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Great Falls Americans Press Release

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Top-ranked Gillette overwhelms Great Falls, 8-2

By Kevin Scott

Box Score	Game Sheet	League Scoreboard	Americans Team Statistics
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GILLETTE, Wyo., February 10, 2023 — In four previous encounters with the #1 Gillette (WY) Wild (32-7-1-2), the #6 Great Falls Americans (15-23-2-0) have come out on top in just one of those games.

Great Falls hosted Gillette in four contests (October 21-22 and November 18-19) at the Great Falls Ice Plex during the 2022-23 season.

The Wild held a 6-3 lead after two periods in their initial meeting and defeated the Americans, 9-4 behind solid efforts from Sky Solig (2 goals, 2 assists), Isaac Young's one goal and two assists and netminder Jake Turek made 25 saves. Russ Rasmussen, Dawson Bunch, Noah Osiowy and former Great Falls standout Tyler Sunagel, who is now playing with the Wild, all scored for the Americans ([game story](#)). In their October 22nd contest, Gillette led 2-1 before they exploded for three goals in a 5-1 romp over Great Falls. Jace Johnson of Gillette led both teams with two goals and Dominic Hite won in the net by accruing 27 saves. Matt Ramstad scored the lone goal in the first stanza for the home team. Former Great Falls Americans goalie Josh Koziol amassed 44 saves in the loss ([game story](#)).

One month later (November 18-19), the Americans pulled off the upset by downing the Wild in a shootout, 4-3. Jace Thompson, Garrett Weisenburger and Baden Powell all scored in regulation for Great Falls. Sky Solig, Jace Johnson, and Johan Palmqvist made the regulation tallies for Wyoming. After a 3-3 contest after three periods and no scoring in the overtime, Anthony Foster made the only one-on-one goal for the visiting team while Great Falls had two successful scoring drives from former Americans players William Fallman and Silas Hughes, now playing for the Wild ([game story](#)). In the November 19th contest, the Wild bounced back and defeated the Americans, 4-1 including two third period goals that secured the victory. Gillette scoring leaders included Alex Waller, Sky Solig, Jace Johnson and Saizha Norwegian. Tyler Sunagel scored for Great Falls ([game story](#)).

The Americans headed for their one and only regular season trip to Gillette, Wyoming for a two-game series with the Wild this weekend. Would they outscore the Wild?

The #1 Gillette (WY) Wild opened their two-game weekend series inside Gillette's Spirit Hall Ice Arena by rolling by the #6 Great Falls Americans, 8-2 with six players from Gillette getting in the scoring column.

Sky Solig and Saizha Norwegian scored half of the Wild's eight goals. Ben Cremers and Jace Thompson added the goals for the Americans.

Gillette, one of the top teams in the entire 34 team North American 3 Hockey League, raced out to a 4-0 first period lead. Forwards Saizha Norwegian, Isaac Young, Jace Johnson and Sky Solig each lit up the lamp. Adam Severson made two assists while Sky Solig, Connor Wendell, Wyatt Schmitz, Zack Slinger, Saizha Norwegian and former American, Tyler Sunagel collected one assist each for Ethan Hayes' squad. Prior to the first period ending, Ben Cremers provided his seventh goal of the season off the stick of Jace Thompson with a secondary assist made by Alex Leaf while the Wild were in the penalty box.

Gillette's 4-1 lead lasted seven minutes into the middle period when Sky Solig put the puck in the net against Great Falls goalie Jake Regan. Adam Severson assisted for the 35th time and third of the game. Josef Lalli also added a helper. The Wild's offense was too much for the Americans to manage as they outshot the Montana squad, 53-19 during the first forty minutes.

In the third period, the Wild kept capitalizing on the Americans mistakes by putting an additional three goals in the back of the net. Jace Johnson, one of six players on the Wild's roster with over 30 assists, gathered his 31st and Zack Slinger created his 14th of the season as Connor Wendell put the puck between the pipes during the first 18 seconds of the final frame. Saizha Norwegian provided Gillette's seventh goal six minutes later off the stick of Sky Solig. Alec Waller also set up the play. Dale Rodriguez, in his second season with the Frontier Division's top team, made his first goal as a member of the Wyoming NA3HL club. The tally with assists coming from Josef Lalli and former American standout Silas Hughes, came with seven minutes left. Great Falls would answer with a goal by Jace Johnson but just 96 seconds remained, and Great Falls would get no closer. The assists went to Mason Loughlin and Ben Cremers.

Gillette had an easy time with Great Falls with 76 shots being taken while holding the visitors to 20 with half (10) occurring in the first period.

The NA3HL officials called eleven penalties that resulted in 22 minutes in the sin bin. Only one power play by the Americans was successful (1-for-5). Six power play opportunities were not answered for the Wild.

Gillette was led by forwards Sky Solig (2 goals, 2 assists) and Saizha Norwegian (2 goals, 1 assist) while Jake Turek had 18 saves. Second and third period scoring drives by Ben Cremers and Jace Thompson provided one goal and one assist to each of the American standouts.

Jake Turek won his eleventh game (11-3-1-1) including his third over Great Falls. The North Branch, Minnesota finished with 18 saves and two goals allowed in sixty minutes. Ryan Stowe last six minutes and collected 11 saves before being replaced by Jake Regan, who saw his record fall to 1-5-0-0. In 54 minutes, Regan accumulated 57 saves.

NOTES: Before tonight's game, the Americans added forward [Colter Barnett](#) to their roster. The 6'2" hockey standout from Glasgow, Montana came over from the NA3HL's Sheridan (WY) Hawks where he had two assists in 32 contests.

FRONTIER DIVISION UPDATE: The #2 Helena Bighorns (31-7-1-1) kept pace with the Gillette Wild in the Frontier Division standings and found a way to win their home contest against the Yellowstone (WY) Quake (12-24-4-2). The 2-1 victory came on a Lyndon Orr score with 2:28 to go in regulation. After Owen Ramsey's goal held up for two periods, Ryan Hiles put in the equalizer in the third for the Quake before Orr ensured the Bighorns 31st win of the season. Keaton French got his second win in two games with Helena after starting the season with the NA3HL's Minnesota Loons where he won six of 19. Edvin Falkenstrom made 75 saves in the Quake setback ([box score](#)). The loss by Yellowstone kept the Americans (temporarily) as the sixth seed in the Frontier Division standings with seven games to go.

It was #3 Sheridan Hawks (22-16-2-0) facing the #5 Bozeman Ice Dogs (19-20-0-1) at Sheridan's Whitney Rink in the M&M's Center on Friday. Sheridan and Bozeman each netted three goals after two periods before Bozeman pulled away with two unanswered scores in the third for a 5-3 win. Bozeman's Bodie Shepardson scored two goals for the winning side. Ryan McKenna and Makhai Sparks led the charge for the Hawks by compiling two goals and one assist apiece. Sean Smer's 31 saves was enough

(three goals allowed) for the Ice Dogs 18th win. Meanwhile, Patric Loeffler swatted away 37 shots in the loss for the Hawks ([box score](#)).

The #5 Butte Cobras (19-20-1-1) and the #8 Badlands (SD) Sabres (11-24-2-3) each rang up five goals through two and a half periods before the Cobras finished off the Sabres, 7-5 thanks to Luke Schleusner (two goals, two assists) and Patrick Crooks and Nick Bradshaw's performances (one goal, two assists each). AJ Petrotto led Badlands with two scoring opportunities. The winning netminder was Caleb Cross, who finished with 21 stops. Despite 30 saves, Zach Broxterman allowed seven goals in another setback for the visitors ([box score](#)).

NEXT CONTEST: Great Falls and Gillette will continue with one final meeting on Saturday, February 11th. The action at the Spirit Hall Ice Arena begins at 7:05PM (MST) on [HockeyTV](#).

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