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**Great Falls Americans Press Release**

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**Gillette wins sixth straight against Great Falls with 5-0 shutout win**

**By Kevin Scott**

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GILLETTE, Wyo., December 11, 2021 — The #2 Gillette (WY) Wild (22-2-0-0) and the #4 Great Falls Americans (13-10-3-1) renewed their rivalry again for the sixth time on Saturday night in Wyoming. Both teams are not scheduled to play each other the rest of the regular season that concludes at the end of February 2022 but could potentially match up in the playoffs if both teams qualify.

In an exciting matchup on Friday (December 10<sup>th</sup>), both teams failed to score during the first period but the Wild got on the scoreboard first when Tucker Lien scored the lone goal heading into the third frame. The score remained 1-0 for the first 17:44 of the final period of regulation before Americans forward Daniel Crutcher with helpers from AJ Benit and Garrett Weisenburger, tied the contest and eventually sent the game into an extra five-minute overtime period. Gillette's Tristan Baker had the last say as his shot lit up the lamp for the game-winning score midway through the extra period to give the home team a 2-1 win. This was the third overtime contests between these two Montana-Wyoming rivals that were all played in Gillette, Wyoming.

Great Falls was hoping for better results and pick up their first win (0-2-3-0) against Gillette on Saturday.

The #2 Gillette Wild easily handled the #4 Great Falls Americans by earning a 5-0 shutout victory on Saturday evening at Gillette's Spirit Hall Ice Arena. The Wild finished with their sixth consecutive win against Great Falls in their final regular season matchup for the 2021-22 season. Five different Gillette players found a way to score against the Americans defense.

Gillette's offense needed seventeen minutes of the first period to put in their first goal over Great Falls. Houston, Texas native Will Blake with assistance from Tucker Lien and Brock Trbojevich added his fifth goal to his resume with 2:20 left as the Americans were shutout in the twenty-minute stanza. Great Falls was in the penalty kill when they were scored upon. Each team created two minor penalties. The teams combined for 32 shots but only one was successful.

The host team never relented as they scored twice in a two-minute span midway through second period. Forwards Saizha Norwegian and Declan Young contributed the goals for one of the top teams in the

North American 3 Hockey League (NA3HL). Tucker Lien (25<sup>th</sup> assist) and Will Blake (20<sup>th</sup> assist) assisted on Norwegian's score with 11:23 remaining. Two minutes later, Declan Young scored over Americans starting goaltender Will Simpson in a play set up by Isaac Young and Tristan Baker helped increase the lead to 3-0. Declan Young is second in the league with 52 points and is the team leader in points scored and most goals made. Both scoring opportunities came when the Americans were down a man (penalty). The Americans took twelve shots and could not take advantage of their two power play tries. Gillette finished the period with 27 shots and went 2-for-5 on the power play.

The home team chipped in two additional scores in the final frame while keeping the Americans out of the net. Carson Kuche and Tucker Lien made their 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> goals, respectively that occurred during the first eight minutes. Will Blake, Tristan Baker, and Brock Trbojevich each collected their second assists of the night for coach Ethan Hayes' squad. Sky Solig also assisted on his first of the contest and third overall.

The Wyoming junior hockey team took over twenty shots in each of the first two periods and 18 in the third to finish with 66. The Americans offense struggled throughout the game by combining for 23 (shots) before the second intermission to end their night with 29 (Great Falls had 55 shots the night before in a 2-1 overtime loss).

The Americans hurt their chances with penalties. Four of the five scores by the second-ranked team in the NA3HL's Frontier Division came while the visitors were in the sin bin. The Wild went 4-for-10 on the power play. Great Falls could not turn their seven power play chances into scores against a solid Gillette defense.

In the end, fourteen minor infractions (20 minutes of penalty time) were committed in the sixty-minute contest.

Jake Turek prevented all 29 shots by the Americans from going by him. The Minnesota goalie's perfect game gave him his eleventh win in thirteen games with four of those victories coming against Great Falls. His counterpart, Will Simpson gave up two goals apiece in the second and third periods after letting one go by him in the opening period. He produced 61 saves but dropped his record to 4-4-0-1.

**NOTES:** The other six teams from around the Frontier Division played tonight (December 11<sup>th</sup>). The top-ranked Helena Bighorns stayed perfect with their 25<sup>th</sup> consecutive win by defeating the #5 Butte Cobras at home, 6-1 ([box score](#)). The Bozeman Ice Dogs also won on home ice to stay in third place behind the Gillette (WY) Wild by taking down the #7 Yellowstone (WY) Quake, 5-2 ([box score](#)). In the game of the night, the #6 Badlands (SD) Sabres trailed 4-2 in the third period against the last place Sheridan (WY) Hawks before overcoming their deficit to win 5-4 ([box score](#)).

**NEXT CONTEST:** The Americans will have a week to prepare for the three-day NA3HL Showcase Tournament featuring all 34 teams in the league with many scouts in attendance. The prestigious tournament that will count in the overall official NA3HL standings will take place in Blaine, Minnesota at the NSC Super Rink on December 20-22, 2021 (Monday through Wednesday). Great Falls is set to play the Minnesota based Willmar WarHawks at 12:00PM (MST) December 20<sup>th</sup> followed by a December 21<sup>st</sup> showdown with Texas' Mid Cities Jr. Stars at 8:45AM (MST) and will conclude the tournament with the New Jersey Titans at 10:45AM (MST) on December 22<sup>nd</sup>. Every game from the Showcase tournament will be shown live on [HockeyTV](#). [Click here](#) to see the NA3HL's official press release.

The Butte Cobras will be the Americans last and first home opponent as 2021 ends and 2022 begins. On New Year's Eve and New Year's Day (December 31-January 1), the Cobras and Americans will collide at  
Great Falls Americans Hockey P.O. Box 1302, Great Falls, MT 59403

7:30PM (MST) each night from the Great Falls Ice Plex for the fifth and sixth head-to-head games of the season and for the final time in the regular season.

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