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Great Falls Americans Press Release

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NA3HL Frontier Finals: Helena takes 1-0 series lead with 2-1 win over Great Falls

By Kevin Scott

Box Score	Score Sheet	League Scoreboard	Americans Team Statistics
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GREAT FALLS, Mont., March 19, 2025 — And then there were two teams left after the first round of the (Frontier Division Semi-Finals) in the North American 3 Hockey League (NA3HL).

The #3 Great Falls Americans (29-16-4-2) and the top-ranked Helena Bighorns (44-5-1-1) each won their best-of-three Frontier Division Semi-Finals last week with Great Falls needing three games to eliminate the #2 Sheridan (WY) Hawks and Helena downed the #4 Badlands (SD) Sabres in three meetings ([click here](#) to see the box scores from the Helena-Badlands series). [Click here](#) to view the results/game stories from the entire 2024-25 Great Falls Americans season including the playoff series with Sheridan.

Both interstate rivals tangled on the ice for the 2025 NA3HL Frontier Division Finals that began on Wednesday, March 19th for Game 1 at the Great Falls Ice Plex. During the regular season, the Americans defeated the Bighorns twice, had three regulation setbacks, two overtime losses and one shootout loss (2-3-2-1) to the 2024 NA3HL Fraser Cup National Champions from last season.

The last time the Great Falls Americans participated in the Frontier Division Finals was back in April 2021 where they fell 2-1 in their best-of-three series to the Sheridan (WY) Hawks ([see schedule and game summaries](#)).

Great Falls was hoping to steal Game 1 of the Frontier Division Finals in front of their home fans one last time this season at the Great Falls Ice Plex on Wednesday evening.

Helena Bighorns forwards G'bari Mayers and Owen Gruener each scored once in the second period as the top-ranked Helena Bighorns slipped by the #3 Great Falls Americans, 2-1 at the Great Falls Ice Plex during Game 1 of the 2025 NA3HL Frontier Division Finals on Wednesday night. Aiden Kennedy score the only goal for the Americans in the first period.

The Montana rivalry between Great Falls and Helena heated up on the ice during the first period. Both squads combined for 34 shots but only one of those by the Americans was successful in the net. Great Falls forward Aiden Kennedy scored on an unassisted play three minutes into the first stanza as the puck sailed by Helena netminder Branson Appelman.

Great Falls held a 1-0 advantage through the first four minutes of the second period when Helena's G'bari Mayers scored against Great Falls goaltender Kaden Rhyder with 15:11 on the clock. Marcus Fritel collected his third assist of the playoffs and Austin Tyler was credited with his fifth assist. The visiting Bighorn broke the 1-1 tie as Caden Feinstein and Maddux Hale earned assists on Owen Gruener's slapshot that got through the glove of the Americans goalie. Helena's goal occurred while Great Falls was in the penalty box. After two periods, Great Falls accumulated 33 of the 65 total shots during the first forty minutes of game time.

The final twenty minutes went by without any scoring from either team despite 22 shots being taken.

The host team outshot the visitors, 45-42, with most of the shots being taken before the third period.

Seven (total) minor penalties dotted the game sheet after the sixty-minute contest concluded. Helena's second goal in the second period was the only power play opportunity that was successful as they finished 1-for-2. The three power play chances by the Americans went unanswered.

Branson Appleman was the starting goaltender for Helena on Wednesday and he amassed 44 saves on 45 shots taken by Great Falls. The Minnesota netminder went 17-2-0-0 during the regular season and is now 3-0-0 in the playoffs.

Kaden Rhyder (24-12-2-0) recorded 40 saves for the Americans as his playoff record dropped to 2-2-0-0.

NEXT CONTEST: Great Falls and Helena will meet at Steed Arena in Helena, Montana on Friday, March 21st for Game Two of the 2025 NA3HL Frontier Division Finals with the puck set to drop at 7:05PM (MST).

If a third game is necessary, Helena will also host the winner-take-all game on Saturday, March 22nd at 7:05PM (MST).

The Frontier Divisional Finals are played between March 19-23 in a best-of-three series. The winning team in each of the divisions plus one wild card team will be participating at the 2025 NA3HL Fraser Cup (National) Championships slated to start on March 26-30, 2025, in St. Peters, Missouri at the St. Peters Rec Plex. The national tournament features each team playing two (round robin) games followed by a semifinal round (two games) and the national championship game.

Regardless of the outcome in this series, the Bighorns are assured of at least a wild card spot at the Fraser Cup National Tournament based on their top seed in the NA3HL.

[NAHLTV](#) will provide the coverage for the Frontier Division Finals (March 19, 21-22) and the [NA3HL Fraser Cup National Tournament](#) beginning on March 26-30th in St. Peters, Missouri.

NOTES: 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.

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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