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Great Falls Americans Press Release

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Bighorns blank the Americans in Great Falls, 5-0

By Kevin Scott

Box Score	Game Sheet	League Scoreboard	Americans Team Statistics
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GREAT FALLS, Mont., September 30, 2022 — It is time for Round Two between the #4 Great Falls Americans (2-3-0-0) and the top team in the Frontier Division, the undefeated Helena Bighorns (7-0-0-0).

Two weeks ago on September 16th, the Americans played host to Helena and the home team trailed 2-1 after the period before being outscored 4-1 in the second and third frames to fall, 6-2. The Americans second game of the season gave them their first setback after they defeated the Butte Cobras (3-3) the week before. Tyler Sunagel scored one goal and one assist and starting goaltender Josh Koziol acquired 44 saves for Great Falls. Meanwhile, Helena's TJ Norris and Tyler Bloom combined for four of the six goals for the visitors. Jesse Schindel stopped 27 of the 29 shots attempted by Great Falls. ([game story](#)).

The Americans were hoping for a better offensive production on Friday as they encountered the Bighorns for the second of their seven regular season meetings this season.

The top-ranked and undefeated Helena Bighorns needed two goals in the first and three in the third to keep their seven-game winning streak alive by shutting out the Great Falls Americans during Friday's junior hockey action at the Great Falls Ice Plex. Five Helena players all saw their shots go in the net.

Helena got the puck in the net first during the opening period. Bozeman native Jack Walters received the assist as Bighorns forward Derek Russell buried his first goal of the season to give the top-ranked team in the Frontier Division the early 1-0 lead. The Bighorns increased the lead before the first intermission on a goal by Andrew Deskin. Deskin's sixth goal came with assistance from TJ Norris and Owen Ramsey with 51 seconds remaining. Each squad had one minor penalty. The Bighorns created 11 of the 16 shots-on-goal.

Helena controlled the puck for most of the middle period as they racked up 21 shots. The two rivals could not find a way to bury the puck in the net. Great Falls did manage to take 9 shots.

After a scoreless second period, both teams were determined to accrue some scoring drives after the second intermission. The visitors captured their third score of the night when Lyndon Orr lit up the lamp off the stick of teammate Garrett Bogan two minutes into the third period. Three minutes later, the Bighorns offense gathered their fourth goal. Harlan Wojtusik received his sixth goal with helpers from Darby McCarthy and Lyndon Orr. After the fourth score, Jake Regan saw his first action in the net for the Americans after replacing starter Nik Romahs. The Americans defense could not stop the Bighorns offense from scoring their fifth goal. Camden Cunningham made his fourth goal with Edvin Astrom and Tyler Bloom setting up the play with 12 minutes remaining in the contest. Helena and Great Falls skated the rest of the way without another score despite many tries.

Helena produced three times as many shots (51-17) than Great Falls was able to. The Bighorns had 21 shots during the second stanza and held Great Falls to nine.

Great Falls and Helena combined for just five minor penalties throughout their second meeting. Great Falls committed two of their four infractions in the middle period. One minor interference penalty was called on Helena during the first twenty minutes. Five power play chances went unanswered during the 2 hour and 15-minute contest.

Five forwards the Bighorns registered tallies including Derek Russell, Lyndon Orr, Harlan Wojtusik, Andrew Deskin, and Camden Cunningham. Orr also had one assist.

Gabe Swanson, a Helena native, finished out the month of September with a 4-0 record with wins over the Badlands Sabres, Bozeman Ice Dogs, Sheridan Hawks and Great Falls. He turned away all 17 shots sent his way. Great Falls goalie Nik Romahs had his record fall to 1-1 after two appearances. The Latvia standout compiled 38 saves in 45 minutes before being relieved by Jake Regan, who finished with 8 saves in 14 minutes, in his first action for the Americans.

FRONTIER DIVISION UPDATE: The #2 team in the Frontier Division, the Gillette (WY) Wild (4-1-0-0) faced off with the top team in the NA3HL's West Division, the Granite City Lumberjacks (4-0-0-0), based out of Sauk Rapids, Minnesota on Friday in Wyoming. Granite City led 5-0 heading into the third frame before giving up two goals as they topped previously unbeaten Gillette, 6-2 behind 37 saves by the Lumberjacks netminder Xander Roberts. Alec Waller and Connor Wendell each scored for the Wild, who are coached by former Great Falls assistant coach, Ethan Hayes ([box score](#)).

The #6 Bozeman Ice Dogs (2-4-0-0) pulled off the minor upset over the third-ranked Butte Cobras (3-3-0-0) in front of a small crowd inside Bozeman's Haynes Pavilion on Friday night. Wyoming native Kole Morris scored twice helping the Ice Dogs win 6-2 over the Cobras. Teammate Kolt Gutzman scored a goal and dished out two assists. Tamer Billman and Nick Bradshaw each scored and accrued one assist apiece for Butte ([box score](#)).

The Yellowstone Quake, Sheridan (WY) Hawks, and the Badlands (SD) Sabres were idle tonight.

NEXT CONTEST: Over the next week, the #4 Americans (2-3-0-0) will face the #3 Butte Cobras (3-3-0-0) three times including two road games at the Butte Community Ice Center. First, the Americans and Cobras will start the month of October in Butte with a matchup on Saturday, October 1st, followed by a

home game for Great Falls on Friday, October 7th and then back to Butte for a Saturday, October 8th showdown. All three contests start at 7:30PM (MST) and can be streamed live on [HockeyTV](#).

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