



# BALDY'S PUCK DROP

Weekly E-Newsletter March 14, 2024

Dear Great Falls Americans Enthusiast:

Disappointed? Sure! Of course, we would have liked to extend the season and still be playing. That is what competition is all about. However, no one is prepared to say it was a disappointing season as this young group of men accomplished a lot within the big picture. On the ice, they progressed and learned what it takes to play and be successful at the Junior Level – a special thanks goes out to our leadership group in Captains Phil Harrell, Sam Duehlmeier and Aaron Leaf along with age-outs Alec Browning and Nathan Bring. The 21 players, plus staff, that are eligible to return are extremely excited about the future and the potential of next season's team. I mentioned before how much this group has gelled the past six weeks and just how tight they are, which was even more evident through their exit interviews and their anxiousness to get started on next season as soon as possible.

From a first-year ownership perspective, it has been a challenge that has energized me and provided me with valuable insights as to how we can be even better next season. I am mostly proud of our players, staff, billet families and many of our partners who have embraced the culture we set out to create and have contributed to the success we have had. Don't get me wrong, there is still a lot of work to do and I will share some of the things I would like to focus on moving into next season in next week's edition. For now, I want to focus on the players as they head out of town and to make sure I thank those who have helped so much through my learning process.

Since the final buzzer last Saturday, the team has had some time to spend together and reflect on their experiences. They had fun skates on Monday and Tuesday AM – many players playing out of position or wearing another player's jersey. Individual exit interviews were held between our coaches, Greg and Alex, and each player where they reviewed the season, talked about their future plans and things the coaching staff wanted them to work on over the summer. Players have then been heading home at their own pace and most players will be gone by the end of this week.

The coaching staff has already started the recruiting process with not only those players eligible to return – all players have been asked back – but also the next group of players to commit to the Americans' program. Three players have already signed tenders (a commitment to allow GFA to own their USA Hockey Tier III rights for next season) and another 3-4 tenders have been offered and are expected to sign in the next few days. Greg and Alex will head to the Fraser Cup Finals – which will also host a prospective player combine and the Top Prospects Tournament - before heading to the USA Hockey Tier I 18U and 16U National Tournament and the Columbus prospect player combine and league meetings. The NA3HL draft will be held April 24<sup>th</sup> and there will be some other recruiting/scouting trips throughout the summer. We also have a handful of other scouts covering events throughout the country and identifying potential players. We will also be hosting a Prospects Camp (Open Tryout) in Great



**Aiden Kennedy**

Falls that is open to any 04-08 birth year players on May 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>. Needless to say, the work still continues.

We also want to recognize our players that have been selected to compete in the NA3HL Top Prospects Tournament in St. Louis on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>. Forwards Ty O'Bey and Aiden Kennedy, Defenseman Luke Pizzezy and Goalkeeper Kaden Rhyder



**Luke Pizzezy**



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have been selected to play for Team Gold in the four-team tournament. I also need to recognize Dmitri Kuleshov (who declined the invitation as his winter Season in Australia is already starting that weekend) and Phil Harrell who declined the invitation due to injury.

The Americans are extremely proud of these six players and their recognition from the league as we cheer them on next weekend in St. Louis.



Kaden Rhyder

### Ty O'Bey

We have extended our special framed and signed Team Photo sale until 9:00 PM tonight! There are still a few copies left and they are \$25 (plus shipping – if needed). You can pick up your copy at:

[www.winwithdash.com/gfamericans](http://www.winwithdash.com/gfamericans)



I would also be remiss if I did not thank the Booster Club for hosting the team dinner on Monday night. It was one final chance for the team, staff and billet families to share a meal together and have some fun with a trivia contest, putting contest and some bingo. Each player walked away with at least a gift card and a few scored some fairly significant prizes. It was a great night to cap off the season and a very special thank you goes to our Billet Coordinator, Kris Steichen, and our Booster Club leadership Adam and Pam Stanczak and Krista Smith for organizing the evening.

There are so many others that I need to thank and it would be impossible to list everyone in this newsletter. I apologize for those who I may have overlooked. But I will try to get as many as I can. They are:

**Team Staff – Kevin Scott, Jessica Sanstra, Trevor Mellon, Rex Rigor. Game Day Staff – Paula Kuebler, Kayleigh Hendricks, Alana Haney, UP Hockey, UP Women's Wrestling, Amy Hunter. Off-Ice Officials – Brian Beecroft, Rick Coster, Tressa Doughty, Nick Garcia, Wells Giles, Mark Heims, Mike Houseman, Ken Speidel, Dana Minster, Nathan Moss (Crew Chief), Eric Powell, Shari Powell, Ryan Smith, Matt Stevens. Music – Krista, Kevin and Kody Smith. NAHL TV Announcer– Ryan Siders Camera – J.D. Pearson and Krystal Weiver Security – Josh Burken (Lead), Steven Whisse and the 341<sup>st</sup> Security Forces Squadron – Malmstrom AFB Photographers – Dustin Bauer, Michael Noel. Ice Plex Staff – Ryan Smith, Aaron Leaf, Helena Harper, Sam Duehlmeier, Trevor Haynes, Marcus Ivey. Great Falls Youth Hockey for managing concessions.**

One other exciting thing we have coming up is we have partnered with **Play It Again Sports** to host a 3 vs. 3 FUN league this Spring at the Ice Plex. All ages and skill levels are welcome and teams will be established once we have all those who register. They will get 10 ice sessions on Monday and Thursday nights from April 1 through May 2<sup>nd</sup> playing ½ ice in a very informal pond hockey environment. The entire format is designed to have fun and allow those who have a passion for the sport to work on skills and do things without the burden of systems or the pressure of winning and losing. If you are aware of anyone who may be interested, they can register at our website highlighted in the footer.

PLAY IT AGAIN  
SPORTS  
GREAT FALLS, MT



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**Player Profile – #92 Garren Narvaez (Phoenix, AZ) 6'0" 187 lbs. FOR - Shoots Left**

**Favorite Team:** Detroit Red Wings **Favorite Player:** Dylan Larkin

**Favorite Movie:** Twister **Favorite Actor/Actress:** Kevin Hart

**Favorite Food:** Chicken Parmesan **Favorite Pre-Game Meal:** Chicken, Rice, Broccoli

**Musical Group You Won't Miss in Concert:** 21 Savage

**Song or Artist Guaranteed to get you hyped:** 21 Savage

**One Item you would bring with you to a deserted Island:** Boat

**Hobbies other than Hockey:** Golf

**Three People you would invite to Dinner:** Dwayne Johnson, Kevin Hart, Best Friend

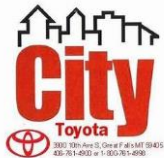
**College/University of Choice:** Arizona State University

**Like Most About Great Falls:** The mountains.

**How would you define a successful season:** Team Success!



Thank you to all our existing **Eagle's Nest, Diamond and Platinum Level** partners for their continued support.



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## Gold, Silver and Bronze Level Partners

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| Century Gaming    | Great Falls Hospital & Clinic | Anderson Glass-Door    | Point S Tire & Auto Service             |
| 2 J's Complex     | Borries Italian Supper Club   | Murphy Law Office      | Stadium Sports Bar & Casino             |
| Heidelberg Lounge | Treasure State Eyecare        | Craftmaster Cabinets   | Floors and More Abbey Carpets           |
| Tuttle Tile       | Teriyaki Madness              | Central MT Lock & Safe | 3D International Restaurant             |
| Jersey Mike's     | Noble's West Side Liquor      | Annie's Taphouse       | Hotel Avron-Celtic Cowboy               |
| Scheel's          | Croxford Funeral Home         | Big Sky Laboratory     | AllState- Tammy Quintrell-Stubbs        |
| All State Signs   | Highwood Creek Outfitters     | Automotive Machine     | She Bare Wax & Sugar Boutique           |
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| Fuddrucker's      | Play It Again Sports          | The Beacon IceHouse    | Nate and Renae Weisenburger             |
| Life in Bloom     | Comparion Insurance           | United Materials       | Fox Sports Radio, Q 106, 104.9 The Wolf |
| Hampton Inn       | Traynor Capital               | Bravera Bank           | Discount Meats                          |
| KFBB              | Cascade Electric              |                        |   |

Thank you for being a part of our family and we look forward to seeing you at the rink.

Matt Leaf  
Great Falls Americans HC Inc  
MattL.GFAmericans@gmail.com



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