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Great Falls Americans Press Release
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Americans surrender in shootout to Helena, 5-4

By Kevin Scott

Box Score	Game Sheet	League Scoreboard	Americans Team Statistics
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GREAT FALLS, Mont., November 30, 2018 — The second-ranked Great Falls Americans (17-4-0-1) and the top-ranked Helena Bighorns battle it out for the fourth time this season tonight in Great Falls.

During the previous three matchups, Great Falls has come out on the winning side just once. On October 26th, they gave the Helena Bighorns (20-1-0-0) their first and only loss of the season by winning in Great Falls, 8-3 in a close game throughout.

Helena forward Mikhail Gavrilenko made the only successful goal in the shootout to help the Bighorns edge the Great Falls Americans in a 5-4 shootout win over the host team during Friday's NA3HL hockey action at the Great Falls Ice Plex.

A hard fought first period saw Great Falls deliver two goals while holding Helena to one. Payton McSharry, the team leader in goals scored, added his 23rd goal of the season thanks to a pass from teammates Justin Ohnstad and Nate Simpson. The goal came within the first 63 seconds of the first period to give the home team the early advantage. A few minutes later, the Americans increased the lead to 2-0 as Jack Olson and Luke Richesin got the puck to one of the Americans newest members, George Nuutinen for the tally. Nuutinen, playing in his first contest with Great Falls after coming over with Brody Boyce from the Coulee Region (WI) Chill (NA3HL Central Division) in a trade for Matt Janke, made the most of his first appearance in Montana. The Bighorns responded with 5:58 remaining as Valary Dietz found the back of the net on the power play to decrease the Americans lead to 2-1. Justin Sullivan and Elliot Plourde assisted on the only scoring drive for the visiting squad. The first stanza saw 23 shots being taken with Great Falls creating 14 of them.

Ben Rinckey started off the middle period with the third scoring drive for the home team. Jens Juliussen recorded his 31st assist of the season with 15:18 on the clock.

Helena rebounded and pulled back to within one goal (3-2). Nicholas Noel set up the play to Luc Cross who skated in and around Americans goaltender Drew Scites to light up the lamp. The Bighorns evened

up the score minutes later as Alaska native Darren Donovan scored his second goal in as many periods with assistance from Elliot Plourde and Valary Dietz. Helena took advantage of the power play while Great Falls was in the penalty box. Helena's offense kept Great Falls from taking many shots in the period. Great Falls had attempted six while Helena had 13.

Helena and Great Falls traded goals during the final period of regulation. Kaden Lindberg gave the Bighorns their first lead of the night (4-3) as Ty Niskanen collected the assist during the third successful power play goal for the top-ranked Frontier team. The Americans gave the home crowd something to cheer about when Lindros Beard tied up the contest with 80 seconds to go. The score sent the contest into overtime. Jens Juliussen and Payton McSharry gathered the assists.

After the five-minute overtime saw neither team score, a shootout was necessary.

The only player to score during the one-on-one shootout was Helena's Mikhail Gavrilenko against Great Falls goalie Drew Scites. Six Great Falls players (Lindros Beard, Payton McSharry, Justin Ohnstad, Cody Dearing, Trent Cowden and Jens Juliussen) had a chance to put the biscuit in the basket but came up empty.

The visiting squad recorded 29 of their 43 shots during the second and third periods. After taking 14 shots in the first twenty minutes, the Americans could only muster up 16 in the second and third periods and overtime.

Three of Helena's five goals came while the Americans were down a man. Great Falls struck out in their five attempts. The 1,012 loud spectators witnessed 11 infractions that resulted in 22 minutes in the penalty box.

Helena's Alexander Rogers and Great Falls' Drew Scites played the full 65 minutes with Rogers picking up the win. Rogers, the netminder from Anaheim, California, stopped 26 of the 30 shots. Scites finished with 38 saves in his first shootout loss of the season.

NOTES: The game saw a 27-minute delay due to surface conditions on the ice. Earlier this week, Great Falls traded Matt Janke to the Coulee Region (WI) Chill (NA3HL Central Division) for Brody Boyce and George Nuutinen.

NEXT CONTEST: Great Falls will play their ninth road game of the season when they travel to Missoula, Montana to face the fourth place Junior Bruins (11-9-0-0) on Saturday, December 1st. The Americans are 7-1-0-0 on the road so far this season. The game is set to begin at 7:05PM from the Glacier Ice Rink.

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