's Willmar WarHawks (17-10-1-0), one of five Minnesota teams that comprise the six-team West Division. Willmar's offense proved to be too much for Great Falls as they shutout the Americans, 6-0. Zac Hattan, the starting goaltender for Great Falls, finished with 41 saves (game story).

Great Falls was matched up in the second day with the Texas-based Mid Cities Jr. Stars (8-18-0-0), based out of Euless, Texas, and a member of the NA3HL's South Division. Great Falls fared better in this game as they scored two goals in the first period, one in the middle period and a final goal in the third stanza to blank the Jr. Stars, 4-0. Tyler Sunagel scored twice while Hunter Maschke and Jay Alford added one goal apiece. Goaltender Will Simpson prevented all 27 shots from getting by him (game story).

In the tournament finale on Wednesday, the Americans served as the host team after being the road team on the scoreboard the previous two games. Great Falls faced the East Division's New Jersey Titans to close out the tournament. In the previous two games at the NA3HL Showcase, the Titans were shut out in both of their games to the Milwaukee Power (5-0) and the Willmar (MN) WarHawks, 9-0.



The Great Falls took a 4-1 lead over the New Jersey Titans after two periods to coast to a 6-2 win in the final day of competition at the 2021 NA3HL Showcase on Wednesday afternoon. Jackson Henningsgard from the Americans gathered two goals and netminder Ben Winkler compiled 18 saves for the Americans second win in three days.

Great Falls, who sits in fourth place behind the Bozeman Ice Dogs, Gillette (WY) Wild and Helena Bighorns, completed the tournament with a 2-1-0-0 record. Great Falls is just four points (38-34) behind the Ice Dogs for third place.

New Jersey registered the first goal of the game with 3:46 left in the first stanza. Forward Joey Mataviesko's third goal of the season made it 1-0 before the first intermission. Great Falls offense outshot New Jersey 22-3.

The Americans rang up four consecutive goals in the middle period to take a commanding 4-1 advantage before the second break. Thomas Gazich, Silas Hughes, Daniel Crutcher, and Jay Alford tallied the goals for coach Greg Sears' Frontier Division squad. Thomas Gazich also assisted on two scoring plays while Daniel Crutcher, Tyler Sunagel, Silas Hughes, and Tae Evans each earned one assist. As the second period ended, the Americans routed the Titans in shots attempted (47-8) after the first forty minutes of action.

A tenth goal by New Jersey's Roland Ponechal cut into the Titans deficit (4-2). Parker King and Samuel Senft provided the assists for coach Lenny Caglianone's team with 15:48 left in regulation. Great Falls' Jackson Henningsgard was not about to see the Titans force a comeback as he scored twice in a six-minute span to send the Americans back to Montana with two wins in three days. Thomas Gazich and Tae Evans added their second assist of the day while Jay Alford and Aaron Leaf chipping in their first.

The Americans were determined to pick up their 15th win of the season as they created 76 shots including 29 in the final stanza. The Titans finished with 20 with 12 coming in the third frame.

A total of 68 minutes were spent in the penalty box between both junior hockey teams on Wednesday. The home team was called for nine of the 22 penalties. The Montana team took advantage of two power plays for scores with Silas Hughes' second period score and Jackson Henningsgard's second goal in the third being successful.

Ben Winkler got the start and the win for Great Falls during Wednesday's action after Zac Hattan and Will Simpson took over goaltending duties during the first two games. Winkler, who is now 3-3-1-0 on the season, allowed one first and one third period goal while swatting away 18 shots. Tyrus Pratley was credited with his first loss (0-1-0-0) in his first appearance for the Titans. The Hollywood, Maryland netminder ended his day with 58 saves. Backup Colin Freitas relieved him midway through the third and stopped 12 of 13 shots.

The box scores for the opening day on Monday can be accessed by [clicking here](#) and Tuesday's box scores can be found [here](#). Fans can also see the league press release and full tournament results by [clicking here](#).

For more information about the tournament that featured many college and junior scouts in attendance, please [click here](#).

NOTES: Five of the seven other Frontier Division squads tasted victory during the third and final day at the NA3HL Showcase. The Helena Bighorns defeated the Texas Brahmas 4-2, Sheridan (WY) Hawks won 5-2 over the Bay State (MA) Bobcats, the Gillette (WY) Wild downed the Long Beach Sharks 3-1, the Badlands (SD) Sabres escaped with a 2-1 victory over the Louisiana Drillers and the Butte Cobras took care of business against the Austin Ice Bats, 6-2. The Bozeman Ice Dogs fell to the El Paso Rhinos, 5-1 and the Atlanta Capitals defeated the Yellowstone (WY) Quake, 5-2. The box scores from all of Wednesday's action can be found by [clicking here](#).

NEXT CONTEST: The Great Falls Americans head into the holiday break with 15 wins and 15 losses. The Americans have eight home games (nine road games) remaining with most of them coming in January 2022. The Butte Cobras come into the Great Falls Ice Plex for a pair of contests to close out 2021 and begin 2022. On New Year's Eve (December 31st) and New Year's Day (January 1st), the Cobras and Americans will battle on the ice for the final times against each other this season with a start time of 7:30PM (MST) each night. Both games can be seen on [HockeyTV](#) with Americans Play-By-Play Announcer Megan Lewis on the call.

CONTACT:

Greg Sears
Great Falls Americans Head Coach/General Manager
Cell Phone: 715-566-2811
Email: 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/>

