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**Great Falls Americans Press Release**

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**Bighorns blow out the Americans, 8-0**

**By Kevin Scott**

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HELENA, Mont., January 27, 2023 — The second-ranked Helena Bighorns (29-7-1-1) have had an easy task figuring out the #6 Great Falls Americans (14-20-2-0) offense through six regular season contests through the first five months of the 2022-23 North American 3 Hockey League (NA3HL) season.

Great Falls has lost all six head-to-head contests leading up to tonight's seventh game against Helena. Through four home games at the Great Falls Ice Plex and two games at the Helena Ice Arena, the Bighorns have outscored the Americans, 27-4 including three shutout victories.

In their last contest, Bighorns forward Andrew Deskin scored two of the five goals in Helena's 5-1 win inside the Helena Ice Arena on January 13th. Silas Hughes scored for Great Falls to prevent the shutout in the third frame ([game story](#)).

The Americans were seeking revenge on Friday and hoping to break their losing streak against their closest competitors in the NA3HL Frontier Division.

Tyler Bloom scored two goals and six of his teammates each added one as the second-ranked Helena Bighorns offense rolled to an 8-0 blowout over the #6 Great Falls Americans during Friday's NA3HL action at the Helena Ice Arena in front of a huge crowd of 1,848 spectators.

A pair of hometown skaters got the job done in the first period. Cade Holland and Dylan Cunningham each buried the puck in the net for the host team. Zach Turner accrued the first of his three assists on Helena's second scoring drive of the night on the Dylan Cunningham score with 11:42 remaining. Tyler Alldredge, Lyndon Orr, and Darby McCarthy all helped set up Helena's first two scores that resulted in an 20-8 advantage in the shots-on-goal category.

Tyler Bloom guided the Bighorns to a 4-0 lead with a pair of goals seven minutes apart after the first intermission. Joe Feamster chipped in two assists. Harlan Wojtusik and Camden Cunningham also earned assists. Before the period ended, Tyler Alldredge lit up the lamp with 34 seconds before the second intermission. TJ Norris and Mason Eggen collected the assists for a 5-0 advantage. The Bighorns managed 47 shots over two periods while limiting the offensive attack by Great Falls to 14. Each team received a major penalty for fighting that resulted in an ejection.

Helena outplayed Great Falls in the third frame by scoring three unanswered tallies. Thomas Hollon, Mason Eggen and Harlan Wojtusik all added goals to the stat sheet. Zach Turner acquired his second and third assists of the evening while TJ Norris gathered his second. Cade Holland and Padraic Whited earned one.

The home team dominated by attempting over 20 shots in each of the three periods to finish with 69. The Americans took 26 shots but could not find a way to get the puck in the net.

Great Falls and Helena total 50 minutes of penalty time for fighting that resulted in a second period ejection. The two rivals combined for 11 infractions that resulted in 64 minutes off the ice. The visitors had five opportunities to score while Helena was in the sin bin but Helena's defense denied any scoring.

Keaton French got his first start for the Bighorns after coming over from the Minnesota Loons of the NA3HL's West Division where he went 6-12-0-0 over eighteen games. The Alaska netminder redirected all 26 of the Americans shots in the win.

Jake Regan had another tough outing for the Americans. He allowed eight goals (61 saves) for his fourth loss (1-4-0-0) of the season.

**NOTES:** The Great Falls Americans have released forwards [Silas Hughes](#) and [Tyler Sunagel](#) and they are now with the Gillette (WY) Wild. Sunagel, Plymouth, Wisconsin native, scored nine goals and 15 assists in 30 games for Great Falls this season while Hughes (Fairbanks, Alaska native), who was recently selected as one of two NA3HL Top Prospects Tournament members for the Frontier Division (along with defenseman Alex Leaf) for the Americans, had 13 goals and 12 assists in 32 appearances during the 2022-23 NA3HL season. Great Falls received [Jack Metcalfe](#) and [Hunter Acker](#) from the Wild.

The #1 Gillette (WY) Wild and the #2 Helena Bighorns have each clinched a spot in the Fraser Cup Playoffs that begin in March with four spots up for grabs.

**FRONTIER DIVISION UPDATE:** Perhaps the most exciting game in the Frontier Division on Friday was between the third-ranked Sheridan (WY) Hawks (20-14-2-0) and the #8 Badlands (SD) Sabres (10-21-2-3) that took place in the Sabres home venue (Roosevelt Park Ice Arena). Badlands and Sheridan traded goals in the first period as Izaiah Phillips (Badlands) and Teejay Torgrimson (Sheridan) scored for the respective teams. Payton Stauffacher gave the Sabres a 2-1 lead with the only score of the second period. Tie Schumacher evened the score for the Hawks midway through the third period with his ninth goal of the season. The 2-2 game resulted in a five-minute overtime, where neither team could put the biscuit in the net. During the shootout, Sheridan outscored Badlands, 2-1. Tie Schumacher and Josh Humphreys scored the goals to avoid the upset by the Sabres. Brady Ridnour lamplighter was the only successful score for the home team ([box score](#)).

The #5 Bozeman Ice Dogs (15-20-0-1) and the #7 Yellowstone (WY) Quake (12-20-4-2) each scored twice during the first period before the Quake opened the game with two goals in the middle period. The

Quake added another goal early in the third for a 5-2 advantage before the Ice Dogs attempted a comeback by scoring two during an 80 second span to pull the deficit to 5-4. Yellowstone's Zac Orwig denied a game-tying goal with 1:21 remaining to preserve the minor upset over Bozeman. Teagan Scheurer and Wyatt O'Donoghue combined for two goals and two assists to lead Wyoming. Goaltender Steven Kelley (3-3-1-0) made 47 saves. Meanwhile, Spencer Wilkinson, Sam Ingram, Ben Fries and Braden Koliha all added to their season (goal) total. Axel Rosenlund struggled in the net allowing five goals and finished with 19 saves ([box score](#)). Rosenlund is 4-4-0-0 as a member of the Ice Dogs and losing two games with the Minnesota Loons to begin the season for a 4-6-0-0).

Two former Great Falls Americans had a big showing for their new team. Silas Hughes scored two of top-ranked Gillette Wild's (30-5-1-2) eleven goals and Tyler Sunagel racked up one goal and dished out two assists in their debut with Gillette after being acquired from Great Falls this week. Gillette led 6-2 after two periods before outscoring the Butte Cobras (18-16-1-1) 5-0 after the second period for their 30<sup>th</sup> win of the season. Cade Wessman and Patrick Crooks scored two goals for the Cobras in the second period. Jake Turek picked up his tenth win of the season (10-2-1-1). The Cobras utilized two goaltenders in Nikolai Wallery (32 saves) and Joshua Horacek (30 saves) in the loss ([box score](#)).

**NEXT CONTEST:** With five weeks remaining in the 2022-23 NA3HL regular season, the Americans continue their month-long road trip with their season finale against the Helena Bighorns on Saturday, January 28<sup>th</sup> for a 7:05PM (MST) showdown in Helena, Montana.

Their February schedule includes six of their eight contests away from the Great Falls Ice Plex meandering through South Dakota and Wyoming. The Americans open up February with a trip to Rapid City, South Dakota for a two-game series with the Badlands Sabres (Feb. 3-4) followed by a stop in Gillette, Wyoming for two games with the #1 Gillette Wild (Feb. 10-11) and back to Montana for two road/two home meetings with the Bozeman Ice Dogs (Feb. 17-18 and Feb. 24-25). The Badlands and Gillette series each start at 7:05PM (MST) and games involving Bozeman start with the puck dropping at 7:30PM (MST). All games are live on [HockeyTV](#).

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