



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Great Falls Americans Press Release

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Americans hockey can't break through in 4-1 loss to the Bighorns

By Kevin Scott

Box Score	Score Sheet	League Scoreboard	Americans Team Statistics
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GREAT FALLS, Mont., February 14, 2024 — Love was in the air at the Great Falls Ice Plex during a special Wednesday (Valentine's) night contest as the top-ranked Helena Bighorns made the 90-mile trip to challenge the #4 Great Falls Americans in the first of three head-to-head games this week featuring both NA3HL squads.

Great Falls (18-21-1-0) is currently in fourth place in the Frontier Division and hoping to try to pull off an upset this week with their three-game series against the Bighorns. Forward Ty O'Bey leads coach Greg Sears' squad with 24 goals and 46 points while Dmitri Kuleshov had a team-high 16 assists.

The Bighorns have been dominating the NA3HL Frontier Division standings all season long as they have a 39-2-0-0 overall record with three weeks remaining in the 2023-24 NA3HL junior hockey regular season. In their five straight victories over Great Falls, they have outscored the Americans, 28-5. Braden (33 goals) and Dylan Cunningham and Gavin Barr each have 42 assists apiece to lead Helena. Last week, they picked up former Butte Irish standouts Patrick Crooks and Carson Streich. Crooks, played with the Americans earlier in his career, now leads the team in points scored (60).

[Click here](#) for the 2023-24 Great Falls Americans schedule, results and game summaries including the most recent games against Helena.

The National Anthem was performed via the trumpet by Kurt Mueller before the rivalry game tonight.

The Great Falls Americans offense could not break through the Helena Bighorns defense, and it cost them a 4-1 setback to the top-ranked squad in the NA3HL's Frontier Division during Wednesday's action at the Great Falls Ice Plex.

Helena's Cai Robinson and Gavin Barr each scored for the visitors while Sam Duehlmeier of the Americans lit up the lamp once during the first twenty minutes. Robinson tenth goal (short-handed) came with eight minutes remaining. Great Falls evened the score (1-1) when Austin Trout and Garrett Driscoll

earned the helpers for the Sam Duehlmeier score three minutes after Helena's first scoring drive. Gavin Barr broke the tie (2-1) for the Bighorns with 1:43 remaining with assists coming from Braden Cunningham and Owen Ramsay. Helena took 20 of the 24 total shots after twenty minutes of play.

The Bighorns increased their lead to 3-1 when Hunter Coulombe put the biscuit in the basket set up by Garrett Bogan and Tim Mattingly. The first goal of the middle period occurred within the first two minutes. The next eighteen minutes went fast without any scoring until the final 15 seconds when Helena's Owen Gruener snuck in a goal over Great Falls netminder Noah Van Herik for the 4-1 advantage after two stanzas. Cai Robinson and Jack Lambert collected the assists.

The scoreless third frame saw two minor infractions called on the Bighorns and twenty combined shots-on-goal.

Helena and Great Falls totaled five power play opportunities, but none were successful.

The Bighorns offense overpowered the home team in the shots-on-goal category, 61-14 with ten of the Americans shots coming after the first period.

Jesse Schindel won his second game against Great Falls and is still undefeated in the net at 13-0-0-0. The Lethbridge, Alberta native registered 13 saves in the victory. Great Falls netminder Noah Van Herik played in his fifth game and suffered his second loss (0-2-0-0). The Japanese netminder stopped 57 of 61 shots from getting into the net.

FRONTIER DIVISION UPDATE: No other Frontier Division games were scheduled for Wednesday night.

NOTES: The Americans had an online "Valentine's Day Auction" that ended on Monday, February 12th and were auctioned off tonight that featured three packages from a few of our sponsors including Life In Bloom Floral & Gift Boutique, She Bare Wax & Sugar Boutique and Central Avenue Meats. The packages (each had a theme) were auctioned off before tonight's contest that also included Americans merchandise and two VIP tickets to tonight's game. Comparion Insurance also included \$50.00 gift cards from area restaurants. All three packages were delivered as a surprise to the winners by Americans mascot, Baldy today. Congratulations to our winners.

Package 1: Dozen Roses from Life in Bloom Floral and Gift Boutique

WINNER: Kayla Rasmussen on behalf of Mom, Dad, and the Great Falls Americans

Package 2: Skin Care Products and Spring Break Spray Tan from She Bare Wax & Sugar Boutique

WINNER: Ginger Murphy on behalf of her family and the Great Falls Americans

Package 3: Montana Rib Eye Steaks, Pork Chops and Hamburger from Central Avenue Meats

WINNER: Cal Laggis on behalf of Chad and Beth Westfahl and Great Falls Americans



The Americans were notified prior to tonight's game that Joseph Sam Williamson passed away February 11, 2024. He is one of only two Great Falls Americans players to have their jersey retired (Terry Casey is the other). The Americans had a retirement ceremony on December 20, 2014, where they raised his (No. 11) jersey to the rafters. Williamson played center and was a team captain, who played with Great Falls from 1955 until the mid-1960's with Terry Casey. He was



the leading scorer for the 1952 United States Men's National Team. Please read the retirement ceremony article from 2014 by [clicking here](#). His obituary can be found by [clicking here](#).

Forwards Dmitri Kuleshov and Sebe Perez received Honorable Mention honors for the weekly "NA3HL Stars of the Week" for the week ending February 11, 2024, for their play last week against the Badlands (SD) Sabres and Gillette (WY) Wild. [Click here](#) for more information.

Americans defenseman Sam Duehlmeier played in his 100th game for the Americans. The Calgary, Alberta, Canada native was honored before the game.

Americans Head Coach Greg Sears was also honored in front of the home crowd for winning his 300th career junior hockey game. He achieved that milestone in February 8th when Great Falls defeated the Badlands (SD) Sabres, 4-2 in Rapid City, South Dakota ([game story](#)).

This week, another episode of the "Americans Podcast with Jim Quick" was completed with his guest being forward Blake Komrofske, a first-year player from Colorado Springs, Colorado. Quick has done twelve 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 has seven more regular season games scheduled with five of them on the road. The Bighorns will return to the Great Falls Ice Plex on Friday (February 16) afternoon (12:00PM MST) for another game in their rivalry with the Americans. The Great Falls Public Schools does not have school on Friday so the Americans are inviting any student (Kindergarten through eighth grade) to see the Americans play FREE with a paid adult admission ticket ([see article](#)).

On Saturday, February 17th, Great Falls will travel to Helena, Montana for a 7:05PM (MST) showdown with the Bighorns at Steed Arena. All games are 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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