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**Great Falls Americans Press Release**  
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## **Americans defeat Bruins for ninth straight victory**

**By Kevin Scott**

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GREAT FALLS, Mont., January 19, 2019 — A night after the top-ranked Great Falls Americans (30-7-0-1) needed overtime to overcome the Helena Bighorns, 5-4, Great Falls faced off with the #4 Missoula Junior Bruins (18-17-0-0) on Saturday night in Great Falls.

The Americans were looking for their 30<sup>th</sup> win of the season and continue their unbeaten streak against the Bruins in their final meeting of the regular season.

Seven of their 30 wins have come for Great Falls against Missoula. Great Falls has only allowed three goals (or less) per game this season when playing the Bruins and have outscored them 45-13 including a 10-3 win in Missoula on New Year's Eve.

The Great Falls Americans raced out to a 3-0 lead after the first period and went on to out-score the Missoula Jr. Bruins 5-2 in the final forty minutes to pick up their ninth straight win (30<sup>th</sup> overall) in the North American 3 Hockey League's (NA3HL) Frontier Division. The Saturday night home victory was seen by over 1,000 spectators in attendance.

Justin Ohnstad, Ben Rinckey and Payton McSharry all collected goals during the first period against Missoula's defense. Justin Ohnstad hit the back of the net five minutes into the opening period with the assists going to Jack Olson and George Nuutinen. Ben Rinckey chipped in his 14<sup>th</sup> goal of the season eight minutes after Ohnstad's scoring drive when the puck sailed by Missoula netminder Evan Williams for the 2-0 advantage for the home team. Justin Ohnstad and Brandon Peterson set up the scoring drive with 6:13 on the clock. Payton McSharry, the team leader in goals scored with 38, buried the puck into the net for the third goal with help from assist leader Jens Juliussen (54 assists) and Cody Dearing (21 assists).

The host team grabbed a 4-0 advantage early in the second when Brandon Peterson and George Nuutinen set up an open Jack Olson, who tallied his eighteenth goal. The shutout came to an end 15 seconds later when Missoula's John Bannon lit up the lamp for the Bruins. Misha Akatnov and Christian Ward received the assists. Great Falls accumulated two more goals before the second intermission.

George Nuutinen and Cody Dearing each put the puck in the net for the first-place team in the Frontier Division. Brandon Peterson, Jack Olson and Jens Juliussen gathered their second assists of the night while Payton McSharry chipped in his first. The Great Falls offense rattled off 40 shots in two periods and held the Missoula Bruins to 15.

Missoula began the third period with a goal 41 seconds into the last period of regulation to cut into the Americans lead (6-2). Canadian Christian Ward recorded his first goal of the season for the fourth place Bruins. John Bannon and Connor Frye garnered the assists on the quick scoring drive for the visiting squad. The scoring didn't end for Great Falls. After scoring two points during the first two periods (1 goal, 1 assist), Payton McSharry increased the lead for coach Greg Sears' team to 7-2 with his 39<sup>th</sup> goal that came with helpers from Jack Olson and Brandon Peterson midway through the stanza. George Nuutinen added the final goal of the game with less than six minutes remaining in the contest. Jack Olson and Justin Ohnstad were credited with the assists and ensured Great Falls would get their ninth consecutive victory dating back to December 28<sup>th</sup> overtime road win against the Bozeman Ice Dogs (4-3).

The Americans almost tripled the number of shots taken in the game (52-18) after registering 40 before the second intermission.

Each team was successful on one power play opportunity. Great Falls incurred six penalties for 15 minutes while Missoula was called for two.

Jack Olson, the 5'10" forward from White Bear, Minnesota led the way for Great Falls with five points (1 goal, 4 assists). George Nuutinen and Payton McSharry combined for four goals and three assists. John Bannon and Christian Ward each scored a goal and dished out one assist in the loss.

The win in the net went to Viktor Wennberg as he stopped 16 of 18 shots by Missoula's offense. Evan Williams collected 44 saves but allowed eight goals get by him for the 17<sup>th</sup> defeat of the year for the Bruins.

**NOTE:** The Sober Life, a non-profit group of individuals with addiction issues who are now in recovery and living life to its fullest, provided FREE tickets to tonight's contest.

**NEXT CONTEST:** Great Falls invades the Helena Ice Arena on Saturday, January 26<sup>th</sup> for their seventh meeting against the evenly match Helena Bighorns. The puck drops at 7:05PM in their only game of the week. Great Falls has only four remaining home games with the next game at the Great Falls Ice Plex scheduled for Sunday, February 10<sup>th</sup> when the Butte Cobras come to town for a 4:00PM tilt.

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