



# BALDY'S PUCK DROP

Weekly E-Newsletter March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2026

Dear Great Falls Americans Enthusiast:

I have had about 48 hours to process the playoff series with Helena, and this one still carries some disappointment. If you were to ask the players and staff, I am pretty sure they would all agree that we left something on the table this year. Not necessarily in effort and/or desire, but more so in execution and opportunity. I indicated from day 1 that this team had high expectations and never waived from that belief. To come up short of our goals with the opportunities presented to us stings this time around. With that being said, hats off to Helena as they were the better team in game three and simply did a better job of capitalizing on our mistakes. But I am just being honest in that being eliminated by Helena for the third straight season does not feel the same this time around.

The Americans got off to a good start with a 5-4 win in Helena last Friday night. The Americans entered the third period down 4-3 and found a way to get the win with the game winning goal being scored by Colton Bacon while 11 different players recorded a point in a well-rounded game. Saturday's game 2 in Great Falls ended up being pushed back to Sunday afternoon due to the weather and I-15 being closed, making it impossible for Helena to travel. What kind of impact did the delay have on the series? We'll never know on the ice as momentum, rest/recovery and the intensity level are all important factors during the playoffs and you never know how a team will respond. From the business side, it certainly impacted attendance and beer sales.

Game 2 ended up being a very competitive game with Helena jumping out to 1-0, 2-1 and 3-2 leads before the Americans tied the game up and forced overtime. Both teams had their chances before Helena took advantage of a defensive lapse about 4 minutes into the overtime to come away with the 4-3 win, setting up game three in Helena on Monday night. AJ Prioli led the way with a hat trick while Cooper Clouse added three assists.

Game 3 in Helena found the Americans jumping out to 1-0 and 2-1 leads before entering the 3<sup>rd</sup> period tied 2-2. The series basically was coming down to the 3<sup>rd</sup> period of game three and that is where the execution faltered with Helena taking advantage of our fatal mistakes and the Americans unable to take advantage of their mistakes, resulting in a 5-2 loss (includes an empty net goal). The truth is we knew going into it that the series would be tight and would likely go to three games. If you would have told us prior to the series that we would enter the third period of game three tied – we would have taken that and been confident of our chances. How close was the series? We played 184 minutes of hockey and for 168 of those minutes the teams were either tied or there was only a one goal differential. That is what playoff hockey is about and is what we expected, yet did not get the job done this time around.

In the other series, Sheridan eliminated Badlands with a 3-2 win and 4-3 overtime win, so another very competitive series. Sheridan and Helena now face-off this weekend for the opportunity to represent the Frontier Division in the Fraser Cup Finals.

On a few positive notes, the Americans finished the season with a record of 31 wins, 15 losses, 3 overtime losses and one shootout loss. Cooper Clouse led the Americans this season with 94 points (including 70 assists) in 49 games and closed out his junior career with a 38-game scoring streak. Ethan Miller added 75 points (leading the team with 38 goals) in 36 games while AJ Prioli chipped in 64 points in 31 games played.



[GREATFALLSAMERICANS.COM](http://GREATFALLSAMERICANS.COM)  
[WWW.GREATFALLSAMERICANS.SHOP](http://WWW.GREATFALLSAMERICANS.SHOP)



## BALDY'S PUCK DROP

Weekly E-Newsletter March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2026

I would also like to take this opportunity to announce the 2026 Mike Lewis Award winner. Mike Lewis was an avid hockey fan and player who suffered an injury while playing his senior year in High School. Mike remained a huge fan of the Americans and passed away suddenly of natural causes in September 2021. In memory of Mike, his family presents an award each season to an Americans player that best exemplifies Mike's spirit, commitment and loyalty. This award is given to a player that shares the passion for the game and goes above and beyond to support his teammates both on and off the ice. Previous winners include Micah Serino in 2022, Assistant Coaches Alex Leaf in 2023 and Nathan Bring in 2024 and Ty O'Bey in 2025. This year's recipient, as chosen by the coaching staff is Fargo, North Dakota native and team Captain Fisher Hannesson. Fisher recorded 2 goals and 19 assists in the season along with 40 penalty minutes. More importantly, he anchored our blue line and averaged roughly 25 minutes of playing time each game. The award was presented to Fisher during the end of season get together. The Americans would like to thank the Lewis family for keeping Mike's memory alive through this award.



m. noel photography

So, what's next for the Americans? I must be honest in that we fully expected to be playing for a couple of more weeks. The coaches conducted exit interviews yesterday and many of the players will be scattering towards home in the coming days. I, personally – and am guessing the coaches, as well – will take a few days to decompress and then will meet to debrief on the season and start preparations for next season. I'll touch on that process a bit in next week's edition and start to introduce you to some of the players who will be competing for a spot on the team next season.

Finally, congrats to Team USA for collecting their fifth consecutive Gold Medal at the Paralympics with a 6-2 win over Canada. The Sled team makes it a clean sweep where one nation has won all three Olympic and Paralympic disciplines in the same year. Quite an accomplishment and it is a great time to be part of USA Hockey.

### Here are the upcoming dates to add to your calendar:

- March 18<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> – Frontier Division finals.
- March 25<sup>th</sup> -30<sup>th</sup> – Fraser Cup Finals in St. Louis, MO.
- April 8<sup>th</sup> – Great falls Sports Foundation Mixer. 5:30-8:00 PM at Expo Park Event Center. Proceeds from this year's Mixer will benefit the Ice Plex and tickets can be purchased from any user group or contact Matt directly.
- April 28<sup>th</sup> – NA3HL Entry Draft.
- June 19<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> – Great Falls Americans Annual Prospects Camp.
- August 15<sup>th</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Cornhole Extravaganza
- August 17-21<sup>st</sup> – Great Falls Americans Main Camp
- August 22<sup>nd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> Annual GFA Blue-White Game.



[GREATFALLSAMERICANS.COM](http://GREATFALLSAMERICANS.COM)  
[WWW.GREATFALLSAMERICANS.SHOP](http://WWW.GREATFALLSAMERICANS.SHOP)



# BALDY'S PUCK DROP

Weekly E-Newsletter March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2026

Thank you to our corporate partners for their continued support.

## Eagle's Club Level



**TOYOTA**

## Diamond Level



BlueCross BlueShield  
of Montana



## Platinum Level



GREATFALLSAMERICANS.COM  
WWW.GREATFALLSAMERICANS.SHOP



# BALDY'S PUCK DROP

Weekly E-Newsletter March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2026



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

All-State Signs  
 Floors & More Abbey Carpets  
 Havre Youth Hockey  
 Life in Bloom Floral & Gift Boutique  
 Coca-Cola\*  
 Comparion Insurance  
 Big Sky Laboratory  
 Ferrin's Furniture  
 Jersey Mike's  
 Scheels  
 Voices of Hope\*  
 Fire Pizza\*  
 Croxford Funeral Home and Crematory  
 Benski Towing & Recovery  
 Sip-N-Dip Lounge\*  
 Hoglund's Work and Western Wear

Beacon Ice House  
 Central Avenue Meats  
 Central MT Lock & Safe  
 Hotel Arvon/Celtic Cowboy  
 Craftmaster Cabinets  
 Play It Again Sports  
 Cascade Electric  
 Great Falls Hospital  
 Karma Coffee  
 Stockman Bank  
 Johnson Distributing  
 Montana Rib & Chop House\*  
 Bish's RV of Great Falls\*  
 Westgate Repair, Inc  
 Special Olympics of Montana\*  
 High Plains Wealth Management

Eagle Mount Therapeutic Recreation\*  
 MNoel Photography  
 Century Gaming  
 Stifel | Finnicum Financial Group  
 Culligan Water  
 Open Door Wellness  
 Hampton Inn and Suites  
 She Bare Wax & Sugar Boutique  
 Murphy Law  
 Traynor Capital  
 Mountain Title Company  
 Visit Great Falls  
 StaRadio  
 Annie's Taphouse  
 TDS Fiber

Thank you for being a part of our hockey family!

Matt Leaf

Great Falls Americans HC Inc

MattL.GFAmericans@gmail.com



[GREATFALLSAMERICANS.COM](http://GREATFALLSAMERICANS.COM)  
[WWW.GREATFALLSAMERICANS.SHOP](http://WWW.GREATFALLSAMERICANS.SHOP)