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**Great Falls Americans Press Release**

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**Americans lose 5-0 decision to Helena; Great Falls drops to fifth in Frontier standings**

**By Kevin Scott**

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HELENA, Mont., February 3, 2024 — The #5 Great Falls Americans (17-18-0-1) hockey team was hoping to pull off an upset over the #1 Helena Bighorns (36-2-0-0), one of the top teams in the NA3HL over the weekend.

On Friday in Great Falls, the Americans kept the Bighorns offense from scoring more than one goal throughout the first two periods but eventually gave up three goals after scoring one themselves in a 3-1 loss. Dmitri Kuleshov added a goal for Great Falls while Gavin Barr, Braden Cunningham and Finn Theriault put the puck in the net for Helena ([game story](#)).

Great Falls tried to get their offense firing during Saturday's contest in Helena but ran into a powerful Bighorns team that used their home ice (Steed Arena) to their advantage.

Braden and Camden Cunningham, Ty Moore, Finn Theriault and Jason Hammett each got the puck past the Americans netminders Kaden Ryhder and Noah Van Herik for the easy 5-0 victory during Friday's NA3HL rivalry game at Steed Arena in Helena, Montana.

Braden and Camden Cunningham scored 83 seconds apart for the early 2-0 lead for the host squad. Gavin Barr assisted on both scoring plays while Owen Ramsay and Finn Theriault created one assist. Great Falls' defense allowed the Bighorns to take 23 of the 30 total shots in the opening period.

All the scoring was completed during the first five minutes after the first intermission. Ty Moore and Finn Theriault each found the back of the net. A trio of players set up the goals including Jason Hammett, Hunter Coulombe and Tim Mattingly.

Helena led 4-0 heading into the final twenty minutes of action. After assisting on a second period score by Ty Moore, Jason Hammett scored his ninth goal of the season with helpers coming from Ty Moore and Owen Gruener. The fifth (and final) scoring drive by Helena came with 6:28 remaining.

The host team outscored the Americans in each of the three frames. Helena had a team-high of 23 shots (out of 56) in the first period. Great Falls managed less than nine shots through the periods to finish with 20 shots-on-goal.

The rivalry saw eleven power play chances between both clubs. The Bighorns capitalized on two of their six chances while Great Falls went 0-for-5.

Jesse Schindel (11-0-0-0) kept his undefeated streak in the net alive by winning his eleventh consecutive victory by stopping all twenty shots. The Americans used starter Kaden Ryhder for two periods where he gathered 34 saves before Noah Van Herik added 17 in the third period. Ryhder (10-9-0-1) took the second weekend loss for the visiting team.

The Bighorns weekend sweep over the Americans and the Badlands (SD) Sabres (15-16-3-3) sweep over the winless Yellowstone (WY) Quake (0-36-3-0) means that the Sabres have overtaken the Americans for fourth place in the NA3HL Frontier Division standings. Great Falls will need to be in the top four by the first week of March to clinch a playoff berth.

**FRONTIER DIVISION UPDATE:** The #2 Gillette (WY) Wild (34-4-0-1) led 4-0 before the #6 Sheridan (WY) Hawks (15-20-2-2) got on the scoreboard in the second period. The Wild then scored four unanswered goals to keep their second-place ranking in the NA3HL Frontier Division standings by posting an 8-1 victory in Gillette, Wyoming on Saturday night. Adam Severson scored twice to lead all scorers for the Wild. Former Great Falls American Christian Crutcher made his sixth goal of the season midway through the middle period for the Hawks. Gillette outshot Sheridan, 62-26. Weston Gerke (11-1-0-0) defeated Sheridan for the third time this season by accruing 25 saves. Sheridan used two netminders in Tyler Ouern (20 saves) and John Simon (34 saves). Tyler Ouern (6-5-0-0) took the setback for the visiting team ([Box Score](#)).

The #4 Badlands (SD) Sabres (15-16-3-3) overtook the Great Falls Americans for fourth place in the NA3HL Frontier Division standings by cruising by the #8 Yellowstone (WY) Quake (0-36-3-0), 11-1. Kyran Jahner scored three goals (hat trick) and Zach Vockler added two for host team. Logan Nichols put the biscuit in the basket for the only goal for the Quake in the opening stanza. Dawson Sellner (2-0-0-1) now has two wins this season as he stopped ten shots in the win for the Sabres. Yellowstone goalies Joseph DaRosa and Otto Reinhart combined for 47 saves but DaRosa (2-1-0-0) was credited with the loss ([Box Score](#)).

The closest margin of victory in the Frontier Division on Saturday came when the #7 Butte Irish (14-24-1-0) hosted the #3 Bozeman Ice Dogs (24-14-0-1). Butte and Bozeman each had four goals in the third frame before Bozeman's Andrew Kaunas accumulated a pair of goals to lift the visiting team to a 6-4 victory. Loghan Weber, Cade Holland, Kazden Stineff and Patrick Crooks tallied the scores for the Irish. Isaac Weatherford (2-1-0-0) was the winning goalie for Bozeman with 33 saves. Despite 43 saves, Keegan Strong's record dropped to 2-7-0-0 in eleven appearances for Butte ([Box Score](#)).

**NOTES:** Forwards Ty O'Bey and Dmitri Kuleshov received Honorable Mention honors for the weekly "NA3HL Stars of the Week" for the week ending January 28, 2024, for their play last week against the Bozeman Ice Dogs. Great Falls went 1-1 against Bozeman. O'Bey had four goals over two games and Kuleshov earned four weekend assists. [Click here](#) for more information.

The NA3HL also announced their “Stars of the Month” for January and three Americans were honored including Ty O’Bey (Forward – Honorable Mention), Phil Harrell (Defenseman – Honorable Mention) and Kaden Ryhder (Goaltender) as an Honorable Mention nominee. [Click here](#) for the full story.

In this week’s “Baldy’s Puck Drop” Newsletter, Americans team owner Matt Leaf has a player profile of Nathan Bring, another “mystery box” promotion and a special Valentine’s Day auction. Check out the newsletter for more information. [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 weekend’s road games against the Bozeman Ice Dogs and previews the two-game series against the Helena Bighorns. 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](#).

This week, another episode of the “Americans Podcast with Jim Quick” was completed with his guest being defenseman Spencer Schipferling. Quick has done ten 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](http://www.greatfallsamericans.com) for all your updated news, game summaries, rosters, photo galleries, etc.

**NEXT CONTEST:** The Americans will play nine games over three weekends. First, the Americans will play a single game on Thursday, February 8<sup>th</sup> against the Badlands (SD) Sabres in Rapid City, South Dakota before facing the #2 Gillette (WY) Wild for two games (February 9-10) to finish out the busy week. The three games will each begin at 7:05PM (MST) and can be seen live on [NAHLTV](#). 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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