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**Great Falls Americans Press Release**

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**Bighorns rally for 5-3 win over the Americans to stay unbeaten**

**By Kevin Scott**

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HELENA, Mont., October 9, 2021 — The #4 Great Falls Americans (3-3-2-1) were hoping for a better performance against the #2 Helena Bighorns (8-0-0-0) as both teams battled it out for the second consecutive night of NA3HL hockey in Helena, Montana.

On Friday (October 8<sup>th</sup>), Great Falls fell behind 5-0 23 minutes into the contest before Americans forward Thomas Gazich found the back of the net. Each team would score once more before the second intermission including a goal by AJ Benit. The Americans would outscore the Bighorns 2-0 in the third, but the late effort was not enough as the host team kept their undefeated streak alive, winning 6-4 in front of 500 spectators at the Helena Ice Arena.

Great Falls was looking to hand the Bighorns their first loss of the season in their second meeting of the season on Saturday.

The #4 Great Falls Americans led the Helena Bighorns 3-1 after the first two periods, but the home team scored four unanswered goals in the final stanza to stay unbeaten, winning 5-3 as a huge crowd of 1,025 loud fans came to watch the rivalry game on Saturday evening at the Helena Ice Arena. Helena forward Adam Harvey scored once and dished out two assists for Helena's eighth win of the season.

The Americans scored the first of their two first period scores with 13:30 remaining as Thomas Gazich chipped in his seventh goal in nine games as Noel Rahn and Daniel Crutcher set up the play. Rahn recorded his third assist while returner Daniel Crutcher, who was added to the team this past week, earned his first assist. Later in the stanza, Tae Evans scored for the second time this season and helped Great Falls lead Helena 2-0 thanks to assistance by Jackson Henningsgard and Thomas Gazich. Evans saw time on the ice in the NA3HL last season as a member of the Bozeman Ice Dogs where he scored 25 points (15 goals, 10 assists) in 37 games. A minor interference penalty by the Bighorns a minute earlier meant that Helena was down a man which resulted in Tae Evans' score. The rivalry on the ice saw

each squad attempt 16 shots-on-goal.

The Americans 2-0 advantage was cut in half midway through the middle period. Adam Harvey's sixth goal of the season came with 9:25 left before the second intermission. Gavyn Galloway, currently sixth in the NA3HL in points scored with 18, recorded his 14th assist while teammate Andrew MacCallum assisted for the third time this season as Helena trailed 2-1. The visiting team waited until the final five seconds to deliver their third goal to maintain their two-goal lead. After picking up his first assist in the first tally of the game, Daniel Crutcher sent the puck by Bighorns netminder Eric Buchholz before time expired. The Bighorns took six more shots than the Americans after the first forty minutes (42-36).

The Helena Bighorns, one of the top teams in the NA3HL, would not be denied as their offense led them to four goals and their defense never allowed Great Falls to rack up any scoring opportunities in the third and final frame. Seven minutes is all the Bighorns, coached by Damon Hanson, needed to even the score at 3-3. Defenseman Johnathan Peterson and forward Andrew MacCallum put in the second and third goals of the night, respectively. Gavyn Galloway assisted on the second of his three total assists while Adam Harvey gathered his second assist of the night and Johnathan Peterson accrued his third of the year. Tylor Greene secured his seventh scoring drive on a short-handed goal assisted by former Missoula Junior Bruins standout, Liam Bland 45 seconds after MacCallum's goal to give the undefeated squad from Helena their first lead (4-3). Despite many attempts, neither team could find a way to score for the next 11 minutes until Helena's Taber Gutschick buried his third goal in a Bighorns uniform with 47 seconds to go to ensure that the Bighorns would not get their first defeat after eight contests.

Great Falls and Helena each contributed 16 first period shots but Helena offense outlasted their rivals, 53-33 over the final two periods of play.

The Americans were whistled for six minor penalties (12 minutes) and converted just two of their ten power play chances. Helena had eleven stoppages of play that resulted in 22 minutes of time spent off the ice. Helena's final goal by Taber Gutschick was the only successful power play made by the Bighorns.

Thomas Gazich (Great Falls) and Adam Harvey (Helena) each led their respective teams with three points (1 goal, 2 assists).

Eric Buchholz, who is in the top 20 in the league with a Goals-Against-Average (GAA) of 2.00, is now sporting a record of 5-0-0-0 in his first year of junior hockey in Montana. Buchholz, who is one of nine players on the roster from Colorado, stopped 46 of 49 shots on the night for the winning squad.

Great Falls netminder Ben Winkler, who earned five wins in five games last season, dropped his record to 1-1-1-0 in four appearances. Winkler registered 64 of his 177 season saves in the loss.

**NOTE:** Prior to tonight's game, the Great Falls Americans were sitting in third place in the Frontier Division standings after eight games behind two undefeated teams, the Gillette (WY) Wild (10-0-0-0) and the Helena Bighorns (8-0-0-0), but tonight's loss and win by the #3 Bozeman Ice Dogs ([8-3 decision over the Yellowstone Quake](#)) moved the Americans down a spot to fourth place in the eight-league division. Gillette blanked the Sheridan (WY) Hawks, 5-0 ([box score](#)) on Saturday evening in front of their home crowd to remain on top of the standings.

**NEXT CONTEST:** The Great Falls Americans will make a return visit to Sheridan, Wyoming to challenge the Sheridan Hawks for a two-game showdown on Friday and Saturday, October 15<sup>th</sup> -16<sup>th</sup> starting at

7:30PM (MST) from Whitney Rink in the M&M's Center.

After six consecutive weeks playing away from the Great Falls Ice Plex due to some rink repairs that are being made ([see story](#)), the #4 Great Falls Americans will play host to the Butte Cobras. Game time is set for 7:30PM (MST) from the Great Falls Ice Plex on Friday, October 22, 2021. Megan Lewis will return to call all the action on [HockeyTV](#). Stay tuned to the Great Falls Americans website for details in the coming week.

**GREAT FALLS ICE PLEX UPDATE:** To follow the frequent updates on the Great Falls Ice Plex repairs, please "Like" their page and check out the Great Falls Ice Plex Facebook page by [clicking here](#).

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