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**Great Falls Americans Press Release**

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**Americans defeat the Ice Dogs to remain in third in the Frontier Division**

**By Kevin Scott**

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GREAT FALLS, Mont., November 26, 2023 — The #3 Great Falls Americans (13-9-0-0) and the #4 Bozeman Ice Dogs (11-11-0-1) have split their two-game home-and-away series this season with six more head-to-head meetings remaining during the 2023-24 season including tonight's matchup in Great Falls.

To recap the season series, the Bozeman Ice Dogs offense behind the three-goal hat trick effort by Braden Koliha during the October 8<sup>th</sup> game in Bozeman defeated the Americans 4-2. Mason Czarnecki tossed in the other goal for the Ice Dogs. Americans forward Dmitri Kuleshov was one goal shy of a hat trick (two goals). The home team led 2-1 after forty minutes before outscoring the visitors 2-1 in the third frame. Matthew Ryynanen tallied 41 saves in the victory while his counterpart, Ryan Stowe made 32 saves in his first defeat of the season ([game story](#)).

Game Two was three weeks later in Great Falls. The Americans were surrounded by their home fans at the Great Falls Ice Plex and found success in a 3-1 decision over the Ice Dogs on October 29<sup>th</sup>. Ty O'Bev (two goals) and Dmitri Kuleshov (1 goal) led the charge for the hosts. Bodie Shepardson of the Ice Dogs prevented the shutout by scoring in the third period. Kaden Ryhder registered his fifth victory by swatting away 41 shots. Sean Smer amassed 31 saves in the loss ([game story](#)).

Dmitri Kuleshov chipped in two goals while Aaron James and Sam Duehlmeier added two assists each as the Great Falls Americans defeated the #4 Bozeman Ice Dogs 4-1 at the Great Falls Ice Plex on Sunday to remain in third place in the NA3HL Frontier Division standings. Great Falls went 3-0 at home this weekend after starting in fifth place but jumped up two spots when Bozeman fell to the Gillette (WY) Wild twice and the Americans tonight.

Before Sunday's contest, the Americans celebrated "Wine, Women and Hockey" as their promotional night. This pre-registered event featured a seminar for women from 4:00PM until 5:30PM where female hockey community members shared their stories about hockey and answered questions. The panelists included Kendall Hanley (2022 Gold Medal Olympic Official and current Manager of Officiating for the NAHL), Heather Mannix (USA Hockey's Manager of Education/Player Development), Jenna Janshen

(Miles City, MT native who worked her way up as an official at the National and International Stages), and the all-female officiating crew assigned to Sunday's game. All ages were welcome with a game ticket and refreshments and snacks were provided.

Great Falls held a 2-1 advantage as Aaron Leaf and Dmitri Kuleshov tacked on the goals in the opening period. Sam Duehlmeier and Jacob James set up the first scoring drive by Aaron Leaf within the first five minutes of the contest. Aaron James claimed the lone assist on Dmitri Kuleshov's short-handed score three minutes later. While the Americans were in the sin bin, Bozeman took advantage and capitalized with a score of their own. Mason Czarnecki converted his 14<sup>th</sup> goal with helpers going to Bryce Sturm and Kody Wallenberg with 80 seconds remaining before the first intermission. The first period saw both squads accumulate 24 combined total shots.

Aiden Kennedy secured his third goal on a power play early in the middle period as Sam Duehlmeier collected his second assist to put the home team back up by two goals (3-1). Great Falls outshot Bozeman, 27-22 over the first two periods.

Great Falls maintained the 3-1 lead until the final 25 seconds of the third when Aaron James' pass to an open Dmitri Kuleshov whose slapshot sailed into the net and put the game out of reach for the visiting Bozeman squad.

Bozeman (1-for-6) and Great Falls (1-for-5) each took advantage of one of their power play opportunities and scored while the opposing team was in the penalty box. The NA3HL on-ice officials called six minor penalties against the home team. Bozeman also was whistled for six penalties that resulted in 23 minutes spent off the ice.

Kaden Ryhder has been on the ice for 13 of the 22 contests as the goaltender for Great Falls. Ryhder, in his first season with Great Falls from Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania, improved his record to 8-3-0-0 including two wins this weekend with the first coming against the Butte Irish in a 4-3 win on Friday. Tonight, he made 21 saves and allowed just one goal in the first stanza. Matthew Ryyanen of the Ice Dogs had a difficult weekend with three losses (two coming from the #2 Helena Bighorns). He finished with 31 saves as his record in the net fell to 7-9-0-1.



**NOTES:** [Zac Orwig](#), a forward for the Americans, played in his 100<sup>th</sup> career junior hockey game tonight. He also suited up with the Oregon Tradesmen (2021-22) and the Yellowstone (WY) Quake.

The Great Falls Americans Booster Club raffled off the Great Falls "Bests" Raffle tonight after selling them throughout the three-game weekend. The raffle featured gift cards from many Great Falls area restaurants, hotels (stays), and alcohol baskets.

Tickets were sold for \$10.00 each. The winner was drawn during the second intermission tonight. Congratulations to Kelly Stevens for winning the raffle.

Ty O'Bey was the Frontier Division "Star of the Week" ending on November 19<sup>th</sup> for his play against the Sheridan (WY) Hawks. The Ashland, Wisconsin native had six points (2 goals, 4 assists) over two games. Teammate Dmitri Kuleshov received Frontier Division "Star of the Week" Honorable Mention for his four-goal performance in Friday's 7-2 romp over the Hawks. Congrats to Ty and Dmitri. [Click here](#) for the story.

In this week's "Baldy's Puck Drop" Newsletter, Americans team owner Matt Leaf has a player profile of team captain forward Dmitri Kuleshov, sponsor information, and upcoming Americans events. [Click here](#) to view this past week's newsletter and all the weekly "Baldy's Puck Drop" Newsletters.

Be sure to check out Staradio's Weekly Interview with Greg Sears hosted by Troy Mellinger. The short radio interview gives a recap of last Saturday's game against the Helena Bighorns and previews the home series against the Sheridan Hawks. Listen live every Monday throughout the season at 12:20PM (MST) on [FOX SPORTS RADIO \(98.3FM/1400AM\)](#) and on [Q106.1 FM](#) on Wednesday mornings at 10:00AM (MST). To listen to this interview and the previous others from the 2023-24 season, please [click here](#).

Check out all the Americans photos throughout the season with many of the game action photos taken by Americans photographer, Dustin Bauer. [Click here](#) to view all the photos from the 2023-24 season.



[Click here](#) to view the Americans online team store that features a variety of different souvenirs to purchase. A store is available at all home games. Fans can also buy game day tickets on the website prior to the game by [clicking here](#).

Please check out the Americans website at [www.greatfallsamericans.com](http://www.greatfallsamericans.com) for all your updated news, game summaries, rosters, photo galleries, etc.

**FRONTIER DIVISION UPDATE:** No other Frontier Division games were scheduled today.

**NEXT CONTEST:** The Great Falls Americans are scheduled to play the Bozeman Ice Dogs in a rematch on Friday, December 1<sup>st</sup> with the puck set to drop at 7:15PM (MST) from Bozeman's Haynes Pavilion.

In December, the Americans travel to Cody, Wyoming to play the #8 Yellowstone Quake (Dec. 8-9). Great Falls and the rest of the NA3HL teams will all meet in Blaine, Minnesota for the 2023 NA3HL Showcase (December 17-19), where teams will play three other teams not in their division during the three-day tournament with scouts in attendance. The schedule and times will be announced by the league soon.

**AMERICANS WATCH PARTY:** The Stadum Bar and Casino, located at 1121 5th Street South in Great Falls, hosts the "Americans Watch Party" this season when the Americans are on the road. Fans are invited to get food and drinks and watch the game.

After the Christmas break, the Americans will travel to Butte, Montana for two games against the Irish on January 5-6 before Great Falls returns to the friendly confines of the Great Falls Ice Plex for two games against the Bozeman Ice Dogs on January 12-13. [Click here](#) for the 2023-24 Great Falls Americans schedule and results.

[NAHLTV](#) is the place to catch all the Great Falls Americans contests all season long. [Click here](#) to learn more about how to watch any of the Americans NA3HL junior hockey games on NAHL TV during the 2023-24 season.

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