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Great Falls Americans Press Release
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Bradshaw's two goals lift the Cobras past the Americans, 2-1

By Kevin Scott

Box Score	Game Sheet	League Scoreboard	Americans Team Statistics
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BUTTE, Mont., January 6, 2023 — When the #6 Great Falls Americans (13-17-1-0) and the #4 Butte Cobras (16-14-1-0) have faced each other this season, the Americans have had the upper hand winning 60% of the time.

Prior to tonight's contest, both teams have played two home-and-away series (four games) with the Americans only loss coming on October 1st when they allowed nine goals in a 9-3 shellacking put on by the Cobras ([game story](#)). In their other meetings, Great Falls earned a 3-2 season opening win on September 10th ([game story](#)) followed by a 4-3 overtime thriller at the Great Falls Ice Plex on October 7th ([game story](#)) and the Americans also edged the Cobras in Butte, Montana on October 8th, 4-3 ([game story](#)).

Forward Jace Thompson and defenseman Alex Leaf lead the Americans with 23 points. Leaf also leads all of the Great Falls players with 20 assists while Thompson is the scoring leader for head coach Greg Sears' squad with ten.

Meanwhile, the Cobras under the direction of new head coach Marc Brodeur, are led by Nick Bradshaw, who leads the team in points (43) and has scored the most goals through 31 contests with 20. Cade Wessman has accumulated a team-best 26 assists. Both Bradshaw and Wessman are returners from the 2021-22 season. Brodeur replaced Kirk Golden on the bench after the 2022 NA3HL Showcase concluded in December ([read story](#)).

Butte Cobras standout Nick Bradshaw scored both goals as the Butte Cobras escaped with a 2-1 win over the visiting Great Falls Americans on Friday evening at the Butte Community Ice Center in Butte, Montana. Great Falls is now 3-2 against Butte with one more game against the Cobras scheduled for January 20th in Butte, Montana. Silas Hughes scored one third period goal for the Americans.

The twenty-minute first period featured no scoring, and no infractions were committed by Butte or Great Falls. Butte held a 26-16 shots-on-goal advantage before the first intermission.

During the second period, Butte grabbed a 2-0 lead over Great Falls. The Cobras first scoring drive of the contest came 12:18 in the period when Nick Bradshaw found the back of the net for his 19th goal of the season. Cade Wessman of Osseo, Minnesota and Washington native Luke Schleusner added the assists. Nick Bradshaw answered the call again for the Cobras second goal 3:43 after he put the biscuit in the basket for the first goal. Luke Schleusner garnered his second assist of the game and 14th overall. Carson Streich also set up the power play score while the Americans were in the sin bin. Butte scored two goals on 46 shots before the second intermission. Great Falls had 35 chances in the net.

Silas Hughes cut into Butte's lead for the Americans first tally of the night during the third frame. Wes Weisenburger and Tyler Sunagel assisted on Hughes' ninth goal of the year early in the stanza. Although Hughes denied the Cobras from a shutout, the Americans could not find a way to even the score as the final fifteen minutes ticked away without any scoring from either squad.

The Cobras outshot the Americans in each period to finish with 70 shots-on-goal. Great Falls accrued 35 of their 49 before the third period.

The fifth head-to-head meeting saw a combined five minor penalties that resulted in ten minutes spent in the penalty box. Bradshaw's second score in the middle period was the lone power play that led to a score.

Ryan Stowe, who has played sparingly this season while top goaltender Josh Koziol was in the lineup, is 1-3-0-0 in six appearances. Koziol has since moved on the college for Augsburg University for the second semester in Minnesota ([read story](#)). Stowe started in Koziol's place last Saturday (Dec.31) and fell to the Helena Bighorns at home, 4-0 in his first outing in more than a month. Stowe made 68 saves in the Americans downfall.

Caleb Cross was the starting netminder from Mankato, Minnesota on Friday and he had his record go to 12-8-0-0 including 2-2 against Great Falls this season. Cross won ten games during the 2021-22 season in his first year with the Butte Cobras. On Friday, the second year netminder stopped 48 of 49 shots.

NOTES: Even though, the Bozeman Ice Dogs (13-17-0-1) had a bye on Friday night, Great Falls' loss moved them down a spot to sixth place (13-17-1-0) and Bozeman moved up to the fifth seed. That was the only movement in the Frontier Division standings.

FRONTIER DIVISION UPDATE: The top two teams in the NA3HL's Frontier Division met on the ice Friday in Helena, Montana as the #2 Helena Bighorns (23-7-1-1) gave the #1 Gillette (WY) Wild (25-4-1-2) their first shutout loss of the season. Three of the four games came during the final period when Harlan Wojtusik, Joe Feamster, and Andrew Deskin each found the back of the net for coach Scott Cunningham's team. Camden Cunningham got the Bighorns going later in the first period with his 12th goal of the season on a power play opportunity. Jesse Schindel (6-1-1-0) was perfect in the net for Helena as he stopped all 29 shots. Jake Turek (8-2-1-1) played 59 minutes for the Wild but gave up three goals in their seventh loss of the season. Helena leads the season series 2-1 with three matchups remaining including January 7th in Helena and February 24-25 in Gillette, Wyoming ([box score](#)).

Yellowstone forward Nick Cofer rallied his team to victory by scoring the game-tying goal with 37 seconds left to send their Frontier Division showdown against the third-ranked Sheridan (WY) Hawks (18-12-2-0)

into an extra frame. Two minutes into the five-minute overtime, Cofer produced the game-winning tally as the #7 Yellowstone Quake (11-17-3-1) won the Battle of Wyoming 5-4 during Friday's NA3HL junior hockey action. Cofer's teammates, Blake Mitchell (1 goal, 2 assists) and Brayson Bennett (1 goal, 3 assists) also helped the Quake post their eleventh victory of the season on the road. Sheridan's Nathan Awoyemi scored half of the home team's goals in the loss. John Hughes (4-6-1-0) made 50 saves in the net for the winning side. Thomas Mellenthin (3-2-2-0) allowed five goals but ended the night with 45 saves ([box score](#)).

The Bozeman Ice Dogs and the South Dakota-based Badlands Sabres each sat idle on Friday. Bozeman will host the Butte Cobras on Saturday night starting at 7:30PM (MST) at Haynes Pavilion. Badlands is not playing this weekend but will be back in action on January 13-14 when they entertain the Yellowstone (WY) Quake each night beginning at 7:05PM (MST).

NEXT CONTEST: Great Falls will return to action on the weekend of January 13-14 when they travel to Helena, Montana to challenge the second-ranked Helena Bighorns (22-7-1-1) on Friday, January 13th (7:05PM start) and then play in Great Falls on the following night for a 7:30PM showdown against the sixth-ranked Bozeman Ice Dogs (13-17-0-1) at the Great Falls Ice Plex. Saturday will be the first meeting between Great Falls and Bozeman this season. [HockeyTV](#) will have live coverage from Helena and Great Falls next weekend.

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