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Great Falls Americans Press Release

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Butte completes the weekend sweep over Great Falls on New Year's Day

By Kevin Scott

Box Score	Game Sheet	League Scoreboard	Americans Team Statistics
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GREAT FALLS, Mont., January 1, 2022 — The Great Falls Americans, ranked #4 in the NA3HL's Frontier Division with a record of 15-13-3-1, looked to start the new year (2022) with a win after having some offensive issues on New Year's Eve as the #5 Butte Cobras (14-18-2-0) came to the Great Falls Ice Plex for a two-day series that began on Friday.

Great Falls finished off December 2021 with a 5-3-1 record including Friday's home loss to the Cobras. The Americans and Cobras each scored once during the first and second periods as the teams headed to the third period tied at 2-2. Butte shut down the Americans offense 3-0 in the final period to claim a 5-2 win. Nick Bradshaw (3 goals) and Luke Schleusner (1 goal, 3 assists) led the fifth-place team in the Frontier Division standings to their 13th victory of the season. Great Falls. Tyler Sunagel and Jackson Henningsgard each racked up their 13th goals in the first and second periods, respectively with helpers from four different players including Daniel Crutcher, Hunter Maschke, Thomas Gazich, and Bryson Fletcher ([game story](#)). Butte ended December winning four of their ten games including the final three games of the month.

Great Falls was hoping to bounce back from Friday's loss to start the new year with a bang.

Nick Bradshaw, Luke Schleusner, and Cade Wessman helped the Butte Cobras defeat the Great Falls Americans 4-2 to complete their weekend sweep in the final regular season contests between these two clubs during Saturday's action on the ice in Great Falls. Schleusner scored twice, Bradshaw had one goal and two assists and Wessman assisted in three of the goals. Great Falls was paced by Daniel Crutcher (one goal, one assist), AJ Benit (two assists) and Garrett Weisenburger (one goal).

Luke Schleusner of the Cobras put the first (and only) score of the first stanza during the first three minutes to give the Cobras the early advantage over the Americans to open the second game of their two-game series. Cade Wessman and Nick Bradshaw assisted in Schleusner's 25th goal of the year. Four of the six minor infractions were called against the Americans. Butte's offense controlled the puck for

most of the period accumulating 21 shots. Great Falls attempted 14 shots but could not find the back of the net before the first intermission.

A slapshot by forward Drysten Bailey deflected off Americans goaltender Zac Hattan for the wild score with 16:10 remaining in the middle frame. The assists went to Ross Biggerstaff and Johan Olson. Butte led 2-0 for eight minutes before the Americans cut the deficit to one as AJ Benit's pass to Garrett Weisenburger (fourth goal) for the first scoring drive for the Great Falls NA3HL junior hockey franchise. Daniel Crutcher received the secondary assist. Weisenburger scored his last goal against Butte back on December 1st against the Cobras when the Americans came out on top, 5-3 ([game story](#)). The visiting team took advantage of a power play and scored before the period ended. The third goal was credited to Luke Schleusner off the sticks of Nick Bradshaw and Cade Wessman with 1:46 on the clock. The Americans offense fought back and scored with 18 seconds remaining to maintain a one-goal difference after two periods of action. AJ Benit and Jay Alford found an open Daniel Crutcher to light up the lamp on the Americans first power play scoring opportunity of the night. Each team scored twice with one goal apiece coming while the opposing team was in the penalty box. Great Falls registered 24 shots with Butte taking 15.

Early in the third, the Cobras increased their lead to 4-2 as Nick Bradshaw scored via a pass from Cade Wessman and Carson Streich. Despite a total of 37 shots (Great Falls had 27), Bradshaw's goal with fourteen minutes remaining was the only goal that was successful by either team.

Great Falls accrued 51 of their 65 shots after the first period. Butte needed 46 shots to get the win.

The Cobras, coached by Kirk Golden, committed six minor penalties in three periods and scored half (2-for-6) of their goals when the Americans were sent to the sin bin. Great Falls was whistled for seven penalties while taking advantage of one of their five power play chances. Crutcher's goal near the end of the second period was made with the Cobras down a man.

Butte goaltender Caleb Cross won for the second time in as many days by swatting away 63 of the 65 shots that the host team produced. Cross, who played in this twentieth game as a member of the Cobras organization, ran his record to 8-10-1-0. Zac Hattan had 42 saves in his fourth regulation loss of the season (4-4-2-0).

FRONITER DIVISION UPDATE: The #1 Helena Bighorns and the #2 Gillette (WY) Wild kept up their winning streak in the Frontier Division by defeating their respective opponents easily. Helena led 6-0 after two periods of play before displacing the newest member of the Frontier Division, the #6 Badlands (SD) Sabres, 7-3 ([box score](#)). The Wild's Will Blake had a hat trick (3 goals, 1 assist) as the Wyoming squad ran out to a four-goal lead and blanked the #8 Sheridan (WY) Hawks, 7-0 in front of 462 fans at Gillette's Spirit Hall Ice Arena on Saturday night ([box score](#)). The Yellowstone (WY) Quake and the Bozeman Ice Dogs sat idle this weekend.

NOTES: The Great Falls Americans were without the services of a few key players for the weekend series including forwards Tae Evans, Henry Fusco, and Silas Hughes. Due to some flight cancellations, they were unable to make it back in time after going home for the holiday break.

NEXT CONTEST: The Great Falls Americans have postponed their road games against the Helena Bighorns (Jan. 8) and the Bozeman Ice Dogs (Jan. 9). The Americans have rescheduled their contest against the Bighorns in Helena, Montana to Sunday, February 27th at 4:00PM (MST) at the Helena Ice Arena. The Americans and Ice Dogs game will be rescheduled for a later date.

The Americans will return home on Saturday, January 15th for a 7:30PM (MST) showdown with the Bozeman Ice Dogs. Fans get check out the Americans full PDF schedule by [clicking here](#). Tune into [HockeyTV](#) for all the action all season long.

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