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Great Falls Americans Press Release

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Third period goals lift the Americans to victory over the Ice Dogs in home finale

By Kevin Scott

Box Score	Game Sheet	League Scoreboard	Americans Team Statistics
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GREAT FALLS, Mont., February 25, 2023 — The time has come!! The Great Falls Americans (16-26-3-0) played their final home NA3HL contest of the 2022-23 season in front of the home crowd on Saturday night at the Great Falls Ice Plex.

On Friday against the Bozeman Ice Dogs (23-21-0-1), the Americans trailed 4-2 after two periods of play and each team managed to trade one goal each in the third for a 5-3 win by Bozeman. Braden Koliha was the standout player by scoring three goals for the visiting Montana squad. Jack Metcalfe, Ben Cremers and Colter

Barnett tallied the goals for Great Falls. Goaltender Sean Smer got the win with 47 saves for the Ice Dogs while Ryan Stowe finished with 39 saves for Great Falls ([game story](#)).

Great Falls looked to pick up one final victory to leave the home fans on a high note until the new season begins in September 2023.

Forwards Ben Cremers and Garrett Weisenburger each scored two goals apiece to carry the Great Falls Americans past the Bozeman Ice Dogs, 5-2 in front of a large and boisterous Saturday crowd of 754 fans that saw the Americans play for the last time this season at home. The Americans had their annual Billet Family Appreciation Night at the Great Falls Ice Plex as host families and players were honored during the second intermission. Kevin Scott, the Americans Public Relations/Media Coordinator, took the photos of the honorees.

Both teams combined 27 shots but neither squad was able to put the puck between the pipes during the first stanza.

Sixteen minutes ticked off the clock after the first intermission before Great Falls scored two goals to give the home team the 2-0 advantage. Garrett Weisenburger struck first with his lamplighter with 3:14 remaining in the second off a pass from Noah Osiowy, who recorded his ninth assist. Jace Thompson (20th assist) and Simon Lazsloffy (4th assist) set up Ben Cremers, who buried his eleventh goal with 1:40 on the clock. Bozeman gathered 36 shots over two periods and Great Falls accrued 15 of their 22 in the middle frame.

The Ice Dogs battled back and cut the Americans lead in half (2-1) on a Chris Porciuncula score 4:50 into the third. Spencer Wilkinson and Bryce Sturm collected the assists for coach Mike Perkins' squad. A switch in momentum had Great Falls' offense score three goals in 36 seconds with a variety of penalties called on the Ice Dogs. During this span, Garrett Weisenburger and Ben Cremers chipped in their second scores of the night and Noah Osiowy added one for the four-goal lead by the host team. Ben Cremers, Wes Weisenburger, Alex Leaf and Jace Thompson received credit for the goals with under six minutes remaining. Weisenburger and Cremer's scores occurred while Bozeman players were in the penalty box. As time expired, Bozeman forward Brock Blake, who spent time on the NA3HL's Helena Bighorns roster this season, netted his first (short-handed) goal while Magnus Lowham and Ben Fries earned their third assists of the year.

Although the Americans won by three goals, the Ice Dogs attempted more shots (51-41) after the sixty-minute rivalry concluded.

The third period saw nine of Bozeman's 13 penalties including five unsportsmanlike conduct infractions called on the Ice Dogs in the last seven minutes. Great Falls played most a clean game with two minor infractions whistled against them including one for cross checking in the second and rough penalty in the third. Great Falls went 3-for-8 on the power play.

After falling to the Ice Dogs, 6-3 on February 18th, Jake Regan earned redemption by acquiring 49 saves for his second victory (2-5-0-0) of the season. Axel Rosenlund suffered his seventh setback including two when he was with the Minnesota Loons at the beginning of the season. The Minnesota netminder allowed three of his five goals in the final period as he ended his final contest versus the Americans with 36 saves.

NOTES: Saturday night was Billet Family Appreciation Night at the Great Falls Ice Plex where host families and the players that have stayed with them were introduced on the ice between the second and third periods. Check out the photo gallery by [clicking here](#).

A special thanks to the Billet (host) families, fans, sponsors, league officials (both on-ice and off-ice), Americans staff and the Great Falls Ice Plex staff for a fantastic 2022-23 NA3HL season!!! We hope to see you for the 2023-24 season beginning in September 2023.

[Click here](#) for the official Billet Appreciation Night (printable) brochure that was at Saturday's game.

During the first intermission, two members of the Great Falls Figure Skating Club performed in front of the American fans as part of the intermission entertainment.

FRONTIER DIVISION UPDATE: All three of the Frontier Division matchups tonight saw the home team earn shutout victories.

The race for Frontier Division supremacy continued Saturday night as the #1 Helena Bighorns (35-8-1-1) played the #2 Gillette (WY) Wild (34-8-1-2) in Wyoming with the home team topping the Bighorns, 2-0 as 1,188 spectators watched inside Riley Arena. On Friday, Helena blanked Gillette, 2-0. Silas Hughes and Alec Waller accumulated the first and second period goals, respectively for the Wild. Both teams struggled to find the back of the net in the third period. Each team accrued seven minor penalties. Cole Wheaton (13-4-0-0) was perfect in the net by swatting away all 43 shots put up by the Bighorns offensive attack. Keaton French took the rare loss (6-1-0-0 with the Bighorns) after going 6-12-0-0 with the Minnesota Loons when he started the season ([box score](#)). Helena went 4-2-0-0 against Gillette this season.

The #3 Sheridan (WY) Hawks (25-18-2-0) scored three goals in the first and third periods and two more in the second to blank the #7 Yellowstone (WY) Quake (12-27-4-2), 8-0. Sheridan swept Yellowstone by also claiming a 4-1 decision on Friday night in front of the home crowd. Teejay Torgrimson led seven Hawk scorers with two goals in the win. Patric Loeffler (11-10-0-0) got back to his winning way after being on the short end in his three previous outings. The third-year player redirected all 39 shots for his tenth win. Steven Kelley and John Hughes split time as goaltenders for the Quake. Kelley (3-5-1-0) had 27 saves in 47 minutes but suffered his sixth loss including five in regulations. Hughes relieved Kelley in the third and prevented all five shots from getting by him in the final twelve minutes ([box score](#)).

The Butte Cobras (24-19-1-1) also won by the same margin as the Sheridan Hawks did when they tallied eight goals against the last place Badlands (SD) Sabres (11-29-2-3) on Saturday night. The only difference in scoring from Friday's contest and Saturday's was that the Cobras allowed one goal (8-1). Nick Bradshaw recorded one goal in each period to finish with a hat trick. Teammate Tamer Billman scored two goals and one assist for the Cobras 24th victory. Butte outshot Badlands 70-25 including 35 in the final twenty minutes. Caleb Cross won his 19th game in 30 appearances by rejecting all 25 shots sent his way. Hunter Oger of the Sabres made 17 saves in the first period before giving way to Brady Devries who ended the night with 45 saves. Oger (2-1-0-0) was credited with his first loss in six contests ([box score](#)).

NEXT CONTEST: The Americans season is not finished yet as they will make a trip down to Cody, Wyoming for a two-game season finale against the #7 Yellowstone Quake (12-27-4-2) on Friday and Saturday, March 3-4, 2023. Both Great Falls and Yellowstone do not qualify for postseason play this season. [HockeyTV](#) will provide the coverage of the final contests of the year beginning at 7:05PM (MST) from Riley Arena.

The Bozeman Ice Dogs will also finish out the 2022-23 NA3HL regular season on the road on March 3-4th when they travel down to Gillette, Wyoming to take on the second ranked Gillette Wild. Game time is set for 7:05PM (MST) each night.

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