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**Great Falls Americans Press Release**

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**Bighorns continue dominance over the Americans by posting 5-1 victory; GF 0-6 vs. Helena**

**By Kevin Scott**

<a href="#">Box Score</a>	<a href="#">Game Sheet</a>	<a href="#">League Scoreboard</a>	<a href="#">Americans Team Statistics</a>
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HELENA, Mont., January 13, 2023 — After 32 regular season contests, the #6 Great Falls Americans (13-18-1-0) have defeated five of the seven other Frontier Division squads in the North American 3 Hockey League (NA3HL) at least once.

The Americans have faced the #7 Yellowstone (WY) Quake and the #8 Badlands (SD) Sabres (Great Falls 3-1 each against these two squads), #4 Butte Cobras (3-2 vs. Butte), #1 Gillette (WY) Wild (1-3 vs. Gillette), and the #3 Sheridan (WY)

Hawks (1-4-1 vs. Sheridan) so far this season. Great Falls also participated in the 2022 NA3HL Showcase in December in Blaine, Minnesota where they went 2-1-0-0 with wins over the Wausau (WI) Cyclones and the El Paso (TX) Rhinos and a loss to the New Ulm (MN) Steel.

Apart from the #6 Bozeman Ice Dogs, whom the Americans haven't each played yet, the #2 Helena Bighorns (25-7-1-1) are the lone team that Great Falls has not been able to defeat yet this season. Entering Friday night, Helena has three shutout victories in their five meetings this season and have outscored the Americans 22-3 with four of the five previous head-to-head matchups occurring at the Great Falls Ice Plex. Helena will also host Great Falls on the weekend of January 27-28 at the Helena Ice Arena for their final showdown of the season. [Click here](#) to see the schedule/results/game summaries of all the Great Falls Americans contests since season began in September 2022.

Great Falls was looking for the upset on Friday evening in Helena as they tried to pick up their 14<sup>th</sup> win of the 2022-23 NA3HL junior hockey season.

The #2 Helena Bighorns grabbed a 4-0 lead heading into the third period against the #6 Great Falls Americans and eventually hung on for a 5-1 win on Friday evening in front of a packed house of 1,164 fans at the Helena Ice Arena. Andrew Deskin led both teams in scoring with two goals. Great Falls' Silas Hughes netted his tenth goal of the season during the first three minutes of the third period.

The home team scored three goals in a five-minute span to take the three-goal lead. Helena forwards Cade Holland, Andrew Deskin, and TJ Norris all came away with the tallies. The six assists went to Derek Russell and Tyler Bloom on Holland's score with 9:41 remaining in the first stanza. Ten seconds later, Zach Turner and Harlan Wojtusik earned the assists on the first of two scores by Deskin. Before the period came to a close, Dylan Cunningham and Mason Eggen set up the Norris lamplighter. Helena had possession of the puck throughout by taking 23 shots and limiting the Americans to five.

The Bighorns maintained their 3-0 lead for nearly 16 minutes of the second period before Tyler Bloom and Owen Ramsey found Braden Cunningham for this 8<sup>th</sup> goal of the season for one of the top-ranked NA3HL teams in the league. Helena's offense racked up 23 shots while holding the visitors to nine during the middle period.

In the third, Great Falls eliminated the shutout by scoring within the first three minutes as Tyler Sunagel and Simon Lazsloffy collected the assists from a goal by Silas Hughes. Hughes' tenth goal gave Simon Lazsloffy his first assist in his Great Falls Americans career and Sunagel picked up his 13<sup>th</sup> assist. The Bighorns answered back midway through the last period of regulation when Andrew Deskin buried his second score of the contest that was made possible by Camden Cunningham and Owen Ramsey, who secured his second assist of the game. Great Falls has now lost six consecutive contests against Helena this season.

The host team made over 22 shots in each period to finish with 68 with five successful scoring opportunities. The Americans fifteen third period shots-on-goal was more than their first two periods combined (14).

The junior hockey rivalry saw eleven total penalties with 43 minutes spent in the penalty box between these two clubs. The Americans and Bighorns squandered their combined six power play chances.

Keaton Woolsey (1-0-0-0), who was added to the Bighorns roster as a goaltender on January 7<sup>th</sup>, stopped 28 shots in his first victory for Helena. Meanwhile, Jake Regan got the start for Great Falls and after allowing two goals midway through first period was relieved by Ryan Stowe, who played the rest of the way. Regan took his third loss (1-3-0-0) in four games. Both American netminders combined for 63 saves.

**NOTES:** Great Falls' latest setback and the Bozeman Ice Dogs shootout victory over the Butte Cobras (see below) saw the Americans and Ice Dogs trade places in the Frontier Division standings after Friday's games. #5 Bozeman is now 14-18-0-1 (29 points) and #6 Great Falls is now 13-18-1-0 (27 points).

Also, the North American 3 Hockey League (NA3HL) announced this week the schedule and the coaches for the [2023 NA3HL Top Prospects Tournament \(TPT\)](#) taking place on Monday, February 6<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday, February 7<sup>th</sup> at the UPMC Lemieux Sports Complex in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The 'all-star' tournament features representation from all five NA3HL divisions and a [North American Prospects Hockey League \(NAPHL\)](#) 18U squad that will each play two contests during the two-day festivities. Each team will have 20 players with head coaches from every team nominating the players. The coaches that will participate are based on the teams with the highest winning percentage (through January 8<sup>th</sup>) in each division. Gillette Wild Head Coach Ethan Hayes and Helena Bighorns mentor Scott Cunningham will coach the Frontier Division team. Player rosters have not been announced yet. [Click here](#) for more information about the TPT including the schedule and the coaches that will represent each of the divisions.

**FRONTIER DIVISION UPDATE:** Sky Solig led the top-ranked Gillette (WY) Wild (26-5-1-2) to a convincing 11-3 win over the third-ranked Sheridan (WY) Hawks (19-13-2-0) during Friday's NA3HL action at Whitney Rink in the M&M's Center in Sheridan, Wyoming. The Wild's offense recorded seven consecutive goals before the Hawks got on the board in the second period. Gillette led 8-2 before the second intermission. Solig had two (of his three goals) and one assist during the first two periods for the Wild. Josh Humphreys led the home team with a goal and two assists. A 32-save effort by Weston Gerke gave Gerke the win in the net. Patric Loeffler and Zuas Landry combined for 38 saves for Sheridan during the Wyoming battle on the ice ([box score](#)).

Dominic Hauer scored two goals for the #5 Bozeman Ice Dogs (14-18-0-1) against the #4 Butte Cobras (17-14-1-1) as the Ice Dogs needed a shootout to upend the Cobras on Friday night inside Haynes Pavilion. Butte and Bozeman were tied at 2-2 when the third period ended. Despite seven combined shots in the five-minute overtime, neither team lit up the lamp, so a shootout occurred. Bodie Shepardson scored the one and only goal for either team in the shootout to give Bozeman the win and moved them up to #5 in the latest Frontier Division standings. Axel Rosenlund was the winning goalie for Bozeman as he swatted away 49 of the 51 shots attempted by the Cobras. Nikolai Wallery made 54 saves in the 3-2 shootout loss ([box score](#)).

The #8 Badlands (SD) Sabres (9-19-2-2) scored two goals each in the second and third periods to hold on for a 4-3 decision over the #7 Yellowstone (WY) Quake (11-18-4-1) at South Dakota's Roosevelt Park Ice Arena during Friday's showdown. Carter Johnson buried two goals and netminder Hunter Oger had 45 saves as the last place Sabres came away with the win. Yellowstone had a 2-0 lead in the first before giving way to four straight goals by Badlands. Yellowstone's comeback came up short in the final period. Edvin Falkenstrom amassed 29 saves in 58 minutes of ice time for the Quake ([box score](#)).

**NEXT CONTEST:** Great Falls concludes the weekend with a home game against the Bozeman Ice Dogs, a team that Great Falls has not encountered yet this season. The Ice Dogs have won 13 of their 32 contests (13-18-0-1). The Americans and Ice Dogs will face off at 7:30PM (MST) from the Great Falls Ice Plex live on [HockeyTV](#) on Saturday, January 14.

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