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Great Falls Americans Press Release

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Great Falls defeats Badlands on the road, 3-2 and keep their playoff hopes alive

By Kevin Scott

Box Score	Score Sheet	League Scoreboard	Americans Team Statistics
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RAPID CITY, S.D., February 23, 2024 —The 2023-24 NA3HL regular season is just two weeks away from ending and then the playoffs begin.

The #5 Great Falls Americans (19-23-0-1), who have spent most of the season in the fourth spot, traveled this week to Rapid City, South Dakota to challenge the #4 Badlands Sabres (17-20-3-3) with the postseason on the line for both squads. If Great Falls can defeat Badlands in two of three games on the road this weekend, their playoff chances may be realized.

How did their previous encounters go? Great Falls has hosted Badlands in four of their five previous meetings in which Great Falls came out on top in three of their five matchups. Their last head-to-head contest was on February 8th in South Dakota where the Americans scored four goals and allowed two goals for the (4-2) victory. Sebe Perez and Dmitri Kuleshov each scored two goals in the road win for the Americans. Zack Vockler and Brooks Roaldson put the biscuit in the basket for the Sabres. Kaden Ryhder recorded 35 saves for the visiting team while Easton Eriksmoen made 28 saves for the host squad ([game story](#)).

Who would come out on top in tonight's game?

Great Falls' Ty O'Bey scored two goals and goaltender Kaden Ryhder gathered 40 saves as the #5 Great Falls Americans stopped their five-game losing streak with a 3-2 road win over the #4 Badlands Sabres during Friday's action at the Roosevelt Park Ice Arena in Rapid City, South Dakota.

The much-needed win by Great Falls has kept their playoff chances alive with two more contests against their opponents from South Dakota this weekend.

In the first twenty minutes, both teams scored one goal each. Zach Vockler scored the first of his two goals for the Sabres 62 seconds into the game to take the quick lead over Great Falls. Brooks Roaldson and Ian Vannelli added the assists. Badlands early lead lasted five minutes before Ty O'Bey's slapshot sailed into the net over Sabres netminder Easton Eriksmoen to even the score. Garren Narvaez made his second assist with Great Falls.

It was a repeat performance in the middle period for Zach Vockler and Ty O'Bey. Vockler scored fourteen minutes into the middle period with Brooks Roaldson and Alexander Petrotto earning the assists as the

Sabres retook the lead. Ty O'Bey managed to find the back of the net again with three minutes remaining for the second tie of the contest. Dmitri Kuleshov and Aiden Kennedy set up the Americans second scoring drive. Great Falls took nine more shots (28-19) before the second intermission.

A trio of newcomers had a hand in the outcome of Friday's contest. Garren Narvaez lit up the lamp for just the second time as a member of the Americans this season. Cal Laggis and Garrett Driscoll made the goal possible with 5:24 left. The goal by Narvaez turned out to be the game-winning tally.

The Montana team took more shots against their opponent in the first and second periods, but South Dakota outshot the Americans, 23-12 in the third frame to edge them, 42-40.

The Frontier Division contest saw eleven infractions with 22 minutes spent off the ice. Great Falls scored two of their three goals with the help of a power play opportunity. Great Falls rejected the three power play chances that Badlands was offered.

Kaden Ryhder created 40 saves in sixty minutes of action for Great Falls. The first year netminder for the Americans now had two of this twelve victories (12-10-0-1) against the Sabres. Easton Eriksmoen (Badlands) dropped to 9-10-0-1 in 20 contests. The Crosby, North Dakota native amassed 37 saves in the loss.

FRONTIER DIVISION UPDATE: In the second-to-last week of the season, the rivalry continues. The top-ranked Helena Bighorns (42-2-0-0) visited Gillette, Wyoming to take on the second-ranked Gillette Wild (38-5-0-1) on Friday night. Patrick Crooks, who started the season with the Butte Irish, scored two goals and teammate Gavin Barr added two assists as the Bighorns outlasted the Wild, 5-2 to claim the Frontier Division championship on the road. Will Sexton scored in the second period and Chase Hapka added another in the third frame for the Wild. Jesse Schindel kept his perfect record intact (15-0-0-0) by stopping 25 shots for Helena. Cole Wheaton (13-4-0-1) was denied his 14th win despite having 51 saves ([Box Score](#)).

The Bozeman Ice Dogs ranked No. 3 in the Frontier Division (29-14-0-1), along with Helena and Gillette have already clinched three of the four Frontier Division playoff spots starting in two weeks. But first, the Ice Dogs had to play the #8 Yellowstone (WY) Quake (0-41-3-0). Bozeman kept the Quake off the scoreboard by winning 9-0 behind the efforts of Kody Wallenberg and Bodie Shepardson, who each scored six of the nine goals by the home team. After playing 17 games for the Americans, goaltender Ryan Stowe picked up his first victory for the playoff bound Ice Dogs (fifth overall win) by stopping all 14 shots in his debut. Otto Reinhardt (0-1-0-0) finished with 56 saves in his third game for the Quake ([Box Score](#)).

Despite Andrew Browe's hat trick (three goals) for the #7 Butte Irish (16-27-1-0), the Irish fell to the #6 Sheridan (WY) Hawks (16-24-2-2), 5-4 on Friday night in Butte, Montana. Makhai Sparks scored the second of his two goals with 34 seconds left in the contest to give the Hawks the victory. John Simon broke through with his first victory (1-8-1-0) for Sheridan after also suiting up for Yellowstone Quake and the Willmar (MN) WarHawks this season. Braylon Rogers (50 saves) took the loss for Butte. The Billings, Montana native is now 9-12-0-1 in 25 appearances ([Box Score](#)).

NOTES: Forwards Ty O'Bey and Aiden Kennedy received Honorable Mention honors for the weekly "NA3HL Stars of the Week" for the week ending February 18, 2024, for their play last week against the top-ranked Helena Bighorns. [Click here](#) for more information.

This week, another episode of the "Americans Podcast with Jim Quick" was completed with his guest Luke Pizzey, a forward from Black Diamond, Washington. Quick has done thirteen podcasts this year featuring the history of the Americans, interviews with former American and now Associate Coach, Alex Leaf, and some current players. Fans can listen to the full podcasts by [clicking here](#).



The NA3HL released their all-new and updated App this week for the App Store and Google Play. Download and set your favorite team to the Great Falls Americans today and stay up to date with the NA3HL. Click here to download from the App Store (Apple) or click here to download from the Google Play Store (Android).

Check out all the Americans photos throughout the season including some 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 remains in South Dakota for games on Saturday (February 24) and Sunday (February 25) against the Sabres. Saturday's primetime showdown will begin at 7:05PM (MST) while Sunday's matinee will start at 12:00PM (MST). Tune in for all the action on [NAHLTV](#) this weekend. To learn more about how to watch the Americans in action on NAHL TV, please [click here](#).

The Stadium 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.

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

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