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Great Falls Americans Press Release

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NA3HL Frontier Semi-Finals: Serino, Chavez and Mellen lead Great Falls to Divisional Finals

By Kevin Scott

Box Score	Game Sheet	League Scoreboard (Playoffs)	Americans Team Statistics
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GREAT FALLS, Mont., April 3, 2021 — The Frontier Division Finals are now set to start next week, and we know now the two opponents that will battle it out for a chance to be one of the five division winners (plus a wild card team) that will advance to the 2021 Fraser Cup Championship Tournament in two weeks (April 15-19th) in Missouri.

The #2 Great Falls Americans Frontier Divisional Semi-Finals against the #3 Gillette (WY) Wild needed three games to decide who would get to go to the Frontier Divisional Finals next week (April 8-11, 2021) and face the top-ranked Sheridan (WY) Hawks, who swept the #4 Missoula Junior Bruins in two games.

During Thursday's playoff opener in Wyoming, Great Falls shutout the host team, 2-0 behind scoring efforts by Jackson Henningsgard and Micah Serino. Goaltender Trever Mellen turned away all 48 shots in the Game 1 win. On Friday evening where the series switched to Great Falls, the Americans held a two-goal lead before the visiting Wild team tied it at 2-2 in the second stanza. There was no scoring from either team in the third, so an overtime was needed to settle Game 2. During the regular season, overtime consists of a five-minute sudden death extra period but in the playoffs, the NA3HL's overtime rules entail a twenty-minute sudden death period. Both teams wouldn't give up for the first 17 minutes of overtime, but Declan Young put in the game-winning goal for the Wild and helped them keep their season alive.

The win by Gillette set up a decisive Game 3 on Saturday at the Great Falls Ice Plex where the winner advances to the NA3HL Frontier Divisional Finals and the losing squad calls it a season.

Meanwhile in Sheridan, Wyoming, the #1 Sheridan Hawks scored all four of their goals after the first period and defeated the #4 Missoula Junior Bruins, 4-2 in Game 1 of their best-of-three series on Friday night. Game Two was played tonight with Sheridan on the brink of reaching the Divisional Finals. In the end, the Hawks showed why they haven't seen many losses this season as they handed Missoula a 10-1 setback in their final game in the league.

Forwards Micah Serino and Henry Chavez each registered a goal and a strong defensive effort by the Great Falls Americans to upend the visiting Gillette (WY) Wild 2-0 in front of a full house at the Great Falls Ice Plex during the decisive third game of the 2021 NA3HL Frontier Divisional Finals. Goaltender Trever Mellen showed why he is one of the best netminders in the NA3HL as he recorded his second shutout in three days with 29 saves. #2 Great Falls will face the top-ranked Sheridan (WY) Hawks in the 2021

NA3HL Frontier Divisional Finals next week for a berth in the NA3HL Fraser Cup National Tournament in Missouri in two weeks.



The first period came and went with no scoring and no penalties issued. Great Falls took nine more shots than Gillette was able to attempt (16-7).

In the second stanza, Great Falls' first tally came 95 seconds after the first intermission. Jake Hayes received the first assist of the game when his pass to Micah Serino was successful as the shot fired by Gillette starting goaltender Cole Wheaton. This was Serino's second of the playoffs as he scored one of the two in the 2-0 Game 1 win for the Americans on Thursday

evening in Wyoming. The first penalty of the game arrived with two minutes remaining in the period. Great Falls was called for slashing that resulted in an unsportsmanlike conduct infraction. Great Falls took the early 1-0 advantage into the second intermission. The Americans and Wild each tallied 29 shots after two periods of play.

Both teams battled hard in the third frame with neither team wanting to concede. The Americans put the game away during the final 54 seconds when Henry Chavez lit up the lamp with a helper from Thomas Gazich to seal the victory.

The Americans and Wild took over 40 shots in the game with the Wild outshooting the home team in the second and third periods. Great Falls had 41 of the 86 shots.

After a penalty-free first period, the Americans accrued three of the four total penalties. All four of the power plays were unsuccessful.

Great Falls' Trevor Mellen played in two of the three playoff games and totaled 77 saves with 29 coming tonight. Gillette's Cole Wheaton started all three games in the net for coach Ethan Hayes' squad. He had 28 saves tonight and a combined 30 in the first two games to end his season.

NOTES: In the other NA3HL Frontier Division Semi-Final, the top-ranked team in the NA3HL, the Sheridan (WY) Hawks easily defeated the #4 Missoula Junior Bruins, 10-1 in Game Two to wrap up their series and send the Hawks to the NA3HL Frontier Divisional Finals that begin this week. Justin Schwartzmiller and Logan Syrup each received a hat trick (three goals) in the dominating victory ([see the box score](#)).

Also, Congratulations to forward Jake Hayes (Anchorage, Alaska) on receiving his 100th point as an American. He had the assist on the game-winning tally on Saturday night against Gillette.

NEXT CONTEST: The Sheridan (WY) Hawks (41-1-0-0) and the Great Falls Americans (29-11-3-0) were the top two teams in the Frontier Division for most of the season and will collide on the ice for a best-of-three Divisional Finals this week. Sheridan with 41 wins in 42 games will have the home-ice advantage. [HockeyTV](#) will stream the games this week.

The best-of-three Finals schedules is posted below:

- Thursday, April 8th: #1 Sheridan (WY) Hawks @ #2 Great Falls Americans, 7:00PM, Great Falls Ice Plex, Great Falls, MT (Game 1)
- Friday, April 9th: #2 Great Falls Americans @ #1 Sheridan (WY) Hawks, 7:30PM, Whitney Rink in the M&M's Center, Sheridan, WY (Game 2)
- Saturday, April 10th: #2 Great Falls Americans @ #1 Sheridan (WY) Hawks, 7:30PM, Whitney Rink in the M&M's Center, Sheridan, WY (Game 3, if necessary)

The five-division (Central, East, Frontier, South and West) winners plus a wild card team that has the highest winning percentage that loses in the Divisional Finals will head to the [2021 Fraser Cup](#)

(National) Tournament this year held at the St. Peters Rec Plex in St. Peters, Missouri on April 15-19th. The national tournament includes two round-robin contests for each of the six teams followed by two semi-finals and the championship contests. The Fraser Cup will also coincide with this year's **Top Prospects Tournament** that will take place on Sunday and Monday (April 18-19). Schedules and rosters have not been announced by the league yet for the Top Prospects Tournament. Please [click here](#) for more information about the playoff format, Top Prospects Tourney, and the upcoming NA3HL Draft on April 28th.

To view the 2021 Playoff schedules for the 2021 Fraser Cup Championship tournament and the Top Prospects Tournament being played in Missouri, please [click here](#). **HockeyTV** provides the full coverage of playoff action.

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