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**Great Falls Americans Press Release**

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**Bighorns blank the Americans 3-0 in makeup contest**

**By Kevin Scott**

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HELENA, Mont., November 23, 2022 — The fifth-ranked Great Falls Americans (9-10-0-0) have already had two encounters with the second-ranked Helena Bighorns (15-4-1-1) this season with both resulting in losses.

During the Americans second game of the seasons on September 16<sup>th</sup>, the Bighorns entered the Great Falls Ice Plex for the first time during the 2022-23 NA3HL season. Helena held a 5-2 advantage after two periods of play and went on to top Great Falls, 6-2 with four of those goals coming from Tyler Bloom and TJ Norris, two returners from last year's playoff team. Baden Powell and Tyler Sunagel added the scores for the Americans. Bighorns netminder Jesse Schindel recorded 27 saves while Great Falls goalie Josh Koziol had 44 stops ([game story](#)).

Their next meeting two weeks later September 30, Helena's offense outshined the Americans again in a 5-0 shutout victory. The Bighorns scored twice (Derek Russell and Andrew Deskins) in the first period and Lyndon Orr, Harlan Wojtusik, and Camden Cunningham added three third period goals in a five-minute span. A seventeen save performance gave Gabe Swanson the win. Nik Romahs took the loss with 38 saves. Backup Jake Regan played 14 minutes resulting in eight saves for the Americans ([game story](#)).

How have the Bighorns and Americans fared since September 30<sup>th</sup>? Great Falls posted a 5-3 record in October with one overtime win against the (Butte) Cobras and a shootout victory over the Badlands (SD) Sabres. The Americans have struggled in November going 1-3-0-0 entering the last week of the month ([game schedule/results](#)). Meanwhile, Helena went 5-4-0-0 in October and 2-1-1 in November.

William Fallman and Jace Thompson are leading the team with seven goals apiece. Fallman also leads in points scored (19) and Alex Leaf is the assist leader with 15 after 18 contests. Harlan Wojtusik (16 goals to lead the team), Dylan Cunningham (16 assists), and Tyler Bloom lead the Bighorns with 26 points.

The #2 Helena Bighorns needed three goals over the last two periods to earn their sixth shutout victory of the 2022-23 season over the visiting fifth-ranked Great Falls Americans, 3-0 during the only Frontier Division junior hockey contest on Wednesday night in front of a huge crowd of 1,052 at the Helene Ice Arena. The game was a makeup date from November 5<sup>th</sup> when the game was postponed due to a lack of NA3HL league officials available for the game. Tyler Bloom registered two goals and Zach Turner had one in Helena's victory.

The first period came and went without Helena or Great Falls getting on the scoreboard. The first twenty minutes saw a combined three (unsuccessful) power play opportunities. Helena's offense created 24 shots and limited Great Falls to just five.

Tyler Bloom slapshot that sailed by Great Falls starting goaltender Josh Koziol and into the net gave the #2 Bighorns the early lead two minutes into the middle stanza. Helena native Dylan Cunningham and Colorado's Joe Feamster chipped in the assists. The Bighorns outshot the visiting team, 17-4 and both teams missed out on capitalizing on their three combined power play chances.

The second goal for the Bighorns came with 12 minutes remaining in the contest when Zach Turner, a forward from Eagle, Colorado, put the biscuit in the basket for his first goal as a member of the Bighorns. His unassisted tally came while the Americans were in the penalty box. Great Falls pulled goaltender Josh Koziol during the final two minutes to get an extra skater on the ice, but that plan failed as Tyler Bloom successfully collected 12<sup>th</sup> goal of the season on an empty net play on the third (and final) scoring drive of the contest with 27 seconds remaining for their 15<sup>th</sup> win in 21 contests.

Helena attempted 24 first period shots and combined for 33 over the second and third to finish with 57. Great Falls totaled 11 of their 20 during the final twenty minutes of regulation.

The NA3HL officials whistled five penalties on each team. Only Helena turned a power play chance into a score (1-for-4) and Great Falls misfired on their three tries.

Marek Andres joined the Helena Bighorns on November 2<sup>nd</sup> and now has two wins in three games. He played a flawless game by redirecting all 20 shots that Great Falls attempted. Josh Koziol saw his record drop to 6-8-0-0 in 14 games for the Americans. The Elk River, Minnesota netminder made 54 saves.

**NOTES:** Goaltender Josh Koziol and defenseman William Fallman were named Frontier Division (Honorable Mention) Stars of the Week for the second consecutive week ending November 13 and November 20 ([see article](#)). This was Josh's fifth nomination (October 9, October 16, November 13, November 20) being named as an Honorable Mention candidate. On the week ending September 11<sup>th</sup>, he received a 2<sup>nd</sup> Star. William recorded his fifth Star of the Week Honorable Mention honor in the Frontier Division (October 2, 9, 16 and November 13, 20).

Congrats to Josh and William for their outstanding play and contributions to Americans hockey.

**FRONTIER DIVISION UPDATE:** There were no other games in the Frontier Division tonight. Play will resume for the rest of the Frontier Division on Friday (November 25) and Saturday (November 26) with Yellowstone (Quake) hosting Badlands (Sabres) and Gillette (Wild) traveling to Bozeman, Montana to face the Ice Dogs in addition to Great Falls entertaining the Sheridan Hawks. All games begin at 7:30PM

(MST). All six teams play each other on Saturday again and the Helena Bighorns make the short trek to Butte, Montana for a game with the Cobras on Saturday night as well.

**NEXT CONTEST:** Before Great Falls goes on a month-long road trip, the Americans welcome the Sheridan (WY) Hawks to town on Friday and Saturday (November 25-26) for the only time during the regular season. Game time is set for 7:30PM (MST) nightly and can be viewed on [HockeyTV](#).

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