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**Great Falls Americans Press Release**

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**Americans in search of offense after shutout loss to the Bighorns**

**By Kevin Scott**

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HELENA, Mont., January 28, 2023 — For the final time during the 2022-23 NA3HL regular season, the Great Falls Americans took the 90-mile trip through Interstate 15 to face their rivals, the Helena Bighorns.

The #2 Helena Bighorns (30-7-1-1) are the only team in the NA3HL Frontier Division that the #6 Great Falls Americans (14-21-2-0) have not defeated at least once this season. Helena is 7-0 against Great Falls with the closest contest occurring on September 16 where Great Falls scored twice but found themselves on the losing end ([6-2](#)). The remaining six defeats had the Americans either being shutout or scoring one goal.

The Americans were remaining optimistic on Saturday with one final chance to pull off an upset at the Helena Ice Arena.

The #2 Helena Bighorns continue to rack up wins as they picked up their 30<sup>th</sup> by shutting out the #6 Great Falls Americans for the second straight night, 5-0 at the Helena Ice Arena on Saturday. Five Bighorn players added tallies to their resume including Padraic Whited, Garrett Bogan, TJ Norris, Harlan Wojtusik, and Tyler Bloom. Helena goalie Jesse Schindel swatted away all 32 shots. This was the final time these clubs would meet on the ice in the regular season.

Defensemen Padraic Whited and Garrett Bogan put the Bighorns on top 2-0 after the first period concluded. Whited scored his second goal of the season with help from Mason Eggers and Lyndon Orr 3:50 into the game. Ty Moore picked up his first assist with the Helena NA3HL franchise and Dylan Cunningham gathered his 25<sup>th</sup> assist on Bogan's score eight minutes later. The Bighorns took twice as many shots (20-10) than the Americans.

Helena continued their offensive attack against Great Falls in the middle period. TJ Norris accumulated his tenth goal within the first three minutes with assistance from Padraic Whited and Derek Russell. The

three-goal lead would hold up throughout the final seventeen minutes of the stanza. The Americans missed two power play opportunities that they could not turn into goals. Great Falls was held to seven shots-on-goal. Helena scored one goal on 22 chances.

In the third frame, Harlan Wojtusik and Tyler Bloom added two more successful scoring drives 81 seconds apart for the fourth and fifth goals for the host squad. Both NA3HL clubs skated the rest of the way without scoring. Lyndon Orr chipped in his second assist after getting his first on Helena's first scoring drive in the first period. Andrew Deskin, Garrett Bogan, and Camden Cunningham each made the other assists in the final period of regulation.

The final meeting between these two squads resulted in a 27 shots-on-goal difference with the Bighorns winning all three periods for a total of 59. Great Falls settled for 32 shots with a team high 15 in the last frame.

For the first two periods, Great Falls played a penalty-free contest. They had two minors with four minutes of time spent in the penalty box along with three unanswered power play opportunities. Six penalties were whistled on the Bighorns, and they scored on one of their two power plays.

Just like his teammate Keaton French did the night before, Helena netminder Jesse Schindel had a perfect game stopping all 32 shots to improve his record to 8-1-1-0 in eleven appearances. French had 26 saves in Friday's 8-0 win against Great Falls.

Nik Romahs, the Latvia native, got his first start in a month for the Americans. Romahs was replaced by Ryan Stowe after Helena scored their third tally in the second period. Ryan Stowe recorded 35 saves but allowed two goals. Nik Romahs (2-2-1-0) took the loss.

**FRONTIER DIVISION UPDATE:** Helena's shutout over Great Falls was not the only one in the Frontier Division on Saturday night. The #3 Sheridan (WY) Hawks (21-14-2-0) earned the weekend sweep over the last place Badlands Sabres (10-22-2-3) by the score of 5-0. On Friday, Sheridan escaped with a 3-2 shootout win over the host team. A trio of Hawks players scored a goal and dished out an assist including Teejay Torgrimson, Josh Humphreys, and Parker Norling with Tie Schumacher and Dalton Thomas also receiving goals. Patric Loeffler (9-6-0-0) was the winning goaltender with 25 saves. Brady Devries saw his record go to 5-5-1-0 with 20 saves. Zach Broxterman came in relief of him in the second period and finished with 28 saves ([box score](#)).

The fifth-ranked Bozeman Ice Dogs (16-20-0-1) combined for four goals in the first two periods and scored four more in the third for a convincing 8-2 victory over the #7 Yellowstone (WY) Quake (12-21-4-2). Bozeman forwards Kole Morris and Braden Koliha each scored twice and had an assist to lead the home team to victory and deny a weekend sweep by Yellowstone. The Quake scored the first goals in the third period with PJ Comose and Teagan Scheurer acquiring them in a 40 second span. Sean Smer of Bozeman (2-4-0-1) got the win by posting 35 saves. Edvin Falkenstrom (43 saves) of Yellowstone saw his record fall to 5-10-2-1 in 19 appearances ([box score](#)).

The #4 Butte Cobras (18-17-1-1) led on two separate occasions but failed to pull off the upset against the top team in the Frontier Division, the Gillette (WY) Wild (31-5-1-2). After trailing Butte 2-1 in the second period, Gillette's offense scored three unanswered goals to claim a 4-2 decision over the Cobras. Gillette went 2-0 on the weekend against Butte on the road. The Wild got scores from Cade Voge, Isaac Young, Josef Lalli, and Anthony Foster. Former Great Falls American standouts playing in their second game

with Gillette, Tyler Sunagel now has one goal and three assists in two games including one helper on Saturday. After getting two goals in Friday's lopsided 11-2 win over Butte, Silas Hughes assisted on two scoring drives in the Saturday matchup. Cade Wessman and Luke Schleusner added the goals for the Cobras and Nick Bradshaw had two assists. The Wild's Cole Wheaton now has twelve wins in fifteen games as he amassed 50 saves on the night. In his third season with the Cobras, Nikolai Wallery (1-2-1-1) played 58 minutes registering 59 saves. Braylon Rogers came into the game for the final two minutes and redirected all four shots he faced ([box score](#)).

**NEXT CONTEST:** Great Falls will travel to Rapid City, South Dakota for a two-game series with the #8 Badlands Sabres on February 3-4, 2023. Great Falls leads the season series 3-1 including a shootout victory in Great Falls on October 29. All the action at the Roosevelt Park Ice Arena begins on [HockeyTV](#) at 7:05PM (MST) on Friday and Saturday evening.

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