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Great Falls Americans Press Release

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Wallenberg and Koliha each score in shootout win over Great Falls, 3-2

By Kevin Scott

Box Score	Score Sheet	League Scoreboard	Americans Team Statistics
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GREAT FALLS, Mont., January 12, 2024 — Since December 1, 2023, the #4 Great Falls Americans (16-14-0-1) have been road warriors traveling to four cities across three states during that time.

Great Falls played at the Bozeman (MT) Ice Dogs (0-1-0-0) and then went to Cody, Wyoming for a two-game series with the Yellowstone Quake (2-0-0-0), followed by a trip to Blaine, Minnesota for the NA3HL league wide Showcase tournament where they went 1-2-0-0 in three games against different opponents in different divisions before a two-week holiday break.

The Americans opened 2024 with a road date with the Butte (MT) Irish on January 5-6 where they were swept in two games.

Great Falls was finally back home this week when the Bozeman Ice Dogs (18-13-0-1), third in the Frontier Division, came into the Great Falls Ice Plex for a fifth meeting this season and a third trip to Great Falls. The Americans are 2-2-0-0 this year against the Ice Dogs with four more matchups (including tonight's game) occurring in January 2024. The Americans fell to the Ice Dogs, 4-2 on October 8th in Bozeman ([game story](#)), topped them at home, 3-1 on October 29th ([game story](#)), defeated Bozeman at the Great Falls Ice Plex, 4-1 in their last home game of 2023 on November 26th ([game story](#)), and lost to Bozeman, 5-2 on December 1st in Bozeman ([game story](#)).

Coach Greg Sears and the Americans were looking for their 17th overall win and third against the Bozeman NA3HL junior hockey franchise on Friday evening.

The #4 Great Falls Americans led 2-1 after two periods before the #3 Bozeman Ice Dogs came back to tie the contest and send it into an overtime where the Ice Dogs came out on top of the host team, 3-2 during a frigid night in Great Falls on Friday night.

An arctic front moved into Great Falls this week bringing some snow and the game time temperature outside was -30 degrees but was slightly warmer inside the Great Falls Ice Plex when the puck dropped at 7:00PM.

Great Falls and Bozeman could not find a way to get the puck in the net during the first twenty minutes. Bozeman held a 16-6 advantage in the shots-on-goal category. The home team was whistled for one minor (tripping) penalty, but Bozeman failed to convert on the power play.

The scoreless game ended fifteen minutes into the middle period with the Americans defenseman Masen Kerr gathering his fourth goal with helpers from Jacob James and newcomer Austin Trout. After picking up his 13th assist on the first goal, Jacob James buried the puck into the net with assistance from Tariq Khan and newcomer Garrett Driscoll. James' seventh goal came with 2:36 left before the second intermission while the Ice Dogs were in a penalty. The two-goal lead lasted fifteen seconds when the visitors ended the shutout with a goal of their own. Mason Czarnecki garnered his 18th score of the season off the stick of Tyler White and Reese Tittle. Forward Austin Trout along with defensemen Garrett Driscoll and Hayden Grabas joined the team earlier this week. Great Falls' offense took twice (20-9) as many shot attempts as Bozeman in the period.

Bozeman's Mason Czarnecki added his second goal of the game five minutes into the final period of regulation to even the score (2-2). Braden Koliha and Bodie Shepardson provided the assists for coach Mike Perkins' squad. Czarnecki's score was the only goal scored in the third frame and a five-minute extra period was necessary.

After a scoreless overtime, Bozeman sealed the victory in a shootout with Kody Wallenberg and Braden Koliha successfully scoring against Great Falls goaltender Kaden Ryhder. Phil Harrell and Ty O'Bey were denied by Ice Dogs netminder Sean Smer.

Despite their first shootout loss of the 2023-24 season, Great Falls managed to outshoot Bozeman 47-42.

Both clubs stayed out of the sin bin with three combined minor penalties. The Americans went 1-for-2 with Jacob James scoring the only goal while the opposing team was in the penalty box. The Ice Dogs did not capitalize on their lone power play chance.

Sean Smer improved his record to 5-1 including his first victory against Great Falls (1-1-0-0) this year. The California goaltender made 43 saves in 65 minutes of action. Kaden Ryhder is now 2-1-0-1 when playing Bozeman and is now 9-6-0-1 after appearing in 18 games. Kaden finished with 37 saves in his first overtime setback.

FRONTIER DIVISION UPDATE: The top-ranked Gillette (WY) Wild (29-2-0-1) steamrolled over the last place Yellowstone Quake (0-29-3-0), their counterparts from Cody, Wyoming, 16-0 in Gillette's home arena. Nine different players lit up the lamp highlighted by Isaac Young's hat trick (3 goals, 4 assists), Tay Kurpius and Elliot Testa (2 goals, 4 assists each) and Landon Thiessen's (2 goals, 3 assists). Dominic Hite won his sixth game (6-0-0-0) by stopping all six shots for the Wild. John Hughes and John Simon combined for 101 saves with Hughes taking another loss (0-8-2-0) ([Box Score](#)).

The second-ranked Helena Bighorns (29-2-0-0) struggled throughout their matchup with their closest rival, the #7 Butte Irish (13-19-0-0) but came out on top with Jakob Losch's third period goal to seal their 29th win in 31 games this season. Alex Lamont was credited with his first win over Butte this season.

Lamont (9-1-0-0) redirected all 19 shots. Braylon Rogers had his record drop to 9-8-0-0 but not before accruing 48 saves including two losses to Helena this year ([Box Score](#)).

The #5 Sheridan (WY) Hawks (13-17-1-1) scored first in the second period but the #6 Badlands (SD) Sabres (11-15-3-3) scored four unanswered goals for a 4-1 road victory on Friday night in Sheridan, Wyoming. Zach Vockler, Thayne Coston, Aden Cobbs, and Brooks Roaldson created the scores for the Sabres. Daniel Shelden scored for the Hawks. Badlands win gave Easton Eriksmoen (35 saves) his seventh win (7-7-1-0) in 15 games. His counterpart, Zach Broxterman (4-10-1-1) also had 35 saves but allowed four goals in the setback ([Box Score](#)).

NOTES: Forwards Tariq Khan and Zac Orwig received Honorable Mention honors for the weekly “NA3HL Stars of the Week” for the week ending January 7, 2024, for their play against the Butte Irish. [Click here](#) for more information.

In this week’s “Baldy’s Puck Drop” Newsletter, Americans team owner Matt Leaf has a player profile of forward Sebe Perez, player recognitions for Tariq Khan, Sebe Perez, Ryan Stowe, and Luke Pizzey, sponsor information, and floor hockey demonstration with students at Montana School for the Deaf and Blind, a new fan activation platform (DASH) including a Mystery Puck/Prize. Check out the newsletter for more information. We also have three new team members that joined this week. [Click here](#) to view this past week’s newsletter and all the weekly “Baldy’s Puck Drop” Newsletters.



Earlier this week as part of their community outreach, American players Luke Pizzey, Caleb Gamboa, Alec Browning, Spencer Schipferling and Blake Komrofske volunteered some time with the Montana School for the Deaf and Blind where they put on a floor hockey demonstration and clinic for 20 Deaf and Blind students.

Students were divided into groups and worked on passing, stickhandling, and shooting. They also played a 20-minute game using a special floor ball provided by USA Hockey that has bells on it for students who are blind and visually impaired.

The Americans have partnered with DASH, which provides an online fan activation platform that we launched this weekend. The first is a “Mystery Puck/Box” prize where you can purchase a puck signed by one of the current players that will automatically be entered for a chance to win a “Mystery Box” of collectables/apparel that is valued over \$100. The chances of winning are great as we are only selling 25 Mystery Pucks. The pucks can be purchased up until 9:00 PM Saturday night and the winner will be chosen and notified Saturday evening. The second activation is an online auction where we are putting two team-signed items (one “proud supporter” banner and one pennant) up for the highest bidder. Both items will be signed by all current players and staff with the auction running until 9:00 PM on Monday evening. Both activations can be found at: <https://fans.winwithdash.com/auctions/greatfallsamericans>



Once you reach the Great Falls Americans DASH Page, you can establish a profile and designate the Great Falls Americans as your favorite team. You will be notified for all the opportunities created and be able to participate in the various sales, auctions, and giveaways of great stuff that we will be looking to provide as we continue to explore ways to improve our brand and provide items are fans are excited to have.

The Americans welcome three new players this week including #22 Garrett Driscoll, Colorado Springs, CO), #19 Austin Trout, Troy, ID and #3 Hayden Grabas, Fernie, British Columbia.

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 for all your updated news, game summaries, rosters, photo galleries, etc.

NEXT CONTEST: Great Falls and Bozeman will meet again on Saturday, January 13th at 7:00PM (MST) at the Great Falls Ice Plex. These two Montana NA3HL clubs will tangle in Bozeman, Montana on January 26-27th in their head-to-head finale of the season.

The Great Falls Americans will be shown live on [NAHLTV](#) all season long. To learn more about how to watch the Americans in action on NAHL TV, please [click here](#).

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

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