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Great Falls Americans Press Release

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Badlands Sabres best the Americans in first showdown in Great Falls

By Kevin Scott

Box Score	Game Sheet	League Scoreboard	Americans Team Statistics
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GREAT FALLS, Mont., November 26, 2021 — After playing the other six squads that make up the NA3HL's Frontier Division during the first three months of the 2021-22 North American 3 Hockey League (NA3HL) season, the #4 Great Falls Americans (9-9-2-1) got their first look at the newest member of the division, the Rapid City, South Dakota based, Badlands Sabres (8-10-1-0) on Friday evening in Great Falls.

The Sabres, coached by former Gillette Wild head coach Brendan Hodge (2016-17 season), replaced the Missoula Junior Bruins after last season and have five former Frontier Division standouts on their 22-man roster. Remington and Rhodes Buffalo are no stranger to Great Falls as they both suited up for the Americans in recent years. Rhodes was also a member of the Gillette (WY) Wild. Three other players came over when the Junior Bruins moved out of Missoula including a pair of defenseman Levi Knight and Billings, Montana native Denim Young along with standout goalie Maxim Currie.

Badlands, sitting two spots behind Great Falls in sixth, have played six of the seven other Frontier Division teams so far this season. How are they faring in their first year in the league? They have won three of their four against the Sheridan (WY) Hawks (3-1 record), Butte Cobras (3-3), Bozeman Ice Dogs (1-1), and they haven't won yet against undefeated Gillette Wild (0-2) or Helena Bighorns (0-3-1-0). They haven't had any matchups with the Yellowstone (WY) Quake yet, but they will meet the first week of January (7-8) in South Dakota.

The Americans are 9-9-2-1 after 21 games but in the month of November, they have just a pair of wins against the Sheridan (WY) Hawks and two setbacks against the Gillette (WY) Wild and a single loss to the Helena Bighorns. Both Gillette and Helena are two of the top teams in the entire league. [Click here](#) for the updated NA3HL standings.

Forwards Kael Delzer (two goals and one assist) and Zach Vockler (one goal, two assists) each contributed to all the scoring drives as the #6 Badlands (SD) Sabres upended the #4 Great Falls Americans, 4-2 in the first showdown between these two clubs during Friday's junior hockey action at the Great Falls Ice Plex. Former Missoula Junior Bruins goaltender Maxim Currie had a big night in the net for Badlands by stopping 63 of the 65 shots sent his way. Daniel Crutcher scored both goals for Great Falls.

Each team successfully made one goal after the first twenty minutes of action. Keagon Holloway lit up the scoreboard for the visiting Sabres four minutes into the stanza as his scoring opportunity was made possible by Zach Vockler (14th assist of the season) and Seth Stock (16th assist). It looked like the Sabres would head into the locker room with the lead, but Great Falls' offense had other plans as Americans forward Daniel Crutcher got the puck by former Missoula Junior Bruins netminder Maxim Currie for his seventh goal of the season with 25 seconds remaining. Thomas Dalsin and Garrett Weisenburger each accumulated their eighth assist on the Americans first tally. Great Falls had many chances to score (23 to be exact) in the first but managed just one goal. Badlands scored on one of their eight shots-on-goal.

Just like the opening period, both squads accounted for one goal in the second frame. After earning an assist in the previous period, Badlands forward Zach Vockler put the South Dakota-based Sabres back out in front 2-1 with 7:29 to go before the second intermission. Adam Kahpeaysewat and Kael Delzer set up the second scoring play on the power play opportunity. Three minutes later, it was the Americans turn to gather their second goal as Daniel Crutcher buried his second goal of the evening (eighth overall) with helpers from Aaron Leaf and Garrett Weisenburger, who also had an assist in the first. The shots were much closer coming out of the first intermission as Great Falls took four more shots (23-19).

Badlands took their third lead of the game midway through the final period of regulation. Rapid City, South Dakota standout Kael Delzer produced his eighth goal of the season to break the (2-2) tie. Mason Martin and Billings, Montana native Denim Young assisted to give the visiting team a 3-2 advantage as the final ten minutes of the first showdown between these two clubs was suspenseful. Kael Delzer recorded another goal for the South Dakota junior hockey team as his second tally in the period came with 42 seconds left to ensure the Sabres would get their first ever win at the Great Falls Ice Plex. Zach Vockler from Sioux Falls, South Dakota, who had a hand in the first two goals of the game, helped secure the win with his 15th assist via an empty net. Sabres netminder Maxim Currie picked up his third assist of the year on the fourth goal made by the visitors.

Despite taking more shots during each of the three periods, Great Falls scored twice while attempting 65 shots. Badlands took 36 of their 44 shots after the first period.

Badlands went 1-for-2 on the power play while incurring four minor penalties with eight minutes of penalty time. The Americans, who failed to garner any scores during their three power play chances, had one penalty in each period that resulted in six minutes spent in the sin bin.

Kael Delzer and Zach Vockler led the team with three points each. Delzer had one assist in the middle period and scored both third period goals while Vockler scored his lone goal in the second period and had one assist in the first and third stanzas for South Dakota. Meanwhile, Great Falls was led by Daniel Crutcher's two goals and Garrett Weisenburger's two assists.

Maxim Currie, who went 14-12-0-0 during the 2020-21 season with the Missoula Junior Bruins, won his seventh game in 12 appearances in his first season with Badlands. The Edmonton, Alberta, Canada native had a busy night between the pipes registering 63 assists.

Zac Hattan played 59 minutes in the net for Great Falls as they lost their fourth straight game. The returning goalie for the Americans swatted away 40 of the 43 shots made by the Sabres. The Kalamazoo Michigan hockey player's record fell to 3-2-1-0 in seven appearances.

NEXT CONTEST: The second game of this series resumes on Saturday, November 27th with the Americans hosting the Sabres at the Great Falls Ice Plex with all the action heating up on the ice at 7:30PM (MST). The Americans will look to bounce back from Friday's loss. Join Megan Lewis on the call for the [HockeyTV](#) coverage Saturday night and for all the Americans home games throughout the 2021-22 season.

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