



BALDY'S PUCK DROP

Weekly E-Newsletter March 13th, 2025

Dear Great Falls Americans Enthusiast:

The regular season has come to an end with your Americans recording 27 wins and tied for 2nd place in the Frontier Division with 60 points. The tie-break established by the league has the first tie-break as wins, followed by head-head and goal differential in games played. Sheridan gets the home ice advantage for the first-round playoff series based on having one more win, even though they had more losses than the Americans and we would have had the edge in the other tie-breaks. Although we are disappointed to not be able to give our fans the possibility of an extra home game, the team feels good about finishing the season with four key wins to get to the 2nd place tie.

Saturday night's game saw a lot of activities taking place as it was "Toyota Fan Appreciation Night", "Billet Appreciation Night" and we took the opportunity to honor our nine age-out players who you met in our player profile last week. A special thanks goes out to John Zuris from **City Toyota** who drove an "Americans' Red" 2024 Toyota Tacoma Limited onto the ice for the Billet appreciation ceremony and for providing fans with several prizes. I can't say enough of how thankful we are of our amazing billet



families who host our players each season. Our billet hosts have gone above and beyond in supporting these young men by providing a place for them to call home and a family to share their experience with. It was a great opportunity for our players to honor them with a special moment, a heartfelt thanks and a huge Great Falls Americans round of applause from our fantastic fans. We would also like to thank **Life in Bloom Floral and Gift Boutique**, the official florist of the Great Falls Americans, for providing the roses the players presented to their billet moms.



handled business last weekend. The final weekend always presents some distractions with Billet appreciation taking place and the emotions of players, and their parents, who may be playing their final junior regular season games. Throw in an opponent that had nothing to play for and was determined to get in their final shots, and it would be easy to lose focus and end up in a wayward direction. The team kept their focus, stayed out of the BS thrown at them and came away with solid 6-3 and 4-2 wins. The goal has always been to be playing our best hockey at the end of the season and that is what the team has shown the past few weeks.



Congratulations goes out to Aiden Kennedy for earning NA3HL Frontier Division 3rd Star of the Week with 2 goals and 2 assists on the weekend. Aiden is enjoying his 2nd season here in Great Falls and has collected 33 goals and 44 assists in 86 games with the Americans,

including 26 goals and 30 assists in 42 games this season.



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The best of three 1st round playoff series starts Thursday night in Sheridan. The team travelled to Sheridan after practice on Wednesday and will return home after the game Thursday night to prepare for game 2 at the Ice Plex on Friday evening. If a game 3 is necessary, it will take place back in Sheridan at 1:00 PM on Sunday afternoon. The other Frontier Division series involves the Badlands Sabres (who earned the 4th spot with a last game must win over Sheridan) and the defending league Champion Helena Bighorns. The winners will face-off in a best of three series next week (If the Americans are involved – likely starting Wednesday night) for the right to advance to the Fraser Cup finals in St. Louis the following week. Be sure to join our fans at the official watch party taking place at **Buffalo Wild Wings** for all away playoff games.

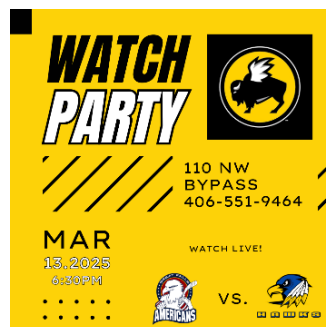
So, how do the Americans stack up with Sheridan as we head into the playoff series. We played each other eight times this season and we each won four games -all in regulation and each two game weekend series ended in a split. In the eight games, we outscored them 22-21 and we are the two least penalized teams in the Frontier Division as Sheridan averaged 12 penalty minutes per game and the Americans averaged 13 penalty minutes per game. MyHockey Rankings has the Americans listed at the 26th ranked team in the nation and Sheridan is 27th with a .03 point difference in rating. The biggest difference is we have an edge in strength of schedule rating due to the unbalanced schedule and the fact they played 7th place Gillette and 8th place Yellowstone eight times each while we played first place Helena and 5th place Bozeman (who just missed the playoffs by 2 points) eight times. Needless to say, our teams are extremely even and I would expect an intense and well played competitive playoff series. For those who have followed along with the Newsletter – you know I am not one to toot my own horn – but I must share this quote from the September 12th Edition of Baldy's Puck Drop *"there is a much bigger picture in a very competitive Frontier Division and Sheridan will be competing for the top of the league just like we will be all season. We play them six more times and expect very competitive games one way or the other for all of them."*

I'd like to take this opportunity to offer a special thank you and acknowledgement for our official team photographer, Mike Noel. Mike has been at all our home games and deserves credit of many of the pictures that I have used in this newsletter throughout the season. His game action shots are the best in the business and you can check a few of them out on our website in the photo gallery section and see all of the Americans photos (available for purchase) he has taken on his website at: www.mnoelphotography.smugmug.com.

Finally, congratulations to billet mom Toni Roope-Quick for the winning bid on the Away (Red) signed jersey and to Janet Massoglia from Saginaw, Michigan for her winning the Home (White) team signed Jersey. The limited number of Framed and Signed 8 x 10 Photos are still available for purchase through DASH as the activation will run through 9:00 PM on Monday, the 17th. Scan the QR code below to get activated with DASH and participate in all future promotions.



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Player Profile – #2 Carson Sears (Great Falls, MT) 6'2" 160 lbs. DEF – Shoots Left DOB 12/28/2008

Favorite Team: Tampa Bay Lightning **Favorite Player:** Cale Makar

Favorite Movie: Miracle **Favorite Actor/Actress:** Tom Cruise

Favorite Food: Cantaloupe or Salmon

Favorite Pre-Game Meal: Banana and a glass of Milk

If you were animal: A Dog – so I can chase squirrels!

Musical Group You Won't Miss in Concert: Rise Against

Music Guaranteed to get you hyped: Anything

Person stuck with on a deserted Island: Aiden Kennedy

Hobbies other than Hockey: Fishing

Three People you would invite to Dinner:

Donald Trump, Jon Jones, Dana White

College/University of Choice: University of Michigan

Like Most About Great Falls: Fishing and the river.

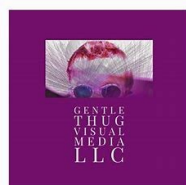
How would you define a successful season: Making it to the playoffs!



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

- March 13th – Game 1 of playoffs at Sheridan 6:30 PM. Join other fans at the Official Watch Party at **Buffalo Wild Wings**.
- March 14th – Game 2 of playoff series versus Sheridan at the Ice Plex. 7:05 PM Puck Drop.
- March 16th – Game 3 (If necessary) of playoff series at Sheridan 1:00 PM. Join other fans at the Official Watch Party at **Buffalo Wild Wings**.
- March 20th-23rd – Final Round of Frontier Division Playoffs.
- March 26th-30th – Fraser Cup Finals in St. Louis, MO.

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



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Tammy Quintrell-Stubbs



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Thank you for being a part of our hockey family!

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