



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**Great Falls Americans Press Release**

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**NA3HL Frontier Finals: #1 Helena wins Frontier Division Finals with 4-1 decision over Great Falls**

**By Kevin Scott**

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HELENA, Mont., March 21, 2025 — The 2024-25 NA3HL junior hockey season for the Great Falls Americans started during the first week of September (6-7) as they earned a split at the Great Falls Ice Plex against the Sheridan (WY) Hawks. After 47 regular season contests and a total of five playoff contests (Great Falls went 2-3-0-0 in postseason play), the Americans season has concluded with an overall record of 29 wins (15 at home), 17 regulation losses, 4 overtime setbacks and two shootout losses).

Great Falls ended the regular season with a third seed in the four-team Frontier Division playoffs. The Americans won twice on the road in the Frontier Division Semi-Finals (March 13-14, 16) in their best-of-three series against the #2 Sheridan (WY) Hawks (29-17-3-1).

Great Falls met the #1 Helena Bighorns, who needed three games to displace the #4 Badlands (SD) Sabres (26-17-4-3) in the other semi-final, during Game 1 of the 2025 NA3HL Frontier Division Finals that began on Wednesday, March 19<sup>th</sup> in Great Falls where the Bighorns edged the Americans, 2-1 ([game story](#)).

Great Falls needed a win on the road in Helena, Montana for their season to continue on Friday night. Would the Americans, who defeated the Bighorns twice in the regular season, live on to play another game?

The #1 Helena Bighorns closed out the Frontier Division Finals in two games by posting a 4-1 decision over the Great Falls Americans during Game Two of the 2025 NA3HL Frontier Division Finals on Friday night inside Steed Arena in Helena, Montana. Hunter Coulombe, Kelton Chadwick, Brandon McIlhany, and Marcus Fritel all put the puck in the net for the Fraser Cup bound Bighorns. Ty O'Bey scored for the Americans in the second period.

The top-ranked Helena Bighorns scored first thanks to a goal by Hunter Coulombe off the stick of Brandon McIlhany to give the host team a 1-0 lead as the first period concluded. The Bighorns took twice as many shots (21-10) as their rivals during the first period.

After the first intermission, Helena added their second goal with Kelton Chadwick's unassisted tally midway through the middle frame. Two minutes later, the Americans pulled to within one goal (2-1) on Ty O'Bey's unassisted goal. Before the period expired with 3:42 remaining, Brandon McIlhany scored his first

goal of the playoffs after adding a helper in the first period with assistance from Kelton Chadwick to increase the defending NA3HL National Champions lead to 3-1.

Helena's offense tacked on one final scoring drive in the third period. Marcus Fritel recorded his fourth goal of the playoffs with Kelton Chadwick setting up the final goal of the contest.

The Bighorns attempted 34 shots after the first stanza to end the contest with 55. The Americans acquired a team-high of 11 shots in the third period to end their last game of the season with 28 shots taken.

The host team went 1-for-2 on the power play and committed three minor penalties after the first period. Great Falls failed to score on their two power play chances, and they were whistled for two minor infractions.

Helena netminder, Branson Appelman (18-2-0-0) had 44 saves during Wednesday's 2-1 victory and finished off the two-game series on Friday with 27. Great Falls' Kaden Rhyder (24-13-2-0) made 51 saves on Friday and finished the Frontier Division Finals with 91.

**NEXT CONTEST:** The Great Falls Americans finished their season with an overall record of 29-17-4-2 including 2-1-0-0 in their playoff series with the Sheridan (WY) Hawks (Frontier Division Semi-Finals) and two setbacks against the Helena Bighorns in the NA3HL Frontier Division Finals.

The Helena Bighorns (45-5-1-1) will represent the Frontier Division in the six-team NA3HL Fraser Cup (National) Tournament taking place in St. Peters, Missouri at the St. Peters Rec Plex from March 26-30. The national tournament features each team playing two (round robin) games followed by a semifinal round (two games) and the national championship game.

[NAHLTV](#) will provide the live streaming coverage of each game at the [NA3HL Fraser Cup National Tournament](#).

**NOTES:** The 2024-25 Great Falls Americans want to thank the billet (host) families, fans, and sponsors who have contributed to making another NA3HL season possible for the Americans. [Click here](#) to view all the sponsors and be sure to patronize whenever possible. A huge thanks goes out to the Americans staff, players and NA3HL officials for another enjoyable NA3HL season at the Great Falls Ice Plex.

Also, a special thanks to our nine players who have finished out their eligibility (aged out) with the Americans including Chase Hapka, Jayden Rogen, Zac, Orwig, Matt Beazley, Sebe Perez, Masen Kerr, Garrett Driscoll, John Lang, and Cal Laggis. We wish you the best in your future and thank you for your contributions to Great Falls American hockey.

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  
Great Falls Americans Hockey P.O. Box 1302, Great Falls, MT 59403

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](http://www.greatfallsamericans.com) for all your updated news, game summaries, rosters, photo galleries, etc.

**[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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