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Great Falls Americans Press Release

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Gillette Wild blank the Americans in the battle of the undefeated teams

By Kevin Scott

Box Score	Score Sheet	League Scoreboard	Americans Team Statistics
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GREAT FALLS, Mont., September 22, 2023 — The Great Falls Americans (2-1-0-0) are right where they want to be after a successful first week of the 2023-24 season.

The Americans hosted the Wyoming-based Yellowstone (WY) Quake (0-4-0-0) two weeks ago (last week they sat idle). Great Falls newcomer Ty O'Bey, a first-year forward from Wisconsin, tallied four goals and dished out two assists over the weekend sweep for Great Falls. Great Falls trailed 3-0 to the Quake on Friday (September 8th) before their offense rallied to even the score at 3-3. O'Bey's teammate, Aidan Kennedy scored the game winner with less than three minutes remaining for the 5-4 win ([game story](#)). O'Bey was the recipient of the Frontier Division Star of the Week with his performance ([see article](#)).

On Saturday, the Americans also scored five goals in a 5-3 win over their Wyoming weekend opponent. O'Bey continued his offensive dominance by scoring two of the five scoring opportunities for the home team. Aaron James, Luke Pizzey, and Blake Komrofske chipped in the remaining goals for coach Greg Sears' young squad. Max Rotsaert scored twice for the Quake in a losing effort ([game story](#)).

Friday's opponent for Great Falls is the Gillette (WY) Wild (3-0-0-0), who last year along with the Helena Bighorns, dominated the Frontier Division standings by winning 39 of their 52 games before falling to Helena in the Frontier Division Finals and losing a chance to compete at the NA3HL Fraser Cup Championship Tournament last March.

While Great Falls was idle last week, Gillette opened their 2023-24 season by outscoring the Butte Irish in Butte, Montana, 12-5 including Friday's opener, 8-2. Returners Jace Johnson (3 goals, 1 assist) and Adam Severson (2 goals, 3 assists) along with rookie Matt Siems (3 goals, 1 assist on Friday) led the Wild to two weekend wins over the Irish. Former Great Falls American, Patrick Crooks had two goals and two assists for Butte. **NOTE:** During the offseason, the Butte Cobras changed their name to the Butte Irish.

Great Falls was hoping their offense would be clicking on all cylinders after two successful wins two weeks ago to down the Wild in front of the home crowd at the Great Falls Ice Plex on Friday evening.

The #2 Gillette Wild scored multiple goals in each of the three regulation periods to blank the #4 Great Falls Americans, 7-0 during Friday's NA3HL junior hockey action at the Great Falls Ice Plex. Forwards Ryan Hipsag (2 goals, 1 assist) and Isaac Young (1 goal, 2 assists) and defenseman Todd Powassin (1 goal, 2 assists) starred for Gillette in their win. Great Falls netminders Kaden Ryhder and Ryan Stowe combined for 53 saves for the Americans.

Gillette's Isaac Young and Ryan Hipsag, two returning players from last year, each lit up the lamp to secure a two-goal lead over Great Falls after the first twenty minutes of action. Young's slapshot sailed into the net with 11:04 remaining with assists going to Gavin Black and Todd Powassin. Later in the period, Ryan Hipsag scored with helpers provided by Payton Kor and Todd Powassin. The visitor's 2-0 advantage saw the Wild outshoot the Americans, 14-11.

It did not take long for the Wild to strike for the third time. Todd Powassin netted his first goal of the season for Gillette 19 seconds into the middle stanza. Adam Severson and Ryan Hipsag added the assists on the Wild's third goal. Before the second intermission, the Wyoming team accumulated two more scoring drives. Tay Kurpius and Will Sexton each scored their second goals of the season. Josef Lalli, Isaac Young, Matt Siems and Wyatt Schmitz collected the assists for coach Ethan Hayes' squad. Gillette's offense racked up 20 second period shots while the Americans made six unsuccessful attempts.

Ryan Hipsag, who spent last year with Gillette and the previous year with the Badlands Sabres, connected on his second goal of the game five minutes into the third frame to increase their lead (6-0). Minnesota natives Wyatt Schmitz and Matt Siems were the recipients of the assists. Jace Johnson secured his fourth goal of the season and his first of the night for Gillette with three minutes remaining off a pass from Wyatt Schmitz and Isaac Young. Schmitz corralled his third assist of the game.

Gillette's offense dominated the Americans throughout the sixty-minute contest by registering 60 shots-on-goal with 26 coming in the final period. Great Falls made 11 of their 21 shots in the opening period.

Dominic Hite, one of three returning goaltenders for the Wild, was perfect in the net by swatting away all 21 shots he faced. The Baldwin, Wisconsin native is now 2-0 on the season after helping the Wild defeat the Butte Irish 4-3 last Saturday (September 16) in Butte, Montana. Meanwhile, Kaden Ryhder saw his record go to 1-1 on the season but not before stopping 29 shots. Ryan Stowe also saw action allowing one goal and compiling 24 saves.

NOTES: Nathan Bring, a local practice player for the Americans, is in our thoughts and prayers as his mother, Lisa Carlson, passed away recently. He has been an inspiration to the squad with his work ethic and overall positive energy.

Since their two wins against the Yellowstone (WY) Quake on September 8-9, the Americans have added two new players from Alaska. Tariq Khan and Dmitri Kuleshov are the new forwards on the team. [Click here](#) to see their stats and the rest of the team throughout the season by clicking on their names.

The Great Falls Chamber of Commerce on Thursday night recognized two of our sponsors for their excellence throughout the year. Life in Bloom, the official "florist" of the Americans, received the

Small/Medium Business of the Year Award. Congratulations to Greg and Karen Beeler for their special award and for supporting the Americans. The Chamber's "Customer Service Champion" is Scheel's, another great partner for the Americans. The awards were presented on Thursday (Sept. 21st) at the Chamber of Commerce's 135th Anniversary and Gala. Congrats to both sponsors on a well-deserved recognition. [Click here](#) to see a full list (including websites and addresses) of our sponsors this season.



This week, the Americans finished their Off-Ice Skills Center and have been using it. Players will be able to access this anytime that they are not on the ice and want to thank Nate and Renae Weisenburger for providing the synthetic flooring. This will hone their stickhandling and shooting skills while off the ice.

This past weekend (Sept. 15-17), the Americans spent their weekend off with a camping trip to Lincoln, Montana where they stayed with Dave and Cathy Covert. The team bonded by helping the Covert's winterize their cabin, hiked, fished, and had a bonfire on Saturday night. Thanks to the Coverts for hosting them.



We have two special functions at the games on Friday and Saturday. The Americans were supporting the Great Falls Community Ice Foundation (GFCIF) on Friday (Sept. 22) with their Capital Campaign for the upcoming season with many improvements already made at the Ice Plex this offseason. The evening raised \$350.00. There is more work to be completed so the GFCIF is accepting donations this weekend for their expansion plans. [Click here](#) for major renovations that they hope to accomplish in the coming years.

Also, the Great Falls Americans Booster Club is helping the team by raffling off a RTIC Cooler and Meat Package. Tickets are \$10.00 each and the package includes 20 lbs. of meat provided by [Central Avenue Meats](#) in Great Falls.

The drawing will be held on Saturday, September 30th when the Americans challenge the Badlands (South Dakota) Sabres. To purchase tickets, please see any of the Booster Club members at any of the home games or contact Adam Stanczak (406-564-6771, email: adam@johnsondistributing.com). All proceeds will be used to support the Great Falls Americans Junior A hockey team!

On Saturday, Sept. 23, all fans are welcome up to the Eagles Nest (room by the balcony) for a Hockey 101 session starting at 6:00PM (MST) where fans can learn about the game (rules/terminology/basic strategy) and ask questions about hockey.

Former Great Falls Americans Hockey TV Play-By-Play commentator Megan Lewis and her husband Josh and son JJ were in attendance visiting from Spokane, Washington tonight. Megan was the "Voice of the Great Falls Americans" for two and a half years (2020-22).

The Americans have a new online team store this season with a variety of items to buy. [Click here](#) to buy online or purchase your Americans souvenirs at any of the home games.

Please check out the Americans website at www.greatfallsamericans.com for all your updated news, game summaries, rosters, photo galleries, etc.

FRONTIER DIVISION UPDATE: The #3 Bozeman Ice Dogs (3-0-0-0) found themselves down 3-1 late in the second period before rallying for a 4-3 decision over the #5 Badlands (SD) Sabres (0-1-0-0) on Friday night in Rapid City, South Dakota on Friday evening. Kody Wallenburg scored one first period goal and connected on a third period scoring drive to lead the Ice Dogs. Brooks Roaldson scored two of the three goals for the Sabres in their first loss of the season. Matthew Ryynanen (1-0) was the winning netminder for Bozeman with 13 saves. A 38-save performance was not enough for Badlands netminder Hunter Oger ([Box Score](#)).

The #1 Helena Bighorns (3-0-0-0) added two goals in each of the final two periods to claim a 4-2 victory over the #7 Sheridan (WY) Hawks (0-3-0-0) during Friday's NA3HL action in Sheridan, Wyoming. Four different players (Finn Theriault, Trey Pareja, Camden Cunningham, and Gavin Barr) scored for the Montana visitors. Danii Viscu and Tanner Freed scored the goals for the Hawks in the first and second periods, respectively. Missouri goalie Malik Johnson picked up his first win of the season by redirecting 14 shots for Helena. Zach Broxterman finished with 60 saves for Sheridan ([Box Score](#)).

NEXT CONTEST: Great Falls and Gillette will tangle for the final time in Great Falls during the regular season on Saturday, September 23rd with the puck dropping at 7:00PM (MST) from the Great Falls Ice Plex. Great Falls will travel to Gillette, Wyoming next February (9-10) for a two-game showdown with the Wild. After each home game this weekend, the Americans invite their fans and supporters to their post-game dinner at [P. Gibson's Sports Grill and Casino](#) (1600 Fox Farm Road).

For fans that are unable to attend the Americans home and away games this season, [NAHLTV](#) is the NA3HL's new streaming platform and is the place to catch all the action. [Click here](#) to learn more about how to view any of the Americans home and away contests.

[Click here](#) for the 2023-24 Great Falls Americans schedule and results.

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