



## BALDY'S PUCK DROP

Weekly E-Newsletter January 9<sup>th</sup> 2025

Dear Great Falls Americans Enthusiast:

The Americans are back in full swing and there is a lot to touch on this week. It is an exciting time of the year as only 16 regular season games remain and the next 10-12 weeks will go by fast – especially for those 04' birth year players that are aging out of Junior hockey at the end of this season. You'll hear more about this top-notch group as the season winds down.

I want to start with a quick recap of last weekend in Cody, Wyoming. Hockey is a funny game and it is not as



simple as looking at a score and thinking you have an idea of how the game went. For example, the Americans won 9-3 on Friday night led by a Ty O'Bey hat trick and 4 points each from Cal Laggis (pictured) and John Lang. Saturday resulted in a 3-2 win with goals from Owen Cronk, Aiden Kennedy and Ty O'Bey. One would suspect that Friday was the better played game, but the reality is our squad was sloppy and not sharp Friday and played much, much better on Saturday – determined by both the eye test and the analytics. They ran into a hot goalkeeper and even though never really felt threatened, gave up a late goal with the goalkeeper pulled to finish with a one goal win.

There were several milestones that I would like to take a moment to acknowledge. Ty O'Bey recorded his 100<sup>th</sup> point as an American as he has 54 goals and 46 assists in 78 games played. Karanveer Kooner (Friday night) and Kale Witt (Saturday night) each recorded their first wins in goal and Owen Cronk recorded his first goal as Americans. Congratulations to all four players!

It is that time of the year where you will likely see some player movement, for a variety of different reasons. In some cases, players may ask to be moved to be able to get more opportunity to play. For older players – it is a last chance to gain exposure and earn a chance to play at the next level. For some younger players- they may be in our long-term plans - but have run out of patience and simply have not bought into trusting the process. Decisions that impact players are never easy and I can assure you our staff does not take this role lightly. On the flip side, players coming in, and we will have some new players joining us in the coming weeks, as we continue to add depth fill specific roles and put us in the most competitive position possible. Adding players does not mean we are not happy with what we currently have, but it does mean that we feel strongly we have the foundation of a championship caliber team and can get even stronger by filling a couple of specific needs. These players may be looking to join a winning team and fill a specific role with our team that will allow us even more roster flexibility. Our players have invested their time/energy in making this program successful and most have trusted the process – part of that process is then providing them with the resources on and off the ice to be able to compete at the highest level.

You have heard me talk about culture on numerous occasions and we are very happy with the culture that has been created in the dressing room and on the ice. In fact, we are even one year farther ahead than we would have anticipated as part of our three-year plan. We have asked the players to trust the process – they all want to develop and have opportunities created for them – but they also want to win. It is kind of ironic that those who recruit players for a higher level generally want winners and players who accept their role – that is why it can be such a delicate balance. Each player has a defined role as part of the team and those players who accept their roles are those who generally have the most success. The most successful teams, and organizations in the business world, all have individuals involved that have clearly defined roles within the organization, know those roles and then execute the role for the betterment of the



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organization. In our case, we are asking our partners, billet families and fans to also focus on their role and trust this process, as well. That includes understanding the player's role – whatever that may be - and supporting them in that role in a positive and constructive manner.

Two games this coming weekend – Friday night we host Helena at home with **Annie's Taphouse** on hand handing out free craft beer samples as our presenting sponsor. Puck drop is 7:05 PM and we will also be presenting the donation check to "Think Pink for the Girls" during the 2<sup>nd</sup> intermission. Saturday we are back in Butte for a 7:30 puck drop and for those looking for something to do, check out our official watch party at **Buffalo Wild Wings**.

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**Player Profile – #1 Kaden Rhyder (Elizabethtown, PA) 6'4" 190 lbs. GK – Shoots Left DOB 04/30/2005**

**Favorite Team:** Washington Capitals **Favorite Player:** Jeremy Swayman

**Favorite Movie:** Hustle **Favorite Actor/Actress:** Ryan Reynolds

**Favorite Food:** Pizza **Favorite Pre-Game Meal:** Pasta

**If you were animal:** A Lion – because they are cool!

**Musical Group You Won't Miss in Concert:** Zac Brown Band

**Music Guaranteed to get you hyped:** War Pigs – Black Sabbath

**Person stuck with on a deserted Island:** Garrett Driscoll

**Hobbies other than Hockey:** Golf, Fishing, Concerts

**Three People you would invite to Dinner:**

Donald Trump, Suga Sean, Dana White

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

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

**How would you define a successful season:** Win the Frontier and make it to the Fraser Cup!

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Here are the upcoming events for you to mark your calendars:

- January 10<sup>th</sup> – Home game versus Helena - 7:05 PM Puck Drop! **Annie's Taphouse** night as they will be there to give away free craft beer samples. Presentation of donation check to "Think Pink For the Girls".
- January 11<sup>th</sup> - Road game versus Butte at 7:30 PM. Official Watch Party at **Buffalo Wild Wings**.
- January 17<sup>th</sup> – Home game versus Gillette at 7:05 PM. Return of the **Point S Tire and Auto** Tricycle Race.
- January 18<sup>th</sup> – Home game versus Gillette at 7:05 PM. City Toyota night!
- January 24<sup>th</sup> - Road game versus Butte at 7:30 PM. Official Watch Party at **Buffalo Wild Wings**.
- January 29<sup>th</sup> – Home game versus Bozeman at the Havre Ice Dome. 6:05 PM Puck Drop with Official Watch Party at **Buffalo Wild Wings**.
- February 1<sup>st</sup> – Home game versus the Helena Bighorns. 7:05 Puck drop as part of a UP double header as Providence takes on UND-Williston at 3:35.



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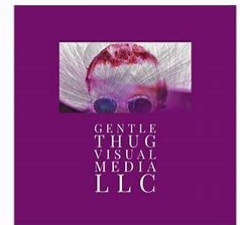
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### Gold, Silver and Bronze Level Partners (\* new this season)

3D International Restaurant and Lounge	All-State Signs	Annie's Taphouse
Comparion Insurance-Todd Neighbor	Automotive Machine	Beacon Ice House
Eagle Mount Therapeutic Recreation	Benski Towing & Recovery	Big Sky Harley Davidson*
Floors & More Abbey Carpets	Big Sky Laboratory	Bravera Bank
Hoglund's Work and Western Wear	Cascade Electric	Central Avenue Meats
Hotel Arvon-Celtic Cowboy	Central MT Lock & Safe	Century Gaming
Life in Bloom Floral & Gift Boutique	Coca-Cola*	Craftmaster Cabinets
Montana Air National Guard*	Culligan Water	Ferrin's Furniture
She Bare Wax & Sugar Boutique	Great Falls Hospital	Hampton Inn & Suites
Stifel   Finnicum Financial Group	Highwood Creek Outfitters	Jersey Mike's
Tilleraas Landscape & Nursery	Johnson Distributing	Karma Coffee*
Murphy Law	Open Door Wellness*	Play It Again Sports
Purvis Chiropractic*	Scheels	STARadio
Stockman Bank	TDS Fiber*	Teriyaki Madness
Traynor Capital	Visit Great Falls*	Westgate Repair Inc*
Mountain Title Company*	Croxford Funeral Home and Crematory*	

Thank you for being a part of our hockey family!

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