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Great Falls Americans Press Release

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Bozeman takes over fifth place in Frontier with 2-1 win against Great Falls

By Kevin Scott

Box Score	Game Sheet	League Scoreboard	Americans Team Statistics
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GREAT FALLS, Mont., January 21, 2023 — After a tough 4-3 overtime road loss to the #4 Butte Cobras on Friday evening ([game story](#)), the #6 Great Falls Americans (14-19-2-0) were ready for a fresh start when the #5 Bozeman Ice Dogs (15-19-0-1) invaded the Great Falls Ice Plex for a Saturday prime time performance.

In their first head-to-head meeting on Saturday, January 14th, Great Falls led 3-1 thanks to goals by Seth Theriault, Silas Hughes and Tyler Sunagel during the opening period and outscored the Ice Dogs 2-1 over the second and third periods to lead the season series, 1-0. The 5-2 win was the Americans 14th victory of the season and first against Bozeman ([game story](#)).

Could Great Falls go 2-0 against Bozeman on Saturday?

The Bozeman Ice Dogs needed two goals to get by the Great Falls Americans on Saturday evening in Great Falls. The Ice Dogs edged the Americans, 2-1 thanks to goals by Kole Morris and Spencer Wilkinson to take over fifth place in the NA3HL Frontier Division. Jace Thompson added a goal for the Americans in the third frame.

Great Falls finished the weekend 0-1-1 including Friday's 4-3 overtime loss at the Butte Community Ice Center against the Butte Cobras.

The first period saw neither squad score any goals despite combining for 24 shots-on-goal. Bozeman's Bodie Shepardson was whistled for elbowing that resulted in a game misconduct and an ejection with 32 seconds remaining.

Kole Morris of the Bozeman Ice Dogs made a soft shot in the net over Great Falls netminder Ryan Stowe with 4:23 remaining in the first period for the game's first successful scoring drive. Chris Porciuncula

gathered his ninth assist and Casey Sturm acquired his first as a member of the Ice Dogs junior hockey team. Bozeman outshot Great Falls 16-13 and had a slim 27-26 advantage after two periods of play.

The Americans waited 47 minutes before picking up their first goal of the game. Jace Thompson secured his 12th goal this season while the Ice Dogs were down a man (penalty). Ben Cremers and Alex Leaf were each credited with one assist apiece on Thompson's game-tying goal (1-1). Leaf was named as one of the 20 players this week who will suit up for the Frontier Division team at the 2023 NA3HL Top Prospects Tournament in Pennsylvania that takes place on February 6-7. Six minutes later, Spencer Wilkinson, one of three players on the roster who call Montana home, broke the tie with his slapshot that sailed over Great Falls netminder Ryan Stowe to put the Ice Dogs back on top, 2-1. The unassisted play came with 6:43 left in regulation. Despite Great Falls having an 18-13 shots advantage in the third, the Americans could not find a way to put the biscuit in the basket for the remainder of the period.

The host team managed to attempt 44 shots while allowing the visitors 40 during the sixty-minute contest.

Nine of the fifteen penalties occurred after the second intermission. Great Falls had one goal in eight power play opportunities and finished with five minor infractions. Bozeman went 1-for-4 on the power play with ten total penalties being called against them.

Axel Rosenlund made 43 saves and ran his record to 4-5-0-0 as a member of the Ice Dogs and Minnesota Loons, whom he played with at the start of the 2022-23 season. The Minnesota goalie lost two games with the Loons.

Ryan Stowe (2-4-1-0) lost his fourth game in regulation and fifth overall for the Americans. The Canadian goaltender redirected 26 of the 28 shots he encountered in the net.

NOTES: Great Falls added another player to their roster prior to Friday's away contest against the Bozeman Ice Dogs. [Andrew Villareal](#), a 5'9" defenseman who will turn 19 years old on Monday (Jan. 23), joined the squad this weekend. He made an appearance in Friday and Saturday's games but did not score. Villareal last played with the NA3HL's Minnesota Loons team during the 2021-22 season. The Pequot Lakes, Minnesota player scored one goal and one assist in twelve contests for the Loons.

On Friday (January 20), the NA3HL announced their team rosters for the upcoming 2023 NA3HL Top Prospects Tournament set for February 6-7, 2023, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Two Great Falls Americans will be playing for the Frontier Division squad. Americans forward Silas Hughes and defenseman Alex Leaf will join the 20-member team coached by Gillette Wild Head Coach Ethan Hayes and Helena Bighorns mentor Scott Cunningham next month. [Click here](#) to read the full article. Congrats to Silas and Alex as they represent the Americans in the February tournament.

FRONTIER DIVISION UPDATE: The #1 Gillette (WY) Wild (29-5-1-2) won both games this weekend against the #8 Badlands (SD) Sabres (10-21-2-2) and became the first team in the Frontier Division to claim a spot in the Frontier Division playoffs that begin in March. Five different players (Jace Johnson, Zack Slinger, Adam Severson, Ryan Hipsag, and Wylee Gladen) each scored in their 5-1 convincing victory over the Sabres at the Spirit Hall Ice Arena. Payton Stauffacher made his first goal of the year for Badlands in the third to prevent the shutout by the Wild. Cole Wheaton (26 saves) won for the eleventh time in 14 games. Brady Devries and Zach Broxterman split time in the goal for Badlands and combined for 58 saves with Devries getting the loss on his resume ([box score](#)).

The #2 Helena Bighorns (28-7-1-1) scored one goal in each period and that was enough to down the #7 Yellowstone (WY) Quake (11-20-4-2), 3-1 in front of a small crowd at Wyoming's Riley Arena on Saturday. Camden and Braden Cunningham and Andrew Deskin each buried the puck in the net for the Bighorns. A lone goal by Yellowstone's Ben Carlson came midway through the third period. Penalties doomed the Quake as they had 16 infractions called that resulted in 141 minutes of penalty time. A night after making 45 saves, Helena's Keaton Woolsey had 19 for his second consecutive win of the weekend and his fourth win in the month of January. John Hughes went 0-for-2 on the weekend and saw his record fall to 4-7-1-1 on the season. Hughes finished with 45 saves after having that many on Friday as well ([box score](#)).

The #3 Sheridan (WY) Hawks (19-14-2-0) and the #4 Butte Cobras (18-15-1-1) sat idle on Saturday night but both squads will return to action next week. Sheridan travels to Rapid City, South Dakota for a two-game series with the #8 Badlands Sabres (7:05PM start both nights) for the final week of January (Jan. 27-28). Butte will host the top-ranked Gillette (WY) Wild for two games starting on Friday, January 27th at 7:30PM from the Butte Community Ice Center.

NEXT CONTEST: The Great Falls Americans will take on their closest competitor next weekend in Helena, Montana. Great Falls makes the short 90-mile trip to face the #2 Helena Bighorns on Friday (Jan. 27th) and Saturday (Jan. 28th). [HockeyTV](#) will have all the action from the Helena Ice Arena beginning at 7:05PM (MST) both nights. This will be the final time these two clubs meet in the 2022-23 NA3HL regular season.

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