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Great Falls Americans Press Release

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Americans fall 7-2 to the top-ranked Bighorns in afternoon “School Daze” game

By Kevin Scott

Box Score	Score Sheet	League Scoreboard	Americans Team Statistics
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GREAT FALLS, Mont., February 16, 2024 — Welcome to School Daze hockey in Great Falls!! The Great Falls Public Schools did not have school today so students in Kindergarten through Eighth Grade got to come to the hockey game today for FREE with a purchase of an adult admission.

The Great Falls Americans have a doable but difficult road ahead if they want to make the postseason in three weeks. Great Falls (19-21-0-1, 37 pts.) faces the top-seeded Helena Bighorns (40-2-0-0, 80 pts.) twice (including today’s contest in Great Falls and Saturday’s showdown in Helena). The Americans will have to face their closest competitor in the NA3HL Frontier Division standings next week for three away contests in Rapid City, South Dakota against the Badlands (SD) Sabres (15-22-3-3, 36 pts.). After the road trip next week, Great Falls will have a clearer picture of their postseason chances but will need to maintain a top four spot in the standings after the regular season ends on March 2nd.

Helena returned to the Great Falls Ice Plex for the second time in three days. The Americans were hoping to steal a victory away from their rivals and separate themselves from the Sabres.

In Wednesday’s Valentine’s Day contest, Helena scored twice in the first and second periods to upend Great Falls, 4-1. Four different scorers gave the Bighorns their 39th win (Gavin Barr, Kai Robinson, Owen Gruener, and Hunter Coulombe). Sam Duehlmeier buried a goal for Great Falls before the first intermission. Jesse Schindel recorded 13 saves to keep his record unblemished at 13-0-0-0. Noah Van Herik made 57 stops for his second loss (0-2-0-0) of the season ([game story](#)).

Helena Bighorns forwards Jack Lambert and Patrick Crooks each scored two goals to help the #1 Helena Bighorns to a 7-2 win over the #5 Great Falls Americans during a Friday afternoon matinee at the Great Falls Ice Plex. Ty O’bey and Garren Narvaez scored both goals for the Americans.

Jack Lambert and Patrick Crooks scored the first two goals of the afternoon contest for the Bighorns. Lambert's score occurred three minutes into the contest off the stick of Owen Gruener and Dylan Cunningham followed eleven minutes later when former Great Falls American and Butte Irish forward Patrick Crooks put in his 33rd goal of the season with assistance from Dylan Cunningham and Mason Eggen. Great Falls' leading scorer, Ty O'Bey successfully connected on a pass from Dmitri Kuleshov and Luke Pizzey for Great Falls' first scoring drive while the visiting team was in the sin bin to cut into the lead by Helena (2-1). Cai Robinson's slapshot got through Americans netminder Anyon Bennett with 58 seconds left in the first period for the 3-1 lead after twenty minutes. Owen Gruener and Mason Eggen garnered the assists. Each team had one minor penalty.

Patrick Crooks put in his second goal for the top-ranked Bighorns midway through the second period with Trey Pareja and Gavin Barr collecting the assists. Before the period concluded, Helena's offense lit up the lamp again. This time, Tim Mattingly racked up his 13th scoring drive with Ty Moore and Jason Hammett setting up the play.

Jack Lambert gathered his second goal of the afternoon and Hunter Coulombe added one as Helena led 7-1 through most of the third period until Americans newcomer Garren Narvaez got the puck in the net over Helena netminder Alex Lamont with eight seconds left.

Great Falls received three minor penalties while Helena committed seven penalties with 43 minutes spent in the penalty box. Both squads took advantage of two power play chances by scoring.

The Bighorns and Americans combined for 70 shots-on-goal.

The winning goaltender was Alex Lamont, (13-1-0-0) who finished with 16 saves in 60 minutes. Anyon Bennett took his third loss with Great Falls but is now 7-6-0-1 with most of his games being played while as a member of the NA3HL's Granite City (MN) Lumberjacks. He made 45 saves.

FRONTIER DIVISION UPDATE: Chase Hapka scored two goals for the second best team in the NA3HL's Frontier Division as the Gillette (WY) Wild (37-4-0-1) downed the #6 Sheridan (WY) Hawks (15-21-2-2), 5-2 in Gillette, Wyoming on Friday night. Daniil Viscu and Tanner Freed each scored once and added an assist for the Hawks. Weston Gerke had 28 saves to improve his overall record to 13-1-0-0 for the Wild. Zach Broxterman (5-12-1-2) made 48 saves in sixty minutes in a losing effort ([Box Score](#)).

Benjamin Larson scored two goals and goaltender Hunter Oger stopped 26 of 27 shots as the #4 Badlands (SD) Sabres (16-22-3-3) reclaimed the No. 4 spot in the Frontier Division standings after the former #4 Great Falls Americans lost to the Helena Bighorns earlier in the day. The Sabres scored the first three goals in the first period and the last four goals in the third frame for a 7-1 victory over the #8 Yellowstone (WY) Quake (0-39-3-0). Oger, who is now 3-8-1-1 and in his second season with Badlands, allowed just one goal. Joseph DaRosa (0-2-0-0), who played in his second game with the Quake after starting the season with the Sheridan (WY) Hawks, registered 54 saves ([Box Score](#)).

Bozeman's Kody Wallenberg scored a hat trick (three goals) as the #3 Bozeman Ice Dogs (27-14-0-1) pulled away from the #7 Butte Irish (16-25-1-0), 6-4 at the Butte Community Ice Center on Friday night. Butte scored three out of their four goals in the middle period. Toby Kerr, Brennan Morgan, Alex Ulyanov all scored for the home team in the second period while Kazden Stineff scored the first goal for the Irish in the first stanza. Matthew Ryyananen won his 19th game of the season in the net for the Ice Dogs. He is

now 19-11-0-1 and finished with 30 saves. Braylon Rogers of Butte (9-11-1-0) also had 30 stops ([Box Score](#)).

NOTES: 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.

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 and Helena have their final showdown of the season on Saturday, February 17th at Steed Arena in Helena at 7:05PM (MST) live on [NAHLTV](#). To learn more about how to watch the Americans in action on NAHL TV, please [click here](#).

After their three-game road trip next week (February 23-25) to visit the Badlands (SD) Sabres, Great Falls will play their home season finale on Friday, March 1st at 7:00PM (MST) against the Butte Irish. This will be Billet Family Appreciation Night!

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

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