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Great Falls Americans Press Release

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Peters four goals helps Great Falls cruise to 14-0 shutout win in season finale

By Kevin Scott

Box Score	Game Sheet	League Scoreboard	Americans Team Statistics
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GREAT FALLS, Mont., March 9, 2019 — The final day of the 2018-19 North American 3 Hockey League (NA3HL) junior hockey regular season is here for 22 of the 36 teams tonight with the remaining 14 teams concluding their seasons after Sunday's contests.

After 47 games (September 2018 - March 2019), the Great Falls Americans (38-8-0-1, 77 pts.) will head into the 2019 NA3HL Frontier Division Semi-Finals next week as the #2 seed behind the top-ranked Helena Bighorns (38-7-2-0, 78 pts.), who clinched the regular season championship with their 9-0 blanking of the Butte Cobras on Friday night in Helena. The other two teams that made the playoffs in the Frontier Division are the #3 Bozeman Ice Dogs (28-15-4-0, 60 pts.) and the #4 Missoula Junior Bruins (27-19-1-0, 55 pts.). Great Falls will face Bozeman in the semi-finals next week while Helena takes on Missoula in the other semifinal.

But first things first, Saturday's season finale at home for the Great Falls Americans as they challenge the Butte Cobras (5-39-2-1), who finished in sixth place (out of 7) in their first-season as a member of the NA3HL's Frontier Division.

The Americans, under first-year mentor Greg Sears, are 8-0 against the Butte Cobras this season with the closest contest (5-2 win at home) coming in February and the largest margin of victory (14-0 win) in March.

The Great Falls Americans offense lit up the lamp 14 times as they cruised to a 14-0 shellacking against the visiting Butte Cobras to conclude the 2018-19 NA3HL regular season. Forward Garrett Peters (Anchorage, Alaska) scored two goals in the first and second periods to finish with four goals (hat trick) in the final home game of the season. Payton McSharry had two goals and two assists. The Great Falls Ice Plex saw 867 fans in attendance to see the Americans pick up their 19th win at home and 38th overall.

Great Falls jumped out to a six-goal lead after the first period with Garrett Peters leading the way with two goals after the first twenty minutes. Also scoring for the Americans were George Nuutinen, Payton McSharry, Jens Juliussen, and Nick Ramstad. After the Americans fourth goal scored by Peters with 6:22

on the clock, Butte changed goaltenders with Casey Mattfeldt (Glasgow, MT) being replaced by backup Cameron Cornish. Cornish allowed two goals including the final one with a second remaining. Blake Nerney and Levi Mese led the way for Great Falls dishing out two assists apiece. The home team didn't allow many shot attempts by the Cobras offense limiting them to five and Great Falls creating 39 shots.

The Great Falls Americans celebrated "Billet Family Appreciation Night" at the Great Falls Ice Plex. During the first intermission, all the billet (host) families were recognized and introduced and came out onto the ice for photos with their respective players they hosted throughout the season.

Great Falls cranked up the offense in the second period by producing seven goals in a 15-minute span. Garret Peters added two more goals and recorded a hat trick. The Alaska native goals came 11 seconds apart. Justin Ohnstad, Brody Boyce, Levi Mese and Great Falls native Braxton Lorenz each chipped in one goal along with Payton McSharry's second goal. The Cobras defense could not find a way to stop the over-powering Great Falls offensive attack and only took one shot while Great Falls had an easy time acquiring 30. Coach Greg Sears brought in backup Cam McIntosh with ten minutes remaining to give the Great Falls native playing time after a successful game by Viktor Wennberg (6 saves). The Americans out-shot the Cobras 69-6 after forty minutes.

Justin Ohnstad netted his second goal of the game with five minutes left in the third frame to round out the scoring for the second-ranked Americans.

Great Falls achieved a penalty-free game and converted two of their four power play chances into goals scored. Three of the four Butte penalties resulting in eight minutes in the sin bin came after the second intermission.

Great Falls goaltenders Viktor Wennberg and Cam McIntosh both saw action, and each played about 30 minutes. Wennberg, the starter from Sweden, earned six saves in a flawless game in the net for the Americans. Cam McIntosh, the hometown netminder, prevented the one shot sent his way from going into the net. Butte utilized two goaltenders in an attempt to stop the Americans persistent scoring but were unsuccessful. Glasgow, Montana native Casey Mattfeldt got the start for coach Chris Shadow but was pulled in favor of Cameron Cornish. Mattfeldt accrued 21 saves and Cornish gathered 47 saves with the loss going to Mattfeldt.

Great Falls led 39-5 in shots after the first period and outscored Butte 43-2 in the final two periods of play.

Hendrik Robel led all players with four assists while a handful of Americans made two assists each including Brody Boyce, Payton McSharry, Levi Mese, Jens Juliussen, Ben Rinckey, Blake Nerney, Luke Richesin and Lindros Beard. Jack Olson, Braxton Lorenz, Nate Simpson and George Nuutinen also assisted.

NOTES: The Great Falls Americans had the fifth best attendance in the North American 3 Hockey League (NA3HL) during the 2018-19 season. The Americans saw an average of 780 fans per contest attend their 24 home games at the Great Falls Ice Plex. The four teams ahead of Great Falls in attendance all came from Minnesota including the Breezy Point (MN) North Stars, Rochester (MN) Grizzlies, Alexandria (MN) Blizzard and the Granite City Lumberjacks (St. Cloud, MN). The Helena Bighorns (ninth) were the only other Frontier Division team in the top ten with a fan average of 459. To view the full season attendance from around the NA3HL, please [click here](#).

The 2019 Frontier Division Semi-Finals are set to begin next week (March 15-17th) in a best-of-3 format. The first two games are posted below with a to-be-announced third game needed if one team doesn't win both games.

The two divisional semi-final winners advance to the Frontier Division Finals in two weeks with the winning team getting a berth in the six-team (divisional winners) [Fraser Cup National Tournament](#) taking place at the [Seven Bridges Ice Arena](#) in Woodridge, Illinois (March 27-31). Woodridge is located 30 miles from Chicago.

Thursday, March 14th

- Game 1: (4) Missoula Jr. Bruins @ (1) Helena Bighorns, 7:05PM, Helena Ice Arena, Helena, MT

Friday, March 15th

- Game 2: (1) Helena Bighorns @ (4) Missoula Jr. Bruins, 7:05PM, Glacier Ice Rink, Missoula, MT
- Game 1: (3) Bozeman Ice Dogs @ (2) Great Falls Americans: 7:30PM, Great Falls Ice Plex, Great Falls, MT

Saturday, March 16th

- Game 3 (if necessary): (4) Missoula Jr. Bruins @ (1) Helena Bighorns, 7:05PM, Helena Ice Arena, Helena, MT
- Game 2: (2) Great Falls Americans @ (3) Bozeman Ice Dogs: 7:30PM, Haynes Pavilion, Bozeman, MT

Sunday, March 17^h

- Game 3 (if necessary): (3) Bozeman Ice Dogs @ (2) Great Falls Americans: 7:30PM, Great Falls Ice Plex, Great Falls, MT

NEXT CONTEST: The #2 Great Falls Americans will host Game 1 of the best-of-three Frontier Divisional Semi-Finals against the #3 Bozeman Ice Dogs on Friday, March 15th at 7:30PM at the Great Falls Ice Plex. On Saturday evening (March 16th) Great Falls travels to Bozeman's Haynes Pavilion for Game 2 on Saturday, March 16th and if necessary, a third and decisive game will be in Great Falls on Sunday, March 17th. To view the 2019 Playoff format and the schedule for the 2019 Fraser Cup Championship tournament, please [click here](#).

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