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Great Falls Americans Press Release
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NA3HL Showcase: Louisiana Drillers earn shutout win over Great Falls

By Kevin Scott

Box Score	Game Sheet	League Scoreboard	Americans Team Statistics
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BLAINE, Minn., December 16, 2018 — After starting the 2018-19 season with six straight victories, the Great Falls Americans (20-6-0-1) have won 14 of their next 20 games. Their record is good enough so far this season for staying in second place behind the Helena Bighorns (22-3-0-0) in the Frontier Division.

The Louisiana Drillers, the Americans opponent during the first day of competition at the 2018 NA3HL Showcase Tournament in Blaine, Minnesota, enter the prestigious tournament with a 20-7-2-0 record in the South Division. The Drillers based out of Lafayette, Louisiana, are in second place in the five-team South Division so far this season. The Texas Brahmas (North Richland Hills, TX) have earned the top spot in the division with a 21-2-1-1 record.

Great Falls, under first-year coach Greg Sears, has a talented cast of stars highlighted by two returning players in Jens Juliussen (14 goals, 35 assists, 49 pts.) and Payton McSharry (25 goals, 22 assists, 47 pts.). Goaltender Drew Scites, a Minnesota native, has a record of 11-3-0-1 and has amassed 417 saves in his second season with Great Falls. He is eighth in the NA3HL in Goals Against Average (GAA) with a 2.13.



Meanwhile, the Drillers are led by Blake Siewertsen, who has produced 19 goals and Russia's Viacheslav Nilov, who leads Louisiana in assists with 27. Samuli Aarinen is the leading goaltender with 328 saves for coach Shawn McNeil's squad.

The prestigious three-day tournament includes many college and junior scouts that are in attendance to watch the league's best talent. The three games that each team appears in does count toward their season standings as Great Falls is the home team for two of those three including today's game and Monday afternoon's contest against the New Jersey-based Skylands Kings.

During the 2017 NA3HL Showcase Tournament, the Americans finished with a 2-1 record with wins over the Oswego Stampede (NY) and the Mid Cities Jr. Stars (TX) but fell to Wisconsin's La Cross Freeze.

On Sunday, the Great Falls Americans trailed 1-0 as the third period began before allowing two goals by the Louisiana Drillers offense as the Americans were tripped up by the Drillers 3-0 during the first day of the 2018 NA3HL Showcase Tournament at the Super Rink in Minnesota. Great Falls served as the host team during Sunday's contest.

Forward Blake Siewertsen, the team leader in goals scored, added his 18th goal of the season for Louisiana at the midpoint of the first period to give the visiting Drillers an early advantage. Tucker Alspaugh and Mitch Dolese assisted on the only scoring play by either team in the first twenty minutes. The Americans and Drillers each had one minor penalty called on them and attempted eight shots apiece.

Only 14 total shots were made during the middle period with seven of those created by Great Falls. The defenses from both teams held up as no scoring was made after the first intermission. Great Falls goalie Drew Scites had 14 of his 21 saves before the third period.

The one-goal lead by Louisiana continued through the first seven minutes of the final period of regulation before they added two goals including an empty net score in the final 39 seconds. Louisiana native Josh Jorajuria scored over Great Falls netminder Drew Scites to give the Drillers their second goal with helpers from Benjamin Cope and Viacheslav Nilov. The Americans pulled goalie Drew Scites for the final 39 seconds to add another player to help but Viacheslav Nilov easily put in the empty net unassisted score to ensure the win.

Despite both squads attempting the same amount of shots in the first two stanzas (15 total per team), Louisiana had two more shots (9-7) than Great Falls had.

The two NA3HL teams squandered nine total power play chances that went unanswered. Great Falls committed one minor penalty in each period that resulted in six minutes of penalty time. The winning team made five penalties with 10 minutes spent in the sin bin.

Samuli Aarinen completed a perfect game for the Drillers. He redirected all 22 shots that were sent his way by the Americans offense. Drew Scites finished with 21 saves in the loss for the Americans.

In other action from the rest of the Frontier squads on Sunday, Butte (Cobras), Missoula (Jr. Bruins), Yellowstone Quake, Bozeman Ice Dogs and the Gillette Wild all picked up victories. Top-seeded Helena was blanked by the Texas Brahmas, 4-0. Butte and Missoula each won by two goals (Butte won 5-3 over Evansville Jr. Thunderbolts and Missoula defeated Cape Cod Islanders, 4-2). Gillette edged the Wausau RiverWolves, 3-2 and the Bozeman Ice Dogs easily defeated the Skylands Kings, who play Great Falls on Monday, 5-1. To see the stats from the Sunday contests, please [click here](#).

For more information about the tournament that will feature many college and junior scouts in attendance, please [click here](#) or see the league press release by [clicking here](#).

NEXT CONTEST: Great Falls will play against the Skylands Kings, New Jersey-based team on Monday, December 17th at 12:15PM (MST) in the second day of the three-day Showcase tournament in Minnesota. Great Falls will conclude the tournament on Tuesday, December 18th when they face the Northeast (MA) Generals at 8:00AM (MST) before their week-long holiday break.

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