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**Great Falls Americans Press Release**

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## **Great Falls downs Butte 5-1 for eleventh consecutive win**

**By Kevin Scott**

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BUTTE, Mont., February 2, 2019 — The Great Falls Americans (32-7-0-1) have prevailed in all five of their previous matchups against the Butte Cobras (4-32-2-0).

Great Falls, the top team in the Frontier Division, easily defeated the Cobras, 6-1 back on January 12<sup>th</sup> behind the solid efforts of Ben Rinckey, who earned a hat trick (3 goals), Cody Dearing's three assists and Viktor Wennberg's 40 saves.

On Friday night, Great Falls was idle, but the Bozeman Ice Dogs exploded for ten goals including four in the final period to earn a 10-0 shutout win against the Butte Cobras in Bozeman, Montana.

The Great Falls Americans, the top-seed in the Frontier Division, needed just two periods to score as they outlasted the Butte Cobras, 5-1 during Saturday evening's NA3HL junior hockey action at the Butte Community Ice Center. A small crowd of 250 fans saw Great Falls standout Payton McSharry register two goals while Cody Dearing and Hendrik Robel each dish out two assists. The Americans won for the eleventh straight time and haven't lost since the final day of the 2018 NA3HL Showcase in Minnesota on December 18<sup>th</sup> when the suffered a 5-3 setback to the Massachusetts-based Northeast Generals.

Almost six minutes ticked off the clock before the visiting Great Falls Americans found the back of the net. Jens Juliussen and Cody Dearing found a way to get the puck to Payton McSharry for the score over Butte netminder Karl Zodda for the early 1-0 lead in the first frame. Great Falls added another score less than 90 seconds after McSharry's score when Ben Rinckey lit up the lamp thanks to assistance from Nate Simpson and Nick Ramstad. Rinckey's 15<sup>th</sup> goal came with 12:43 remaining. Before the first period ended, the Americans received scores from Jack Olson and a second goal by Payton McSharry. Olson and McSharry's scoring drives came as the Americans were on a power play after Butte was called for a penalty. Defenseman Trent Cowden and goaltender Viktor Wennberg assisted on the third scoring opportunity while Cody Dearing and Hendrik Robel each obtained an assist on McSharry's score. The Americans defense only allowed the home-standing Cobras to take three shots with the Americans attempting 20.

The Cobras answered in the middle period to prevent the Americans from getting a shutout. Las Vegas, Nevada native Bryce Gould grabbed his tenth goal off the stick of Canadian Tyson Stovin with Great Falls down a man due to a penalty midway through the stanza. Cody Dearing responded to give head coach Greg Sears' squad a 5-1 lead when his goal set up by Hendrik Robel and Payton McSharry fell into the net moments after the Cobras scored. The Americans offense created 29 shots and left Butte with just five before the second intermission.

The final 30 minutes of action on the ice was quiet. Neither team was able to score.

Great Falls accumulated 59 shot attempts in the second and third periods to crush Butte in the shots-on-goal category, 79-10. Seven of Butte's ten shots came in the final forty minutes. All three power play chances led to scores including both of Great Falls' power plays in the first period.

Eleven total infractions were committed between these two junior hockey teams with the Cobras spending 24 of the 30 total minutes in the penalty box.

Viktor Wennberg, the starting goaltender for the Americans who was recently named as a goaltender for this month's Top Prospects Tournament for the Frontier Division squad in Massachusetts, played the first two periods and finished with seven saves. Backup Cam McIntosh was back with the Americans after playing just one game for the NA3HL's Bozeman Ice Dogs in a trade with the Bozeman junior hockey franchise last week. The Great Falls native allowed three goals in a 3-0 loss for the Ice Dogs to the Helena Bighorns on January 25<sup>th</sup>. Tonight, McIntosh prevented both shot attempts from getting by him (2 saves) in the final period. Meanwhile, Butte goaltender Karl Zodda, a Utah native, allowed four of the five total goals in the opening stanza for the sixth-place Cobras.

**NOTE:** On Tuesday, January 29<sup>th</sup>, the North American 3 Hockey League (NA3HL) announced their rosters and schedule for the upcoming Top Prospects Tournament taking place on February 18-19 from Attleboro, Massachusetts. Four players from the Americans will be suiting up for the Frontier Division squad including forwards Payton McSharry and Jens Juliussen along with defenseman Nate Simpson and goaltender Viktor Wennberg. For more information about the tournament, please [click here](#).

**NEXT CONTEST:** Great Falls has four of their final seven regular season games at home including three in February before the postseason begins. On Friday, February 8<sup>th</sup>, the Americans will travel to Bozeman, Montana to challenge the Ice Dogs at Haynes Pavilion at 7:30PM. Great Falls will then return home for a 4:00PM showdown with the Butte Cobras on Sunday, February 10<sup>th</sup>.

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