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Great Falls Americans Press Release

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Gillette earns second weekend sweep of the season over Great Falls

By Kevin Scott

Box Score	Game Sheet	League Scoreboard	Americans Team Statistics
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GILLETTE, Wyo., November 20, 2021 — The #2 Gillette (WY) Wild (18-0-0-0) and the #4 Great Falls Americans (9-8-2-1) have competed against each other four times this season with Great Falls serving as the road team for all the games. Great Falls' September matchup was moved to Gillette, Wyoming after the Great Falls Americans home arena (Great Falls Ice Plex) was getting some ice repairs made at their rink.

During the first encounter with the Wild taking place on Friday for their third overall head-to-head meeting, the Americans trailed 3-1 after two periods before falling to Gillette, 4-2 ([see game story](#)). Declan Young led the undefeated squad by scoring half of the goals (2) and receiving one assist. Daniel Crutcher and Tyler Sunagel answered with one goal apiece and Jackson Henningsgard was the recipient of the assists for the Americans.

Would Great Falls survive Saturday's showdown with one of the top teams in the NA3HL and come out on top or would Gillette continue their unblemished record for second place? (The Helena Bighorns (19-0-0-0) is the other unbeaten team and ranked just ahead of the Wild in the Frontier Division standings).

The #2 Gillette Wild's offense showed why they are a tough team with a talented roster to beat on Saturday evening as they used a four-goal first period to down the visiting #4 Great Falls Americans 7-2 as over 643 fans watched the rivalry continue on the ice at the Spirit Hall Ice Arena.

Four goals in a fifteen-minute span is how the Gillette Wild opened the first period. The Wild's defense held the Americans without a goal during the first twenty minutes. Declan Young, the team leader in points scored (45) and the top scorer in all the NA3HL with 25 goals and 20 assists on the season, scored twice while Isaac Young and Sky Solig contributed one. Saizha Norwegian set up two scoring drives while Caleb Sanborn, Isaac Young and Will Blake added one assist. Gillette's offense kept the puck for most of the time as they put up 22 shots while Great Falls failed to gather any goals in their nine attempts.

After the teams came back from their break in the second stanza, Gillette and Great Falls each traded a goal during the first 12:40. Caleb Sanborn sailed the puck by Great Falls goalie Wyatt Olsonawski 81 seconds into the period to take the commanding 5-0 lead. It took Great Falls offense 27 minutes of game time to settle down and net a goal of their own. First year player, Aaron Leaf racked up his second goal of the season thanks to Petr Van Voorhis and Jackson Henningsgard passes to the Colorado native to cut into the Wild's lead (5-1). The successful power play opportunity came with 7:20 left before the second intermission. The Wild showed why they are one of the elite junior hockey teams in the country when Tristan Baker and Saizha Norwegian each put in an additional goal to cushion their six-goal advantage. Both scoring chances came with the Americans in the sin bin. A trio of players collected the assists including Declan Young, Caleb Sanborn and Will Blake.

After eight goals were scored in the first forty minutes, Tyler Sunagel's eighth goal of the season was the only time the lamp was lit by either squad after the second break. Sunagel, from Plymouth, Wisconsin, needed 3:50 to give the Americans their second goal on the unassisted tally.

Gillette amassed over 22 shots during each of the three frames to finish with 70 shots that resulted in seven goals being scored. Great Falls saw a game-high of 11 of their 27 total shots come during the middle period.

Nine (combined) minor penalties resulted in 18 minutes of time spent in the penalty box. All four power plays were answered and resulted in a score.

For the second consecutive night, Declan Young carried his team to victory by gathering two goals and two assists while teammates Isaac Young, Caleb Sanborn, and Saizha Norwegian had one goal and two assists apiece to ensure their 18th victory. Aaron Leaf and Tyler Sunagel added the scoring for Great Falls with Jackson Henningsgard and Petr Van Voorhis assisting.

Canadian goaltender Jack Orchard stopped 25 of the 27 shots along with a perfect first period for the host team. Ben Winkler started for the Americans and recorded 13 saves in 15 minutes. Wyatt Olsonawski, who replaced him for the remaining 45 minutes, ended with 50 saves.

NEXT CONTEST: [HockeyTV](#) will provide the full coverage of the Americans homecoming weekend on the two days following Thanksgiving on November 26-27 when the Badlands (Rapid City, South Dakota) Sabres come to Great Falls, Montana for the first time as a member of the NA3HL. Game time is set each night at 7:30PM (MST) from the Great Falls Ice Plex. Join Hockey TV's Megan Lewis for the play-by-play and commentary both nights.

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