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Great Falls Americans Press Release

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Quake comes back in third period to defeat the Americans, 3-2

By Kevin Scott

Box Score	Game Sheet	League Scoreboard	Americans Team Statistics
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GREAT FALLS, Mont., September 23, 2022 — Entering their third week of competition in the 2022-23 North American 3 Hockey League (NA3HL), the Great Falls Americans (1-2-0-0) sit in seventh place in the Frontier Division standings mainly because they have only played twice in two weeks whereas most of the other teams in the division have played three or four games heading into the third week.

#7 Great Falls had their season opener on September 10th where they escaped with a 3-2 victory over the Butte Cobras followed by a September 16th showdown with their closest competitor and rival, the Helena Bighorns. The Bighorns proved to be too much for Great Falls and defeated them, 6-2. Forward Tyler Sunagel and defenseman Alex Leaf provided the offensive scoring for the Americans with one goal and two assists apiece for coach Greg Sears' team after two weeks of play.

The #5 Yellowstone Quake, the Americans third opponent of the season, come into the season with a completely new roster and coach than during the previous year. The Cody, Wyoming based junior hockey squad made a coaching change in April 2022 when Chris Blaisuis replaced CJ Sweigart. So far, only two returning players from the 2021-22 season were brought back including defenseman Cole Whitman and goaltender Edvin Falkenstrom. The Quake (2-3-0-0) went 1-1 against their Wyoming rival, the Sheridan Hawks two weeks ago at home and then could not get their offense firing and fell twice last week on the road to the Badlands Sabres, based out of Rapid City, South Dakota. After the first four games, Wisconsin native Teagan Scheurer has scored six goals and dished out two assists in his first season with Yellowstone while Illinois product Wyatt O'Donoghue provided three goals to lead the offense. Returning goalie Edvin Falkenstrom has one win and two losses heading into Friday's contest with the Great Falls Americans.

Both young squads were looking for their second win of the season in Great Falls.

It took two periods before the offenses got going. The Great Falls Americans held a 2-0 advantage with 16 minutes remaining but ended up being outscored 3-0 in the final 12 minutes for a 3-2 loss to the Yellowstone Quake on Friday night at the Great Falls Ice Plex. Teagan Scheurer, Nick Cofer and Benjamin Kuza all scored for Wyoming while Caleb Gauthier and Jace Thompson lit up the lamp for the Americans.

Both teams had their chances in the net, but neither could put the biscuit in the basket during the penalty-free first stanza. Great Falls totaled 13 of the 25 shots-on-goal.

The first goal scored by either team came five minutes into the middle period when Great Falls' Alex Leaf collected his fourth assist when his pass to Caleb Gauthier whose slapshot proved to be successful over Quake netminder John Hughes. The secondary assist went to Sam Duehlmeier. Gauthier racked up his first goal with Great Falls. The Americans defense held up the final fifteen minutes and did not allow the Quake to capitalize on any scoring plays. The home team attempted 15 opportunities toward the net and Yellowstone had 13.

Jace Thompson scored his second goal in three games four minutes into the final frame to increase the Americans lead (2-0). Caleb Gauthier gathered his first assist after scoring the lone goal in the second period while Alex Leaf was credited with his fifth (assist). Yellowstone's offense created their first scoring opportunity minutes later when Owen Schoonover and Brayson Bennett assisted on the score by Teagan Scheurer to cut into the Americans lead (2-1). Bennett captured his ninth assist on the Quake's first scoring drive. Former Helena Bighorn forward Nick Cofer evened up the score for the visitors with 8:26 remaining when his pass by teammate Zac Orwig was successful. Yellowstone goaltender John Hughes was also credited with an assist on the second score. The Quake continued their scoring and broke the 2-2 tie (and eventual game-winner) with 4:33 left in regulation. Benjamin Kluza accumulated his second score of the season from a pass by Shawn Ohlenschlager Van Coller, who was added to the roster today. Christopher Dick also earned an assist.

Yellowstone outshot Great Falls in two of the three periods to finish with 41. Great Falls had 27 of their (38) shots before the second intermission.

The fast-paced contest featured just two minor penalties called on host squad in the second period. The Quake stayed out of the penalty box throughout the night.

John Hughes allowed one goal each in the second and third frames to run his record to 1-1-0-0 for the Wyoming junior hockey squad. The Indiana native swatted away 36 shots on 38 attempts. Josh Koziol lost for the second time in three appearances for the Americans. Koziol was spotless in the first two periods before he allowed three goals in the final 12 minutes to end his night with 38 saves.

FRONTIER DIVISION UPDATE: The #1 Helena Bighorns (5-0-0-0) remained undefeated by posting a 7-3 win against the #6 Sheridan Hawks at the Helena Ice Arena with 1,056 fans in attendance. Camden Cunningham led all scorers with two goals and one assist. Goaltender Jesse Schindel had 19 saves for the Bighorns ([box score](#)). Sheridan fell to 1-3-1-0 on the season. In Rapid City, South Dakota, the Badlands Sabres (2-3-0-0) had a challenging time finding the back of the net as they fell to the second-ranked Gillette (WY) Wild (3-0-0-0), 6-1. Zach Slinger scored half of Gillette's goals that resulted in a hat trick. Teammate Jace Johnson scored four points (1 goal, 3 assists). Zach Vockler had the lone goal for the Sabres. Cole Wheaton picked up the win in the net for Wyoming. ([box score](#)). In Bozeman, Montana, the Ice Dogs (1-3-0-0) downed the Butte Cobras (2-2-0-0), 4-1 behind the efforts of Chris Porciuncula's

two goals and goaltender Cam Milewski's 42 saves for their first win in four contests. Butte scored their only goal of the evening in the second period when Luke Schleusner added his third of the season ([box score](#)).

NEXT CONTEST: The Quake will remain Great Falls for one more contest against the Americans on Saturday, September 24th. The Great Falls Ice Plex will play host to both teams beginning at 7:30PM (MST) and the game can be seen on the NA3HL's official streaming service, [HockeyTV](#) with Justin Latham providing the Play-By-Play and commentary.

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