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**Great Falls Americans Press Release**

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

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

**Sheridan sparks third period comeback over Great Falls for weekend sweep**

**By Kevin Scott**

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SHERIDAN, Wyo., November 12, 2022 — The #5 Great Falls Americans (8-8-0-0) played their second game of the weekend against the #4 Sheridan Hawks (9-8-1-0) in Sheridan, Wyoming on Saturday evening.

In their first matchup of the season on Friday, Great Falls and Sheridan had a scoreless first period before Great Falls took a one-goal lead thanks to William Fallman's pass to Alex Leaf, who put the biscuit in the basket. Seconds later, the Hawks evened up the game with the equalizer by Ryan McKenna. McKenna would score again in the third period and teammate Makhai Sparks also found the back of the net for a 3-1 lead. The Americans comeback bid came up short as Alex Leaf successfully lit up the lamp with an assist from Silas Hughes before the contest concluded ([game story](#)).

Would the Americans bounce back and even their series with the Hawks by winning on Saturday night?

Makhai Sparks scored two third period goals and the #4 Sheridan Hawks trailed 2-0 before they scored four unanswered goals in the final period to earn the weekend sweep over the #5 Great Falls Americans 4-2 at Whitney Rink in the M&M's Center during Saturday NA3HL junior hockey action.

Great Falls' Jace Thompson scored the lone goal for either team in the first period. Alex Leaf collected his 16<sup>th</sup> assist and William Fallman earned his 10<sup>th</sup> assist on the Americans power play opportunity that occurred with 12 minutes remaining. Sheridan took 13 shots-on-goal and Great Falls had seven.

Great Falls outshot Sheridan, 15-10 in the middle period. Garrett Weisenburger, who has five assists in 16 games this season, collected his first goal of the season as William Fallman set up the Americans second goal of the night. The lone scoring drive arrived during the first two minutes.

After Sheridan failed to score in the first two stanzas, the Hawks secured their first scoring drive 5:40 into the third period. Ryan McKenna, who scored twice in Friday's 3-2 win against the Americans, racked up his 12<sup>th</sup> goal with assistance from McCaffrey Billings and Hawks assist leader, Parker Norling (18) while Great Falls was in the sin bin. The momentum swung the Hawks way as they scored two goals in a 26 second span with under seven minutes left to claim their first lead of the game. Makhai Sparks and McCaffrey Billings were the recipients of the two goals. Nathan Aweyemi, hailing from London, England, assisted on the Sparks goal with 6:58 remaining to tie the game, 2-2. McCaffrey Billings' fourth score of the season went unassisted. Great Falls pulled goaltender Josh Koziol to give the visiting team an extra skater after the Billings' second score. Makhai Sparks took advantage of the open net and scored without assistance with 49 seconds to go to ensure the weekend sweep by the Wyoming NA3HL squad.

Makhai Sparks came up with a huge effort for coach Chad Bailey's Hawks team as he scored two goals during the final seven minutes of action to lead the team in scoring. McCaffrey Billings had a goal and an assist and Parker Norling added two assists to his resume in the final period of regulation. Meanwhile, Jace Thompson and Garrett Weisenburger each scored for Great Falls and William Fallman garnered the assists on both scoring plays.

The host team outshot the visitors from Montana, 45-33.

A total of fifteen minor penalties were whistled in Saturday's contest and Great Falls and Sheridan went 1-for-5 on the power play. Jace Thompson's first period score came while the Hawks were down a man and Ryan McKenna's third period lamplighter occurred with the Americans in the penalty box.

Bo Buckley (1-0-0-0), who was added to Sheridan's roster on Friday and listed as a defenseman before tonight's game, was the winning netminder. He made 31 saves in his goaltending debut. Josh Koziol of Great Falls, who had 55 saves in a 3-2 loss to the Hawks on Friday, had 41 saves as he is now 5-7-0-0 on the season.

**FRONTIER DIVISION UPDATE:** Sky Solig and Wylee Gladen each registered goals in the first period and the #1 Gillette (WY) Wild (16-1-0-1) held on for a 2-0 victory over the #7 Badlands (SD) Sabres (5-10-2-1) during Friday's Frontier Division action in Gillette, Wyoming. Gillette earned the weekend sweep. Jake Turek improved his record to 5-0-0-1 in six games by redirecting all 16 shots by the Sabres. Zach Broxterman had 43 saves in the loss for Badlands ([box score](#)).

In front of a packed house of 1,187 spectators inside the Helena Ice Arena, the #2 Helena Bighorns (13-3-1-1) suffered a rare overtime loss to the last place Bozeman Ice Dogs (4-13-0-1), 3-2. Helena and Bozeman traded two goals apiece in the first frame and needed a five-minute overtime to decide a winner after both squads could not find the back of the net in the second and third periods. Tyler Bloom and Camden Cunningham scored the tallies for the Bighorns while Spencer Wilkinson and Kole Morris answered for the Ice Dogs. In the extra period, Spencer Wilkinson scored the game-winner for the visiting team. Wilkinson's scored his second goal (fourth overall) during the first 89 seconds over Helena netminder Jesse Schindel ([box score](#)).

The #3 Butte Cobras (9-8-1-0) and the #6 Yellowstone (WY) Quake (6-9-2-1) also needed an extra period to declare a winning team. Butte and Yellowstone each scored three goals in three periods. Caelin Chinery of Butte broke the tie and gave the Cobras their ninth win of the season. His seventh goal came with 12 seconds remaining in overtime to prevent the Quake from sweeping the weekend series ([box score](#)).

**NEXT CONTEST:** The Great Falls Ice Plex will host the Great Falls Americans and the top-ranked Gillette Wild as they battle on November 18-19, 2022, in Great Falls. Game times for both nights is set for 7:30PM (MST). Fans can watch all the action on [HockeyTV](#). Gillette won both of their contests against Great Falls on October 21-22.

**CONTACT:**

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

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