

BALDY'S PUCK DROP

Weekly E-Newsletter October 29th, 2026

Dear Great Falls Americans Enthusiast:

There was a lot going on last week, so I think I will try to tackle this in chronological order. Our team captains



and Blady stopped by the **Benefis-Sletten Cancer Institute** on Thursday morning for a chance to mingle with some of their staff and promote the weekend. We presented a team signed jersey to display at the center and recognized the important role they play as our presenting partner for our “Think Pink” Breast Cancer Awareness weekend and for cancer treatment, research and support in our area in general. Personally, my family has been recently impacted as one of my sisters has been battling breast cancer for the past six months and one of my brothers is currently fighting prostate cancer. Facilities such as the **Sletten Cancer Institute** are located throughout the country and positively impacts so many people which is why it is important for

us to do our part with this special awareness weekend each season. It is also why the proceeds from the “Think Pink” jersey auction will go towards the “Circle of Hope” Fund within the **Benefis-Sletten Cancer Institute Foundation**.

A group of volunteers worked well into the early morning hours last Thursday night/Friday morning painting the ice pink. The group got started about 10:00 PM after the last ice user on Thursday evening and put down four coats of pink paint before sealing it with water and letting the Zamboni take over in building the ice. A very special thanks goes out to Ty Fayden, Marcus Ivey, Trevor Haynes, Sam Deuhlmeier, Ryan Bobo and Aaron and Alex Leaf for taking on the task and making the process seamless the third time around.



Friday night resulted in a lackluster effort by the Americans and a 5-2 loss in front of the smallest crowd of the season due to the nasty storm that went through. The highlight of the night was the figure skating exhibition during the 1st intermission with Serenity Harris, Emily Weaver, Charlotte Bowe and Orene Christensen skating to Katy Perry’s “Rise”. The four skaters represent the Great Falls Figure Skating Club and compete both regionally and nationally. We annually include them as part of our “Think Pink” Weekend as they enjoy skating on the pink ice and the opportunity to skate in front of our fans. The group is coached by Jill Ahlbrecht and Stephanie Kazior – thanks for sharing the young ladies with our fans.

Saturday night brought our largest crowd of the season which motivated the team to close out an 8-5 win. It was also the return of EJ Sanchez (Great Falls, MT) who tallied two goals in his first game back with the Americans while Kaleb Wood recorded his first win in goal. Our fans were treated to an exhibition of 6U cross-ice hockey during the 1st Intermission as several local 6U kids demonstrated that the future of the Americans is bright with some fast-paced action at the end of their long day as they also participated in their first 6U jamboree of the season earlier in the day. Thank you to Great Falls Amateur Hockey and the 6U coaches for all you do to promote the game in the area. You’ll see more of our youth hockey players participating in future activities throughout the season as we recognize our future players and thank the many volunteers that make youth hockey click.

In addition to the Pink Jersey auction, we were also raising funds for the local breast cancer support group here in Cascade County - “Think Pink for the Girls”. The Americans will be donating \$479 (\$1 for everyone in attendance Saturday night), that will be matched by **City Chevrolet**. Raffle baskets from **She Bare Wax & Sugar Boutique** and **Life in**



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Bloom Floral & Gift Boutique were available each night with all the proceeds going towards **"Think Pink for the Girls"**. We'll have the final numbers in a few days, but early indication is that another \$4000 plus has been raised for Cancer support bringing our four-year total to roughly \$17,000. Thank you to all our fans and partners for your support in making this worthwhile weekend a success.

Another part of the weekend was especially meaningful to me. Before joining the Americans for the 2023-24 season, I spent 28 years at USA Hockey as Director of the Officiating Education Program. To support our breast cancer



awareness efforts, my former colleagues sent four top-level female officials and two officiating coaches—all dear to me—to cover the games. They brought exceptional skill and professionalism rarely seen at our level of play, along with personal connections that reflect my years at USA Hockey. Some might consider establishing and growing female officiating development one my legacies, and I have always taken tremendous pride in the accomplishments of our women in stripes. Officiating coaches Kendall Hanley and Jackie Spresser dedicated themselves to excelling and earned Olympic assignments in 2022. The four on-ice officials—Kaylen Hanson, Sydney Harris, Katie Glover and Janice Bolton—began under my guidance and are now considered among the world's top female officials

as they work toward qualifying for future Olympic Games. Watching them on the ice and catching up off the ice made the weekend special. As our staff put it, "they are welcome back to work our games anytime".

Next up is a road trip to Yellowstone (Cody, WY) Friday night and Sheridan on

Saturday. Puck drop is 7:30 both nights and you can catch all the action at our official watch party location **"Buffalo Wild Wings"**.



The following weekend is our Military Appreciation Weekend presented by **1st Liberty Federal Credit Union** where we will, once again, wear special jerseys that will be auctioned off for a great cause. Here is the first look at the Military themed jerseys we will be wearing this season – be sure to get activated with DASH so you can be part of the fun. We will also have some special edition military themed merchandise



for sale during the games. A special note is Saturday's game on November 7th is a 3:35 PM start as the University of Providence is hosting Montana State later that night.

Finally, in the spirit of Halloween, the Booster Club hosted the team Halloween Party on Sunday evening with costume and pumpkin carving contests – Thanks to Mike and Katie Hanning for hosting. Then a few of the players participated in the annual **Peak Health and Wellness** "Trunk or Treat" on Wednesday evening. After a busy week off the ice, the players are looking forward to hitting the road and placing all their focus back on the ice and getting on the right track heading into the half-way point of the season.



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Player Profile – #6 Paxon Sacre (Des Moines, IA) 6'0" 165 lbs. FOR– Shoots Right DOB 08/16/2008

Favorite Team: Toronto Maple Leafs **Favorite Player:** Macklin Celebrini

Favorite Movie: Wolf of Wall Street **Favorite Actor/Actress:** Leonardo DiCaprio

Favorite Food: Chicken Parmesan

Favorite Pre-Game Meal: Chicken/Steak with Rice

If you were animal: Jaguar – Because I can be sneaky on the attack

Musical Group You Won't Miss in Concert: Treaty Oak

Pre-Game Hype Music: Trap and Southern Hip-Hop

One Person to be stuck with on a deserted Island:

Hobbies other than Hockey: Hanging with family and friends

Three People you would like to invite to Dinner:

Connor McGregor, Togi (Shane Stoffer), Brad Krust

College/University of Choice: Pursuing my own business

Like Most About Great Falls: How peaceful it can be and the potential for money

How would you define a successful season: Winning the Fraser Cup!



Here are the upcoming and special dates to add to your calendar:

- October 30th - Away game at Yellowstone. 7:30 PM - Official Watch Party at **Buffalo Wild Wings**.
- October 31st - Away game at Sheridan. 7:30 PM with Official Watch Party at **Buffalo Wild Wings**.
- November 6th -10th – Military Appreciation Jersey Auction through DASH.
- November 6th – Military Appreciation Weekend-Presented by **1st Liberty Federal Credit Union**. Home game versus Helena at 7:05 PM.
- November 7th - Military Appreciation Weekend-Presented by **1st Liberty Federal Credit Union**. Home game versus Badlands at 3:35 PM followed by UP versus MSU at 7:30 PM.
- November 13th-14th – Away games versus Yellowstone in Sidney, MT. 7:30 PM - Official Watch Party at **Buffalo Wild Wings**.
- November 20th - Away game at Butte. 7:30 PM with Official Watch Party at **Buffalo Wild Wings**.
- November 28th – Home game versus Bozeman. 7:05 PM Puck Drop and \$2 beer night presented by **Gusto Distributing**.
- December 5th – Home game versus Helena and Salute to 10U Hockey Night. 7:05 PM.
- December 6th – Away game versus Bozeman. 5:15 PM with Official Watch Party at **Buffalo Wild Wings**.
- December 11th- Home game versus Yellowstone and Salute to 8U Hockey Night. 7:05 PM.
- December 12th – 2nd Annual **Russell Country Federal Credit Union** "Teddy Bear Toss".
- December 20th-22nd – NA3HL Showcase, Blaine, MN.
- January 8th and 15th – Rodeo/Rancher Appreciation.
- February 12th and 13th – Local Business Appreciation presented by **Comparion Insurance- Todd Neighbor** and **Great Falls Chamber of Commerce**.
- March 12th – Home game versus Badlands Sabres – Billet Appreciation presented by **Toyota**.
- March 13th - Home game versus Bozeman – Fan Appreciation presented by **Toyota**.



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Thank you to our corporate partners for their continued support.

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Thank you for being a part of our hockey family!

Matt Leaf

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