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Great Falls Americans Press Release

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Great Falls edges Gillette, 4-3 to remain atop the Frontier Division standings

By Kevin Scott

Box Score	Game Sheet	League Scoreboard	Americans Team Statistics
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GILLETTE, Wyo., December 18, 2020 — A lot has happened since the Great Falls Americans, currently sitting atop the Frontier Division with a 14-4-0-0 record, have challenged the #4 Gillette (WY) Wild, (11-6-1-1) at the Great Falls Ice Plex during the weekend of October 16-17th.

First, Great Falls defeated Gillette, 3-0 on October 16th followed with a 3-2 win on October 17th in a shootout with defenseman Connor Doyle adding the game-winning score. The Americans had six straight victories in their third week of the regular season while Gillette had three wins, two losses and one shootout loss after six contests.

After the first encounter, Great Falls reeled off five consecutive wins before falling to the Missoula Junior Bruins on November 21st for their first setback and have won seven of their last eleven since the Gillette series. Meanwhile, the Wild, under the direction of former Great Falls Americans assistant coach, Ethan Hayes, has seen eight victories, three regulation losses and one overtime defeat since the two-game series against the top-ranked Americans.

Great Falls is led by rookie Alex Jackson with 26 points (11 goals, 15 assists) while the Wild have on their roster the second leading points scorer in the league in Declan Young, who has registered 43 points (25 goals, 18 assists).

Micah Serino scored half of the goals and Jake Hayes and Henry Chavez chipped in two assists apiece as the Great Falls Americans snapped a two-game skid by edging the Gillette Wild 4-3 for their fourteenth win of the season during Friday night action at the Spirit Hall Ice Arena in Wyoming. Great Falls remains in first place in the Frontier Division by leading the Sheridan (WY) Hawks, Missoula Junior Bruins, and the Gillette (WY) Wild by four points (28-24).

The visiting Montana NA3HL team did not take long before they found the back of the net. Micah Serino, one of three brothers on the Americans squad, lit up the lamp 42 seconds into the first period. Bryson Fletcher and Jake Hayes helped create the first goal for Great Falls. Ten minutes later, Declan Young tied the contest (1-1) when his shot went by Americans netminder Trevor Mellen. Isaac Young earned his fourth assist while Young secured his 25th goal in 19 appearances for the Wild. Kellen Harris scored his first goal of the season for the Americans to give them their lead back temporarily 81 seconds with Connor Doyle and Henry Chavez receiving the assists. The Wild offense got going as Mitchell Vekich's pass to Will Blake proved to be successful and gave the host team their second tie of the contest 51 seconds after the Americans gathered their second scoring drive. Neither team could answer during the last six minutes of the stanza. A total of four combined goals with 28 shots taken.

The middle period was tied at 2-2 until the final 14 seconds when the Americans broke the tie (3-2) when Jake Hayes made his tenth goal with help from Henry Chavez and Kellen Harris while the Wild were in the penalty box. Gillette's offense held Great Falls to eight shot attempts while they accrued 21.

Early in the third stanza, Great Falls took a 4-2 advantage with Micah Serino's second tally (sixth overall) 5:40 into the final period of regulation. Jake Hayes added his second assist of the night while AJ Benit assisted for the fifth time this season. Gillette's Ethan Maish pulled the third-ranked Wild to within a goal (4-3) one minute later but that was the final scoring drive of the game for either squad. Mitchell Vekich and Ethan Becker each provided the assists.

Although the Wyoming club took more shots (52-33), they fell short on the scoreboard. The Americans took only 18 shots while the Wild contributed 39 after the first intermission.

Great Falls' lone second period goal was the only goal made while Gillette was in the sin bin. The top team in the Frontier Division committed seven of the nine penalties that resulted in 14 minutes spent in the penalty box. Gillette's two minor penalties came before the second intermission.

The fourteenth victory for the Americans was made possible by Micah Serino's two goals, Jake Hayes' one goal and two assists and Trevor Mellen's 49 saves. Declan Young, Will Blake, and Ethan Maish recorded the goals while Mitchell Vekich garnered two assists in the losing effort.

Trevor Mellen now has a dozen victories and three setbacks as the Minnesota native allowed three goals in two periods. Rookie Cole Wheaton, who finished with 29 saves, saw his record fall to 1-2-1-0 in four appearances for the Wild.

NEXT CONTEST: The Americans will remain in Gillette, Wyoming for the final meeting of the regular season between these two highly regarded teams when they face off on Saturday, December 19th for a 7:00PM puck drop at the Spirit Hall Ice Arena.

Both squads will enjoy the holiday break before returning to action on the weekend of December 31st – January 2, 2021. Great Falls will host a three-game homestand when the Butte Cobras (December 31st), Missoula Junior Bruins (January 1st) and the Helena Bighorns (January 2nd) come to the Americans home arena to begin 2021. Gillette travels to Sheridan, Wyoming to face the Hawks for a pair of games on January 1-2, 2021. [HockeyTV](#) will provide all the action through their streaming service, since spectators are not yet allowed back into the games in Great Falls due to COVID-19 restrictions, starting nightly at 7:30PM (MST).

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