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**Great Falls Americans Press Release**

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## **Americans nip Ice Dogs, 4-3 in overtime; Dearing provides deciding goal**

**By Kevin Scott**

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BOZEMAN, Mont., December 28, 2018 — Two weeks ago before the 2018 NA3HL Showcase tournament in Minnesota, the Great Falls Americans (22-7-0-1) and the Bozeman Ice Dogs (16-10-4-0) tangled on the ice in Great Falls in the final home game of 2018 for the Americans.

Great Falls broke a 2-2 tie in the third period as the host team produced three unanswered scoring drives to top the Ice Dogs, 5-3. Great Falls was led by Payton McSharry who had four points (2 goals, 2 assists) and goaltender Drew Scites registered 33 saves.

In each of their three victories against the Bozeman junior hockey franchise so far this season, Great Falls has scored five goals apiece in each contest while out-scoring their opponents 15-6.

Justin Ohnstad was one goal shy of a hat trick and Cody Dearing found a way to provide the game-winning score in overtime as the Great Falls Americans nipped the Bozeman Ice Dogs 4-3 on the road during Friday's NA3HL junior hockey action from Haynes Pavilion. A small crowd of 189 viewed the exciting finish as Americans scored the final tally.

Third-ranked Bozeman, who had a 1-2 record at the 2018 NA3HL Showcase tournament, scored the opening goal 48 seconds into the contest against the second place Great Falls Americans on Friday evening. Daniel Davis of Manhattan, Montana scored his first goal for the Ice Dogs with help from Sterling Morin, who received his first assist of the season, and Hazen McKay on the first and only successful power play of the period. Great Falls evened up the score fourteen minutes later when Justin Ohnstad scored the first of his two goals with 5:47 remaining in the first stanza. Jack Olson and Payton McSharry claimed the assists in the Americans first score. The Americans picked up their second goal of the game quickly (35 seconds later to be exact) as Jack Olson found Justin Ohnstad again to give the visiting team their first advantage of the contest. Nate Simpson increased the lead for coach Greg Sears' squad before the first intermission with his late score off the stick of Cody Dearing. The Americans offense lit up Bozeman with 24 shots and held the home team to five. Great Falls starting goaltender Viktor Wennberg

stopped four of the five shots he faced. His counterpart, Mikael Levokari of Bozeman allowed three goals.

The following period brought two goals by the Ice Dogs to tie the contest up again for the second time. Bozeman connected on their second power play score thanks to Connor Fuchs seventh goal of the season with seven minutes remaining. Bozeman natives Hazen and Luke McKay tallied the assists for coach Elliot Bates' squad to bring the Ice Dogs to within one goal. Minutes later, Brock Finn, a defenseman from Minnesota, slipped the puck by Americans goaltender Viktor Wennberg to even the score (3-3). Another Bozeman product, Adam Franklin provided the assistance. Although the Americans failed to find the back of the net in the middle period, they still took nine more shots than the Ice Dogs in the stanza (26-17).

Both NA3HL squads battled hard but the 27 total shots in the third frame between Great Falls and Bozeman didn't produce any goals so a five-minute overtime was necessary to declare a winner.

Great Falls Americans forward Cody Dearing, who played on last year's squad, secured the game-winning goal 3:09 into the extra period to give the Americans their 22<sup>nd</sup> victory in 30 games. George Nuutinen and Hendrik Robel set up the game-winning play for Great Falls.

Great Falls created 50 of their 74 total shots in the first two periods. Bozeman finished with 28 shots including 17 in the middle period.

The Americans and Ice Dogs each committed five minor penalties resulting in 10 minutes of penalty time. Two of Bozeman's three goals came while the Americans were in the sin bin. Great Falls came up empty-handed in their four power play opportunities.

Winning goaltender Viktor Wennberg defeated Bozeman for the second time this season as he ran his record to 10-2-0-0 on the season. The Sweden netminder stopped 25 of the 28 shots in 61 minutes of action. Finland's Mikael Levokari made 70 saves for the home team despite the loss.

**NEXT CONTEST:** The Great Falls Americans will play the Butte Cobras in their second contest of their three-game road trip on Saturday, December 29<sup>th</sup> with the puck set to drop at 7:30PM from the Butte Community Ice Arena. The Missoula Jr. Bruins will host the Americans on New Year's Eve starting at 6:00PM from the Glacier Ice Rink as 2018 concludes.

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