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Great Falls Americans Press Release

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Americans led early but fell to the Bozeman Ice Dogs, 5-4 in overtime

By Kevin Scott

Box Score	Game Sheet	League Scoreboard	Americans Team Statistics
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BOZEMAN, Mont., February 17, 2023 — The Great Falls Americans enter the final three weeks of the 2022-2023 NA3HL junior hockey regular season this weekend.

#6 Great Falls (15-24-3-0) faced the #5 Bozeman Ice Dogs (21-20-0-1), who are ten points ahead (43-33) in the official NA3HL Frontier Division standings. Both teams will face each other four times over the next two weeks including two games next weekend (February 24-25) at the Great Falls Ice Plex for the Americans home weekend season finale.

In January 2023, Great Falls and Bozeman each recorded one victory in Great Falls, Montana. Due to the league scheduling, both teams met on the ice for the first time this season on January 14th where the Americans downed the Ice Dogs, 5-2. Two American players who have since been traded to the #1 Gillette Wild had a hand in the Americans win. Silas Hughes buried two goals and had one assist and Tyler Sunagel had one score. Ryan Stowe, Great Falls' netminder, collected 49 saves. Owen House and Chris Porciuncula added the two scoring drives for Bozeman while Axel Rosenlund stopped 30 of the 34 shots in the loss ([game story](#)).

A week later (January 21st), Bozeman traveled to Great Falls again and the Ice Dogs escaped with a 2-1 win as Kole Morris and Spencer Wilkinson made the tallies and Casey Sturm assisted on both scoring plays for Bozeman. Ben Cremers and Alex Leaf assisted on Jace Thompson's lone third period score for the home team. It was Axel Rosenlund (Bozeman) and Ryan Stowe (Great Falls) in the net for their respective teams. This time, Rosenlund's 43 saves carried the Ice Dogs to the one-goal win. Stowe registered 38 saves for the Americans ([game story](#)).

The team leaders this season for the Americans are Jace Thompson with 22 goals and 39 points and Alex Leaf is the front-runner with 29 assists. Meanwhile, Bodie Shepardson leads Mike Perkins' squad with 23 goals and Owen House has dished out 27 assists and is the points leader with 43.

Great Falls Americans forward Jace Thompson had a hat trick (three goals) and one assist but that was not enough to knock off the #6 Bozeman Ice Dogs on Friday night in Bozeman, Montana. Great Falls held a slim 3-2 advantage after two periods and Bozeman outscored Great Falls, 2-1 in the third to send the

game into an extra period where the Ice Dogs prevailed by scoring two minutes into overtime for their 21st victory of the season.

Bodie Shepardson scored the first of his two goals during the opening stanza to give the Ice Dogs the early lead. Spencer Wilkinson and Ben Fries added the assists on the only scoring drive eight minutes into the period.

It was Jace Thompson's time to shine on the ice in the second frame. The second-year player from Valley City, North Dakota scored all three of the Americans goals including the final one with one minute remaining to give Great Falls the 3-2 advantage. Ben Cremers picked up his 18th and 19th assists of the season Simon Lazsloffy, Wes Weisenburger, Noah Osiowy, and Alex Leaf also earned assists. Bozeman answered with a second goal by Bodie Shepardson midway through the period with helpers from Cole Busher and Chris Porciuncula. After taking 17 shots in the first, Great Falls added 12 in the second for a total of 29 during the first forty minutes. Bozeman had 19 of their 28 shots before the first intermission.

Bozeman evened the score (3-3) three minutes into the third period. Spencer Wilkinson recorded his 16th goal that was made possible by the assistance of Bryce Sturm and Chris Porciuncula. Seven minutes later, the host team struck again. This time, Braden Koliha accumulated his 13th scoring drive as Cole Busher added his second assist of the night and Owen House, the team leader in assists (27) chipped in one. Bozeman's small lead (4-3) last 2:20 until Phil Harrell scored the game-tying lamplighter with six minutes remaining. Harrell, a first-year player for the Americans from St. Louis, Missouri, tacked on his second career goal for the Americans. Ben Cremers tallied his third assist and Jace Thompson accrued his first of the game. Bozeman outshot Great Falls, 10-8 in the last regulation period.

Bozeman needed two minutes to capitalize on their fifth and deciding goal. Cole Busher's pass to Dominik Hauer two minutes into the five-minute extra period helped the Bozeman Ice Dogs maintain fifth place in the Frontier Division standings with three weeks to go.

The shots taken were close throughout the night, but Bozeman finished with 39 of the 76 taken throughout the 62-minute affair.

The NA3HL league officials did not have too many stoppages of play. Bozeman had two of their three (minor) penalties called in the third period. A minor interference infraction called on Sam Duehlmeier was the only penalty called against the Americans in the second period. Both squads had their one power play go unanswered.

Jace Thompson led both NA3HL Frontier Division members with three goals and one assist and Ben Cremers gathered three assists. Bodie Shepardson was one goal shy of a hat trick (two goals) and Spencer Wilkinson scored once and assisted on one scoring play for the Ice Dogs.

First-year goaltender Sean Smer saw his record improve to 5-4-0-1 as he redirected 33 of 37 shots by the Americans in his first game against the Montana NA3HL club. Ryan Stowe (3-6-2-0) suffered his second overtime loss of the season in Friday's loss but not before acquiring 34 saves. His first overtime setback came in a road loss to the Butte Cobras (4-3) on January 20th. Ryan is now 1-0-1-0 against Bozeman this season including a January 14th 5-2 win in Great Falls.

FRONTIER DIVISION UPDATE: Ty Moore, Andrew Deskin, Tyler Bloom, and Braden Cunningham all scored for the #2 Helena Bighorns (33-7-1-1) before the second intermission as Helena handed the eighth-ranked Badlands (SD) Sabres (11-26-2-3) their 26th regulation loss (4-1) as 1,547 spectators watched from the Helena Ice Arena in Helena, Montana. Denim Young scored for South Dakota. Keaton French (22 saves) picked up his fourth consecutive victory in the net for the Bighorns. Brady Devries (5-7-1-0) struggled during the first and second periods and finished with 77 saves ([box score](#)).

Jace Thompson was not the only Frontier Division player to achieve a hat trick on Friday evening. Butte Cobras standout Nick Bradshaw also lit up the lamp three times and dished out one assist as the #3 Cobras (22-18-1-1) topped the #4 Sheridan (WY) Hawks (22-18-2-0), 5-2 inside the Butte Community Ice Center. Teejay Torgrimson and McCaffrey Billings scored for the Hawks in a losing effort. Caleb Cross, who won for the 17th time in 27 contests, concluded his night with 61 saves for the winning side. Patric Loeffler, the third year netminder for the Hawks, saw his record drop to 10-10-0-0 in 21 appearances this season in Wyoming. The Rogers, Minnesota native made 45 saves ([box score](#)).

The #1 Gillette (WY) Wild (33-7-1-1) and the #7 Yellowstone (WY) Quake (12-2-4-2) are idle this weekend. Both teams will return to the ice next weekend (February 24-25, 2023). Gillette will host the second-ranked Helena Bighorns at 7:05PM (MST) on Friday and Saturday (Feb. 24-25, 2023) while the Yellowstone Quake will travel to Sheridan, Wyoming to challenge the Sheridan Hawks at 7:30PM (MST) for a two-game series.

NEXT CONTEST: Great Falls and Bozeman will face off again on Saturday, February 18, 2023, at Haynes Pavilion at 7:30PM (MST).

The Great Falls Americans will entertain the Bozeman Ice Dogs in the regular season home finale on February 24-25, 2023. Both games begin live on [HockeyTV](#) at 7:30PM (MST) from the Great Falls Ice Plex.

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