



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**Great Falls Americans Press Release**  
**Contact: Kevin Scott, GF Americans Public Relations Coordinator**  
**Phone: (406) 403-8146**

## **Americans fall to the Irish on the road, 3-1**

**By Kevin Scott**

<a href="#">Box Score</a>	<a href="#">Score Sheet</a>	<a href="#">League Scoreboard</a>	<a href="#">Americans Team Statistics</a>
---------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------------	---



BUTTE, Mont., January 5, 2024 — The #4 Great Falls Americans (16-13-0-0) played in 29 games during the first half of the 2023-24 season, winning 16 of them.

As 2024 begins, Great Falls needs to finish out strong with 19 contests remaining in the regular season. First up is a road (two-game) trip to Butte, Montana to face the #7 Butte Irish (12-18-0-0), who they have won three of their four meetings against so far this season. Great Falls won their first meeting in Butte, 5-3 on October 20<sup>th</sup> ([game story](#)), lost 6-3 in Great Falls on October 21<sup>st</sup> ([game story](#)), and rebounded with two wins against their Montana opponents on November 24-25 at the Great Falls Ice Plex. Great Falls edged Butte, 4-3 on November 24 ([game story](#)) and a 3-1 November 25 ([game story](#)).

The fourth-ranked Americans have won four of seven games (including 1-2 at the NA3HL Showcase Tournament in Minnesota in December), since their Thanksgiving Weekend matchup with Butte. A trio of players lead the way for coach Greg Sears' team after four months of action. Ty O'Bey leads the team in total points (39) and teammate Aaron James leads the way with 22 assists. While Dmitri Kuleshov is the team leader in goals scored with 22. Kuleshov, a first-year player for Great Falls, currently is in Serbia playing for Team Australia's U-20 team at the U20 World Championships. Follow Dmitri and Team Australia by [clicking here](#) in their first game on January 14<sup>th</sup> against Iceland. Ryan Stowe (7-2-0-0) and Kaden Ryhder (9-6-0-0) are the top goalies for Great Falls.

The Irish, coached by Marc Brodeur, have three victories in their previous nine contests since their last encounter with the Americans. Patrick Crooks, who suited up for Great Falls in recent years, leads Butte with 22 goals and 45 total points and is tied in team assists with Andrew Browe (23 assists). Braylon Rogers (8-7-0-0, 17 games) is top netminder for the Irish. He has a 3.55 (GAA), 618 saves and a 0.924 save percentage.

Great Falls was looking to go 4-1 against Butte and start the new year with a win on Friday night but the Irish had other plans.

Patrick Crooks and Weston Villers each scored one goal and dished out one assist as the #7 Butte Irish held on for a 3-1 victory over the #4 Great Falls Americans during Friday's NA3HL regular season contest at the Butte Community Ice Center in Butte, Montana.

Butte's offense needed 79 seconds of the first period to record their first goal. Cade Holland had the first of his two assists on the first scoring drive for the Irish and Logan Grimbleby also assisted on a goal by Brennen Morgan. The home team led 1-0 after the first stanza despite Great Falls taking more shots (17-13).

Patrick Crooks helped Butte score their second goal midway through the middle period. Weston Villers and Andrew Browe accrued the assists. Ty O'Beay cut into the Americans deficit (2-1) when he scored his 18<sup>th</sup> goal of the season that was set up by Aaron James and Luke Pizzey with 3:43 remaining before the second intermission. Both teams combined for just eight shots-on-goal in the second period with Butte topping Great Falls on the scoreboard, 2-1.

The third period saw 41 shots taken between both NA3HL Frontier Division squads. Butte scored the last lamplighter with 33 seconds remaining in the contest to preserve the win for the Irish. Weston Villers ensured the victory with his fourth tally of the season with assistance from Patrick Crooks and Cade Holland.

Great Falls' offense accounted for 17 shots in the first and third periods to finish their first game of 2024 with 36 shots-on-goal. Butte attempted 24 of their 43 shots in the final stanza.

The sixty-minute contest had the NA3HL on-ice officials whistle 13 minor infractions between both clubs. The Americans went 0-for-5 on the power play while the Irish successfully connected on one of their six attempts while Great Falls was in the penalty box.

Butte goaltender Braylon Rogers (8-7-0-0) picked up his first win against Great Falls this season by stopping 35 of 36 shots. Kaden Ryhder (9-6-0-0) was denied his tenth win as he fell to Butte for the first time this season (2-1-0-0). The Pennsylvania netminder ended Friday's game with 40 saves.

**FRONTIER DIVISION UPDATE:** Landon Thiessen and Wylee Gladen kept the top-ranked Gillette (WY) Wild (27-2-0-1) from falling to the #5 Badlands (SD) Sabres (10-15-3-2) by combining to score four of their five goals in a 5-2 decision over the host Sabres on Friday night. Benjamin Larson and Aden Cobb scored for South Dakota in the first and third periods, respectively. Both teams combined for 0-for-6 on the power play and eight minor infractions. Gillette registered 37 of the 67 total shots-on-goal. Weston Gerke remained perfect in the net for the Wild (10-0-0-0) in twelve appearances. The second-year player for Gillette stopped 28 of 30 shots. Meanwhile, Easton Eriksmoen (Badlands) had 32 saves but saw his record drop to 6-7-1-0 after 14 games ([Box Score](#)).

It was a rough contest when the #3 Bozeman Ice Dogs (17-12-0-1) made the trip to Helena, Montana to challenge the #2 Helena Bighorns (27-2-0-0). The Bighorns tallied 58 shots and defeated the Ice Dogs, 8-2. Both teams combined for 44 total penalties and over 100 minutes each spent in the sin bin. Jack Lambert and Finn Theriault produced half (four goals total) of Helena's scoring drives in their huge win in front of the home crowd. Andrew Kaunas and Aiden Clements chipped in the goals for the Ice Dogs. Bighorns netminder Malik Johnson is now 10-0-0-0 after gathering 23 saves in another victory. Matthew Ryyanen (34 saves) played the first two periods before being relieved by teammate Isaac Weatherford. Ryyanen suffered his tenth regulation loss (12-10-0-1) and fourth against Helena this season ([Box Score](#)).

The #5 Sheridan (WY) Hawks (12-16-1-1) traveled from Sheridan, Wyoming to Cody, Wyoming where they faced the #8 Yellowstone (WY) Quake (0-27-3-0) for a Friday matchup. After three periods, both teams scored three goals apiece to force an extra period. Makhai Sparks, Daniil Viscu, and Elijah White all scored in regulation for the visiting Hawks while Owen Schoonover, Carter Tymchak, and Brysen Garner had lamplighters for the Quake. Tanner Freed scored the quick ten second winning goal in overtime for Sheridan. Sheridan's offense racked up 57 shots while holding Yellowstone to 24. Tyler Ouren (5-3-0-0) picked up his fifth victory and second against Yellowstone this season with 21 saves. John Hughes (0-8-2-0) had 53 saves in another losing effort for the Quake ([Box Score](#)).

**NOTES:** Forward Sebe Perez and goaltender Ryan Stowe received Honorable Mention honors for the weekly "NA3HL Stars of the Week" for the week ending December 19, 2023, for their play at the 2023 NA3HL Showcase in Blaine, Minnesota. [Click here](#) for more information.

The NA3HL also announced their "Stars of the Month" for December and three Americans were honored including Sebe Perez (Forward – Honorable Mention), Luke Pizzey (Defenseman – Honorable Mention) and Ryan Stowe (Goaltender) as an Honorable Mention nominee. [Click here](#) for the full story.

In addition to Dmitri Kuleshov playing with Team Australia at the 204 IIHF U20 Division II World Championships held in Belgrade, Serbia this week, Ty O'Bey and Zac Orwig practiced with the North American Hockey League's Fairbanks IceDogs this week.

In this week's "Baldy's Puck Drop" Newsletter, Americans team owner Matt Leaf has a player profile of forward Aaron Leaf, player recognitions for Kuleshov, O'Bey and Orwig, sponsor information, and "Watch Party" information at The Stadium Sports Bar and Casino. [Click here](#) to view this past week's newsletter and all the weekly "Baldy's Puck Drop" Newsletters.

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.

**NEXT CONTEST:** Great Falls will finish off their first road trip of 2024 against the Butte Irish on Saturday, January 6, 2024, with the puck dropping at 7:30PM (MST) from the Butte Community Ice Center.

Great Falls will be back at the Great Falls Ice Plex for the first time since November 26<sup>th</sup> when the Bozeman Ice Dogs were in town for another showdown with Bozeman on Friday and Saturday, January 12-13. Both games begin at 7:00PM (MST).

**AMERICANS WATCH PARTY:** 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.

[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.

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

**CONTACT:**

**Greg Sears**  
Great Falls Americans Head Coach/General Manager  
Cell Phone: 715-566-2811  
Email: [gsears@gfamericans.com](mailto:gsears@gfamericans.com)

Visit our website: <http://www.greatfallsamericans.com>  
Join Us on Facebook:  
<https://www.facebook.com/greatfalls.americanshockey>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/gfamericans>

North American 3 Hockey League: <http://www.na3hl.com/>

