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Great Falls Americans Press Release  
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**Top Prospects Tournament: South and West Divisions win both NA3HL TPT games on final day**

By Kevin Scott

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CRANBERRY TOWNSHIP (PITTSBURGH), PA., February 7, 2023 —The [UPMC Lemieux Sports Complex](#) (home of the NHL’s Pittsburgh Penguins practice facility) in Cranberry Township (near Pittsburgh), Pennsylvania played host to the first (Monday) and final day (Tuesday) of the 2023 North American 3 Hockey League’s (NA3HL) [Top Prospects Tournament](#) on Tuesday. Each team played their second and final game of the tournament.

The ‘all-star’ like tournament is played in cooperation with the 2023 North American Hockey League’s (NAHL) Top Prospect Tournament at the same facility.

The [2023 NA3HL Top Prospects Tournament](#) provides an opportunity for the NA3HL to showcase their best hockey players in front of coaches and scouts from the North American Hockey League (NAHL), the American Collegiate Hockey Association (ACHA) and the NCAA college levels.

On Sunday, January 8<sup>th</sup>, the NA3HL standings were frozen, and teams were seeded within their division based on win percentage. The number of players that each NA3HL team sent to the TPT was based on each squad’s winning percentage within their group.

This year, the five teams comprised of the five NA3HL divisions (Central, East, Frontier, South, and West) plus a team comprised of a roster of U18 players from the North American Prospects Hockey League (NAPHL) make up the tournament. Each team consists of 20 players (120 players and twelve coaches total) will each play two games over two days with each squad having 12 forwards, 6 defensemen, two goaltenders, one head coach and one assistant coach. Respective head coaches nominated all players that were considered for the prestigious event. The two-day Top Prospects Tournament began on February 7<sup>th</sup> and will finish on February 8<sup>th</sup>. [Click here](#) for the full two-day tournament schedule and results.

The Frontier Division squad was represented by all eight teams. The Gillette (WY) Wild and the Helena Bighorns, the top two teams in the Frontier Division, sent seven players and four players, respectively, while the Sheridan (WY) Hawks will have three players and the Butte Cobras have two representatives. The Yellowstone (WY) Quake, Badlands Sabres, Bozeman Ice Dogs, and the Great Falls Americans will have one each. [Click here](#) for the Americans press release with full rosters, coaches, and schedule for each team.

[Alex Leaf](#) represents the Great Falls Americans (15-22-2-0), who are currently in sixth place in the Frontier Division, at this tournament. "Alex is very deserving of this honor," said Great Falls Americans Head Coach and General Manager, Greg Sears. "He is one of our most consistent players. It will be a good trip for him." Alex will be guided by Gillette Wild Head Coach, Ethan Hayes and assisted by Helena Bighorns mentor Scott Cunningham.

[Click here](#) to recap the first day of the tournament. The early game started at 7:00AM (MST) or 9:00AM (EST).

Read below for the full recap of all three Top Prospect Tournament contests that occurred on Tuesday morning.

### **South Division pulls away from the Frontier squad, 6-4**

Aaron Best (Texas Brahmas) and Jack Herron (Texas RoadRunners) scored two goals each to help the South Division squad outlast the Frontier Division team, 6-4 during Tuesday's final day of competition at the 2023 NA3HL Top Prospects Tournament in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Tyler Alldredge and Harlan Wojtusik of the Helena Bighorns, Sheridan Hawks standout Parker Norling, and Gillette Wild forward Sky Solig chipped in the goals for the Frontier Division.

The South Division outscored the Frontier Division, 2-1 in the first period. Parker Norling scored his first and only goal eight minutes into the first game of the second day of the tournament. Ryan McKenna (Sheridan Hawks) and Silas Hughes (Gillette Wild) captured the assists. Jack Herron and Aaron Best scored the first of their two goals during a six-minute span that saw the South take the lead. Eitan Geralnik and Tyler Love from Texas RoadRunners assisted on the Herron's goal with 8:15 remaining. Alex Cagan's pass to Best with 2:26 gave the South the lead before the break.

The Frontier Division answered the call to tie the contest (2-2) when Bozeman Ice Dogs defenseman, Cole Busher connection to Helena Bighorns' Harlan Wojtusik gave Wojtusik his first goal of the Top Prospects Tournament. Sky Solig, who is usually mentioned in most of the Gillette Wild's encounters, made his second goal in two days midway through the second period with an unassisted tally for the Frontier's only lead. Before the period ended, Michael Imala (Texas Brahmas) lit up the lamp with his unassisted goal for the second tie. Team South led Team Frontier 22-18 in the shots-on-goal category after two periods.

Tyler Alldredge gave the Frontier team a 4-3 advantage within the first two minutes of the contest. Alldredge's teammate on the Bighorns, Dylan Cunningham, created the assist. The South Division went on a 3-0 run including a final goal with three seconds left. Aaron Best and Jack Herron added their second scoring drives of the day while Eitan Geralnik netted his first. Michael Imala and Dakota Brandom (Mid Cities Jr. Stars) gathered the assists.

The South Division finished with 31 shots and one minor penalty in the second period. The Frontier team took 33 shots and had two minors (penalties).

Great Falls Americans defenseman Alex Leaf played in both games but did not register any goals or assists.

Hunter Hein (Texas RoadRunners) accrued 23 saves in the win for the South. John Moriarty (Louisiana Drillers) started and swatted away six of nine shots. Jake Turek (Gillette Wild) and Caleb Cross (Butte Cobras) totaled 25 shots between them for the Frontier ([box score](#)).

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## **Team Central defeats NAPHL; goes 1-1 in NA3HL TPT**

CRANBERRY TOWNSHIP (PITTSBURGH), PA., February 7, 2023 — Oregon Tradesmen's Dillon Schmidt was one of five scorers on the Central team that scored three goals in the first and third to down the NAPHL squad, 6-3 to earn the tournament split on Tuesday.

A total of five goals were successfully made between both teams. Hayden Shoemake (Wausau Cyclones), Patrick Toomey (Milwaukee Power), and Jacob Heurman (St. Louis Jr. Stars) all scored first period goals for Central. Massimo Polistina (Peoria Mustangs), Max Erstad (Milwaukee Power), Luke Morrisette, Logan Kroyman and Austin Meers of the Rochester Grizzlies, all collected assists. Brody Simko (Esmark Stars) and Connor Jalbert (Northeast Generals made both goals for the NAPHL. The tallies were set up by Shane Kozlina (Maine Nordiques) and Chris Fotopoulos.

Shane Kozlina's pass to Connor Jalbert broke the tie for the NAPHL in the middle period and was the only goal scored in the second frame.

The Central team erased their one-goal deficit and outscored their opponents, 3-0 in the third highlighted by goals from Dillon Schmidt (two goals) and Max Erstad. The goals were assisted by Hayden Shoemake, Massimo Polistina and Ben Parent (Oregon Tradesmen).

Three infractions dotted the stat sheet after the sixty-minute contest. NAPHL went 0-for-1 on the power play and Central scored their lone power play scoring drive in the third.

Adam Prokop (Milwaukee Power) was named the winning goaltender as he stopped all six shots in the final 28 minutes. Cam Pendleton (Peoria Mustangs) also played and allowed three goals and compiled 22 saves. The NAPHL used a trio of netminders including Brady Govero (CarShield AAA) three saves, Nikita Volski (Esmark Stars) seven saves and Michael Manzi (Philadelphia Little Flyers), who received the loss, recorded 11 saves ([box score](#)).

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## **Team West defeats Team East, 4-2 to stay undefeated at tournament**

CRANBERRY TOWNSHIP (PITTSBURGH), PA., February 7, 2023 — Matthew Nuzzolilo (Northeast Generals) amassed two goals for Team East, but it was the offense of the West Division that earned the hard-fought 4-2 victory.

It was Matthew Nuzzolilo's score in the first period that gave the East Division the early advantage after the first period. The short-handed goal came with eight minutes left before the first intermission.

Team West had a 2-1 lead thanks to scoring drives by Cullen Hogan (Mason City Toros) and Willem Kerr (Minnesota Loons). Nick O'Brien (New Ulm Steel) and George Moore (Minnesota Loons added the assists on Hogan's goal while Kerr's goal went unassisted. Both teams took 14 shots in the second frame after Team West had a 19-6 shots-on-goal advantage before the first break.

In the third, Nuzzolilo lit up the lamp for his second goal for the game-tying goal early in the stanza. Paul Johnson of the Bay State Bobcats and Braeden Kennedy from the Northeast Generals chipped in the helpers. Carter Newpower scored the third goal for the West at the midway point. His eventual game-winning score was made possible by George Moore and Cole Klingbeil (Alexandria Blizzard). The East

Division took out goaltender Ian Kangas to gain an extra attacker but Granite City Lumberjacks forward Jacob McPartland took advantage and got the puck in the empty net with 90 seconds to go to preserve the West victory. McPartland's teammate for the Lumberjacks, Finnigan Greeley garnered the assist.

Both squads had 24 shots-on-goal after the first period. The thirteen shots-on-goal difference came in the first period when the West Division had 19 shots and held Team East to six.

West and East combined for five minor penalties that resulted in ten minutes of penalty time.

Nolan LaCosse of the New Ulm Steel (winning netminder) stopped 16 of 17 shots and teammate Michael D'Orazio (Willmar WarHawks) had 12 saves.

A total of 39 saves for Team East came from Ryan Maguire (Danbury Jr. Hat Tricks) and Ian Kangas of the Northeast Generals ([box score](#)).

**TOURNAMENT NOTES:** View the last day of action (box scores/game recaps) by [clicking here](#) for the NA3HL article.

[Click here](#) to view the full roster list (printable PDF version) from each of the six TPT teams.

[Click here](#) to view the NA3HL Press Release with rosters, coaches, and schedule and information for the 2023 Top Prospects Tournament.

The following links are articles relating to the 2023 Top Prospects Tournament.

January 24, 2023: [NA3HL News: NA3HL Top Prospects just two weeks away](#)

January 20, 2023: [NA3HL announces 2023 Top Prospects Tournament rosters and schedule](#)

January 12, 2023: [NA3HL News: 2023 Schedule, coaches announced for 2023 NA3HL Top Prospects](#)

To view more information about the 2023 Top Prospects Tournament, please visit the tournament webpage: <http://na3hl.com/tpt/>

**NEXT CONTEST:** Alex Leaf and the Great Falls Americans return to action in Gillette, Wyoming for a showdown with the #1 Gillette Wild with former Great Falls Americans Silas Hughes and Tyler Sunagel on the roster on Friday (February 10) and Saturday (February 11) from the Spirit Hall Ice Arena. Great Falls is looking to pull off the upset. The action begins at 7:05PM (MST) with game coverage on [HockeyTV](#).

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