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Great Falls Americans Press Release

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Bighorns defeat the Americans, 3-2 in overtime in final regular season meeting

By Kevin Scott

Box Score	Score Sheet	League Scoreboard	Americans Team Statistics
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GREAT FALLS, Mont., February 14, 2025 — Happy Valentine's Day from the Great Falls Americans hockey team!!

Entering their final rivalry game of the 2024-25 NA3HL regular season on Friday in Great Falls, the #3 Great Falls Americans (23-13-4-2) and the top-ranked Helena Bighorns (35-3-1-1) have had seven encounters (2-3-1-1).

The latest meeting occurred on Saturday, February 1st in a thrilling game at the Great Falls Ice Plex that ended in a shootout where Helena topped Great Falls, 4-

3. John Lang, Fisher Hannesson, and Aiden Kennedy scored all three goals to give the Americans a 3-1 lead before the second intermission. Jason Hammett scored the lone first period score for the Bighorns. Helena's Chase Berg and Trey Pareja scored two goals in the third frame to send it to a scoreless five-minute overtime and to a shootout. Jason Hammett of the Bighorns outscored Great Falls, 1-0 in the shootout for the victory by the road team. Ty O'Bey, John Lang and Aiden Kennedy came up empty for the Americans. Tyler Miller added 38 saves in Helena's win while newcomer Isaiah Paulnock stopped 47 of 50 shots for the host squad ([game story](#)).

The Americans under head coach Greg Sears was looking to get their third win over one of the top teams in the North American 3 Hockey League at home on Friday night. Would their offense be able to stop the Bighorns offensive attack?

The #3 Great Falls Americans let their 2-1 slip away as the top-ranked Helena Bighorns tied the game with 1:57 remaining to force an overtime where the visitors scored 98 seconds into the extra period to claim a 3-2 win at the Great Falls Ice Plex on Friday evening.

The hockey rivals played hard throughout the first stanza, but no pucks would light up the lamp. The Bighorns attempted 13 of the 21 total shots.

Great Falls scored first in the second period and held a 2-1 advantage after forty minutes. Aiden Kennedy recorded his 21st goal during the first three minutes. Gavin Denis and Chase Hapka assisted on the power play score by the home team. Six minutes after Kennedy's lamplighter, Jurzy Allard buried his third goal with an assist by Garren Narvaez and Zac Orwig acquired his 31st assist of the year. Helena's offense prevented a shutout as Austin Tyler scored off the skate of Great Falls netminder Kaden Rhyder to cut the Bighorns deficit in half. The Americans trailed in the shots-on-goal category, 16-10.

Great Falls continued to lead 2-1 for the first eighteen minutes before Bighorns defenseman Hunter Coulombe's slapshot set up by Finn Theriault and Jason Hammett evened the contest at 2-2 to force overtime.

In the extra frame, Austin Tyler's pass to Caden Feinstein for the score over Great Falls netminder Kaden Rhyder gave the Bighorns their second overtime victory over Great Falls. On January 10th, Helena won 5-4 in overtime ([game story](#)).

The top-ranked team in the Frontier Division outshot the #3 Americans in each of the three regulation periods and overtime. Helena accounted for 24 of their 56 in the third period. Great Falls finished with 23 with 18 occurring before the third period.

Both clubs combined for nine infractions that resulted in 60 minutes spent in the sin bin. Aiden Kennedy's second period goal was the only goal scored by either team on a power play opportunity.

Branson Appelman ran his record to 10-1-0-0 in his twelfth appearance in the net for Helena. Appelman stopped 21 of 23 shots sent his way by the Americans offense. Kaden Rhyder (19-9-2-0) finished the regular season against the Bighorns with a 2-2-2-0 record and accumulated 53 saves in the loss.

Great Falls picked up one point for the overtime loss and combined with #4 Sheridan's loss to the #7 Gillette (WY) Wild moved Great Falls (temporarily) back to the third spot in the NA3HL's Frontier Division as of Friday night.

FRONTIER DIVISION UPDATE: Bozeman's Spencer Wilkinson provided key goals including one in the third period to send their game against the #6 Butte Irish to overtime and scored one of the two goals in the shootout to carry the #5 Bozeman Ice Dogs (23-15-1-1) to a 4-3 decision over the #6 Butte Irish (17-21-1-3) during Friday's action at the Butte Community Ice Center in Butte, Montana. After each team scored once to open the first period, Butte scored two of the three goals for the 3-2 lead after the second period. Spencer Wilkinson added his 17th goal six minutes into the third period as the Ice Dogs held Butte scoreless in the third period. The five-minute overtime came and went without either team scoring. Bozeman won the shootout, 2-1 with Spencer Wilkinson and Tyler Klingbeil successfully scoring their one-on-one goals against Butte netminder Logan Hunter. Easton Langemo scored the lone goal for Butte in the shootout as he finished with two goals. Jack Ryan is now 6-6-0-0 as he posted 23 saves in 65 minutes of action for the winning team. Meanwhile, Logan Hunter (Butte) suffered his first shootout loss (2-4-0-1) by accruing 35 saves ([Box Score](#)).

The #7 Gillette (WY) Wild's Dante Hunziker scored one goal in each period for his first hat trick of the season as the Wild (18-23-1-0) pulled out a 4-2 regulation victory over the #4 Sheridan (WY) Hawks (24-13-2-1) in Gillette's home arena on Friday. Elijah Farris scored in the first and second periods for the Hawks. Wylen Cambensy added his third win to his resume (3-6-0-0) for Gillette. He allowed two goals before the second intermission and finished with 32 saves. TJ Wonnacott (9-3-2-1) had 33 saves for the Hawks. The loss for Sheridan moved them down a spot to fourth in the NA3HL Frontier Division standings ([Box Score](#)).

The #2 Badlands (SD) Sabres (23-13-4-3) and the #8 Yellowstone (WY) Hawks (1-39-1-0) are idle this weekend and will return to action next week.

NOTES: During the first intermission of Friday's game, the Great Falls Figure Skating Club put on a special skating exhibition that featured four of their team members including Emily Weaver, Liz Perry, Serenity Holmes, and Charlotte Bowe skating to Alicia Keys' song, "If I Ain't Got You." The GF Figure Skating Club is under the direction of coaches Jill Ahlbrecht and Stephanie Kazior. The skaters will be performing in Helena, MT this weekend. We thank them for their performance and wish them luck this weekend.

Goaltender Kaden Rhyder and forward Ty O'Bey were selected earlier this month to represent the Great Falls Americans at the NA3HL's annual Top Prospects Tournament that will take place at the USA Hockey Arena in Plymouth, Michigan on Monday and Tuesday (Feb. 17-18). They will play on Team Blue

with other Frontier Division standouts and will be seen by many scouts from the North American Hockey League (NAHL), NCAA and ACHA hockey teams. Team Blue will play on Monday at 12:00PM (MST) and on Tuesday at 10:00AM (MST). [Click here](#) to see the press release for more information.

Read about all the Americans hockey action in print through the Great Falls Gazette, a newspaper that is published on Sunday, Tuesday, and Friday each week with game recaps written by Kevin Scott, the Great Falls Americans Public Relations/Media Coordinator. [Click here](#) for more information on how to subscribe.

Season Two of the **“Americans Podcast with Jim Quick”** premiered on September 5, 2024, with his first guest of the season, Cole Molaski, a forward from Suamico, Wisconsin, who is in his first season with Great Falls. Other players featured this season include Ty O’Bey, Easton and Aiden Kennedy, Sebe Perez, Mercer Twomey, Zac Orwig, Cal Laggis and Blayne Juszczak. [Click here](#) to learn more about Blayne Juszczak on the official podcast of the Great Falls Americans. Each podcast will feature one American player as we get to know the team this season. Jim completed 13 episodes during his first season. Fans can listen to the full podcasts from Seasons One and Two by [clicking here](#).

560AM KMON Weekly Radio Interview with Coach Greg Sears: Join KMON Radio Sports Director “Baker Bob” McNamee every Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday mornings during the 2024-25 season with Great Falls Americans Head Coach and General Manager, Greg Sears as he talks about the Americans. The Weekly Radio interview on 560AM KMON in Great Falls can be heard locally every Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday mornings during the Hourly Sports Report (6:15AM (MST), 7:15AM (MST), and 8:15AM (MST) live. [Click here](#) to listen to the current and previous radio interviews.

AMERICANS PHOTOGRAPHER: Look for game photos from all of the home games from Michael Noel, the Americans Official Photographer by [clicking here](#).

AMERICANS E-NEWSLETTERS: The Americans have two email newsletters for fans to receive in their inbox this season. Kevin Scott, the Americans Media Coordinator, has an **Americans E-Newsletter** that you can get on Sunday’s during the regular season filled with game summaries, press releases, links, schedule, etc. [Click here](#) to subscribe (if you haven’t already).

Americans Owner Matt Leaf creates and sends out a weekly email called **“Baldy’s Puck Drop”** that features team news, player profile, sponsor information and lots of other tidbits relating to Americans hockey that is published on Thursday mornings. [Click here](#) to receive the weekly newsletter (if you haven’t already).



NA3HL MOBILE APP: If you haven’t already, download the NA3HL App available at the App Store and Google Play. Fans can 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).

2024-25 PHOTOS: Check out all the Americans photos throughout the season including some taken by Americans photographer, Michael Noel and Gentle Thug Media’s Tim Ljunggren. [Click here](#) to view all the photos from the 2024-25 season.



AMERICANS TEAM STORE: [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. **AMERICANS GAME TICKETS ONLINE:** 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: The Americans will make their final regular season trip to Bozeman, Montana to face the Ice Dogs on Saturday, February 15th at 7:30PM (MST) live from Haynes Pavilion. The game will be shown on [NAHLTV](#), the NA3HL's official streaming service.

After the Bozeman contest, Great Falls will have a busy week as Americans forward Ty O'Bey and goaltender Kaden Rhyder will suit up for Team Blue in the NA3HL's Top Prospect Tournament (TPT) taking place on Monday and Tuesday, February 17-18 at the USA Hockey Arena in Plymouth, Michigan ([see more information about the TPT](#)). Great Falls will then travel to the Roosevelt Park Ice Arena in Rapid City, South Dakota to challenge the Badlands (SD) Sabres on Friday and Saturday, February 21-22 as the puck drops at 7:05PM (MST) each night.

[P. Gibson's Sports Grill and Casino](#) (1600 Fox Farm Road) is the place to be after Friday and Saturday night home games where the Americans invite their fans and supporters to their post-game dinner.

[Buffalo Wild Wings](#), located at 17 Northwest Bypass in Great Falls, hosts the "Americans Watch Party" this season when the Americans are on the road. Fans are invited to get food and drinks and watch the game.

[NAHLTV](#) is the NA3HL's new streaming platform and is the place to catch all the action for fans that are unable to attend the home and away games this season. [Click here](#) to learn more about how to view any of the Americans home and away contests.

[Click here](#) for the 2024-25 Great Falls Americans schedule and results.

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