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**Great Falls Americans Press Release**  
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### **Third period rally falls short as Great Falls suffers 7-4 setback**

**By Kevin Scott**

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HELENA, Mont., March 3, 2018 — This contest marked the final meeting between the Great Falls Americans (32-11-2) and the Helena Bighorns. With one week left in the regular season, these two squads could meet in the Frontier Divisional Semi-Finals in two weeks if everything goes according to plan.

Great Falls won the first four head-to-head contests this season before a pair of losses. Great Falls rebounded and took the 5-3 win last night to lead the season series 5-2. The Americans also have scored five more goals against the Bighorns, 24-19.

The Great Falls Americans were out-scored by the Helena Bighorns in each period as they fell to the Helena Bighorns for the third time in eight games. The 7-4 win by Helena on Saturday night at the Helena Ice Arena provided the biggest margin of victory when these two interstate rivals collided on the ice this season.

The Helena Bighorns started the first period ahead 2-0 behind goals from Mikhail Gavrilenko and Ben Kottmeier. Richard Groskops created two assists while Ty Niskanen and Dane Rieger added one. Michael Houlihan kept Great Falls in the game with his shot that sailed by Bighorns goalie Erik Berglund for the Americans first scoring drive with 11:18 on the clock. Brandon Vukasin and Adam Vandebos chipped in the assists for coach Jeff Heimel's playoff-bound team. Helena's offense out-shot Great Falls, 13-9 during the first twenty minutes.

Noel Parker even up the scores (2-2) within the first 54 seconds of the middle stanza with his first goal of the season. Kyler Mack and Michael Fary helped set up the quick score for the visiting squad. Ben Kottmeier put the go-ahead score in for the Bighorns 73 seconds later off the sticks of Hayden Seitz and Jarett Scheibel. Towards the end of the period, Luc Cross amassed his 22<sup>nd</sup> goal of the season to increase the lead by the Bighorns to 4-2. The assists went to Gavin Cline and Kaden Lindberg.

Just like the second period, Noel Parker got his second goal in as many periods during the first minute of the last period of regulation. Great Falls' power play score was created by Brandon Vukasin and Michael Great Falls Americans Hockey

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Houlihan. Five minutes later, Great Falls would tie the contest at 4-4 with Michael Fary lighting up the lamp. Assisting on the play were Nick Ramstad and Nate Simpson. Kaden Lindberg helped Helena take the lead for good by scoring the Bighorns second power play opportunity with help from Mikhail Gavrilenko and Dane Rieger. The home team finished the contest with goals by Gavin Cline and Richard Groskops. Luc Cross, Jarett Scheibel and Mikhail Gavrilenko earned the assists.

Helena produced 40 shots including 15 after the second intermission. The Americans came away with 27 shots.

Three of Great Falls' four penalties came in the final frame and they accumulated 16 minutes of penalty time. Two Helena scores came via the power play. Helena's four penalties resulting in eight minutes in the sin bin came in the second stanza.

Eric Berglund earned the win over Great Falls goaltender Bryan Sharp. Berglund stopped 23 of the 27 shots he encountered by the Americans offense. Bryan Sharp played well in the goal for the first two periods before allowing three straight goals during the final 12 minutes. He finished with 33 saves in the losing effort.

**NEXT CONTEST:** The next and final opponent for the Great Falls Americans is the Bozeman Ice Dogs. Great Falls plays host to Bozeman on Friday, March 9<sup>th</sup> before closing out the regular season with the final road game in Bozeman, Montana on March 10<sup>th</sup>. Both games are slated to start at 7:30PM.

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