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Great Falls Americans Press Release
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Americans season ends with loss to Helena in Frontier Division Semi-Finals

By Kevin Scott

Box Score	Game Sheet	League Scoreboard	Americans Team Statistics (Playoffs)
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GREAT FALLS, Mont., March 17, 2018 — The Great Falls Americans (34-12-3-0) found themselves down 1-0 to the Helena Bighorns (32-13-4-0) in their best-of-three Frontier Divisional Semi-Final series with the Helena Bighorns before Saturday's contest.

In Game 1, Great Falls and Helena were tied at 3-3 after the second intermission during Friday's game in Great Falls. A scoreless third period led to an overtime period where Gavin Cline seized his opportunity and gave the Helena Bighorns a 4-3 win on the road.

The #3 Helena Bighorns scored two goals each in the first and third stanzas and prevented the #2 Great Falls Americans offense from scoring to lift the home team to a 4-0 win at the Helena Ice Arena on Saturday evening. The two-game sweep earned Helena a trip to the Frontier Divisional Finals against the #1 Yellowstone Quake (37-7-3-2), who won their series 2-0 over the #3 Gillette Wild on Saturday night as well.

A pair of power play goals by the Helena Bighorns put the home team ahead 2-0 before the first intermission. Ben Kottmeier, with help from Hayden Seitz and Jeremy Solko, scored the first tally of the game over Americans goalie Bryan Sharp with 6:04 remaining in the opening period. Three minutes later, Justin Sullivan added his first playoff goal as Kaden Lindberg and Gavin Cline picked up the assists. Great Falls managed just six shots and Helena capitalized on two goals by taking 13 shots.

Six minor penalties and no scoring opportunities came during the middle period despite squad creating ten shots.

Luc Cross recorded the third goal of the game for the Bighorns 4:47 into the final stanza. Henry Kipper accumulated his first assist in the playoffs while Kaden Lindberg assisted for the fourth time in two games. Great Falls' offense couldn't break through for a score despite posting 32 total shots in the playoff contest. The Americans pulled goaltender Bryan Sharp during the last 2:18 so they could add another

player onto the ice. The plan was foiled by Hayden Seitz who scored the short-handed unassisted score with five minutes remaining.

Great Falls took half of their total shots (16) in the third period to finish with 32. Helena concluded their two-game series with Great Falls by contributing 34 shots with 13 coming in the first period.

Helena obtained two successful power play opportunities that came within the first twenty minutes. The Americans went 0-for-4 while Helena was in the penalty box. The teams each received eight infractions with 16 minutes of penalty time.

Bighorns netminder Nick Battaglia is now 2-0 in the playoffs with two wins over Great Falls. He prevented all 32 shots from finding the back of the net. Bryan Sharp redirected 30 of the 34 shots in the second game of the series. For the season, the young netminder went 14-8-0-1 during the regular season and 0-1 in the playoffs with 658 total saves in 24 appearances.

NOTE: The Great Falls Americans sent Head Coach and General Manager Jeff HeimeI out with back-to-back playoff losses. As the Americans organization searches for his replacement, HeimeI moves on to coach the inaugural men's hockey team at the University of Providence (MT) in Great Falls next season.

NEXT CONTEST: The Great Falls Americans ended their 2017-18 season by compiling a record of 34-12-3 record including the two playoff losses. Great Falls produced 16 wins at the Great Falls Ice Plex (16-6-2) and finished with 18 victories on the road (18-6-1).

To view the 2018 Playoff format and the schedule for the 2018 Fraser Cup Championship tournament, please [click here](#).

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