



# BALDY'S PUCK DROP

Weekly E-Newsletter January 4, 2024

Dear Great Falls Americans Enthusiast:

I hope this finds that everyone has had a wonderful holiday season and 2024 is off and running in the right direction. The Americans are back in town and had their first practice Wednesday after a two week-break to spend the holidays with their families and friends. They are excited for the start of the 2<sup>nd</sup> half and, hopefully, are ready to make a solid playoff run. I know the staff is optimistic as the players have the skill and the team has the pieces to make a run, but it will be up to the players to bring the determination, confidence and compete level necessary for end-of-season success. Just like with team success, the individual success our players will need to earn the opportunity they are looking for at the next levels will be driven by their "compete factor"; Do they simply love to win? Or, do they hate it even more when they lose? I know where our staff leans on this question, it will be exciting to learn where our players stand as we continue our efforts to set them up for success.

A few quick mentions of some player recognition. I mentioned last issue that Dmitri Kuleshov is off to Belgrade, Serbia to play for Team Australia at the IIHF U20 Division II Group B World Championship from January 14-20. There, they will compete against Belgium, Iceland, Romania, Serbia and Chinese Taipei. The IIHF system follows a promotion/relegation format, where the top team at this event will move up to the next level next season and the bottom team will drop a level. Having been to close to 50 events of this nature all over the world, it is a big deal for the participating countries as it provides a chance to represent their country and stand for their respective country's anthem after each win. For many of these smaller non-traditional hockey countries, it is also their opportunity to earn government support and funding for their youth hockey programs through international success. We certainly wish Dmitri the best and look forward to following him along the way.

A special congrats also goes out to Ty O'Bey and Zach Orwig for being chosen to practice with the NAHL's Fairbanks IceDogs this past week.



The team is off to Butte for a two-game set this weekend – puck drops are at 7:30 both on Friday and Saturday nights and we encourage all our fans and supporters to head over to our official watch party location – **The Stadium Sports Bar and Casino** – to enjoy some great food/drink and cheer on our team with other passionate fans. The Americans return home versus Bozeman on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> with 7:00 PM puck drops both nights. We look forward to seeing you at the rink then and appreciate your support while packing the Ice Plex for our remaining six home games.

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## Player Profile – #21 Captain Aaron Leaf (Colorado Springs, CO) 5'11" 175 lbs. FOR - Shoots Right

**Favorite Team:** Colorado Avalanche **Favorite Player:**

**Favorite Movie:** Saving Private Ryan **Favorite Actor/Actress:** Tom Hanks

**Favorite Food:** Pasta **Favorite Pre-Game Meal:** Pasta

**Musical Group You Won't Miss in Concert:** Cody Johnson

**Song or Artist Guaranteed to get you hyped:** Motley Crew

**One Item you would bring with you to a deserted Island:** Knife

**Hobbies other than Hockey:** Hunting/Fishing

**Three People you would invite to Dinner:** Will Ferrel, Kevin Hart, Adam Sandler

**College/University of Choice:** Montana Grizzlies **Like Most About Great Falls:** The people.

**How would you define a successful season:** Winning the Fraser Cup.

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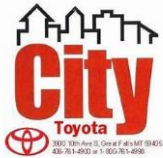
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Thank you for being a part of our family and we look forward to seeing you at the rink.

Matt Leaf  
 Great Falls Americans HC Inc  
 MattL.GFAmericans@gmail.com



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