



BALDY'S PUCK DROP

Weekly E-Newsletter December 12th, 2024

Dear Great Falls Americans Enthusiast:

I'll wrap up last weekend with just three words: **Trust the Process!** There were a lot of good things that came out of last weekend that will help put us in a position to achieve our goals come March. Although we did not go into the weekend planning to lose two close games – there was way more to accomplish over last weekend than a win or two and our staff feels good about most of what we set out to do. Do we want the first two periods back on Friday night, or the last 20 seconds of the 1st period on Saturday – of course! But none of that diminishes what we did accomplish and what we can use to move forward.

Congrats this week goes out to Garren Narvaez who was called up to practice with the Elmira Aviators of the NAHL. Garren flew out early Sunday morning and will meet us in Minneapolis on Saturday after a great week of practice with the NAHL team. Look for some other players to get similar opportunities the second half of the season.

I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome our two newest players. Cooper Clouse (see player profile) joins us from the Colorado Fighting Elk (a non-sanctioned Junior Team) where he had 8 goals and 10 assists in 10 games. Chase Hapka joins us in a trade from Gillette where he played last season plus the start of this season. Chase accumulated 25 goals and 37 assists in 66 games with Gillette. Both Cooper and Chase come from Fargo and played High School Hockey together and join our other Fargo natives (Fisher Hannesson, John Lang and Keegan Hanson). The absolute best recruiting tool we have is "word of mouth" as both players had other options but wanted to come here because of what they heard about the culture we have created and the way we treat our players from those players now on our team.



We head out for the NA3HL Showcase this morning after a quick skate at 8:00 AM. The plan is to drive to Bismarck today, overnight in Bismarck and then tour and skate at the University of Mary facility in Mandan Friday morning. From there we make the two-hour drive to Fargo, where we will be hosted by our player's families in Fargo at the Hannesson household for a great home-made dinner before attending the Fargo Force game in the USHL. Saturday, we will, again, practice at Scheel's Arena in Fargo before making the rest of the trip to Minneapolis; arriving mid-afternoon. The players will have the rest of Saturday to spend with family and friends before we go to work on Sunday. Most of the players will head home after our game Tuesday morning for the holidays and will return to Great Falls on the 27th. The Staff and the

local players (plus those from Calgary) will hop on the bus for the 16-hour trip home with another overnight in Bismarck.

We open the Showcase at 8:30 PM (CT) on Sunday versus the Texas Roadrunners. The Roadrunners are currently in 5th place in the South Division and is ranked 48th in the country. Monday we take on the New Hampshire Jr Mountain Kings at 3:00 PM (CT). New Hampshire is in 4th place in the Eastern Division and ranked 31st. We close out the showcase on Tuesday morning at 9:30 AM (CT) versus the New Mexico Ice Wolves; the 3rd place team in the South with a 16-7 record and the 5th ranked Tier III Junior team in the U.S. Set your schedules (don't forget the time difference) and plan on watching Sunday/Monday from the Showcase at our official Watch Party at **Buffalo Wild Wings**. Tuesday- enjoy a cup of coffee as you log into NAHLTV.com.



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You may wonder where the rankings come from. My Hockey Ranking is a company that specializes in a computerized ranking system for hockey teams at all levels of play, including youth hockey and Junior Hockey. The formula they use takes into consideration not only wins and losses, but also calculates strength of schedule and goal differentials for each game played to come up with a numerical rating that is then used to rank the teams. It is not the end-all-be-all for ranking teams, but it is scientifically based and is similar to what the NCAA uses to place teams in their championship tournaments for all sports. They have ranked all 172 Tier III Junior Hockey teams in the U.S. and your Great Falls Americans have been in the top ten all season long. As a point of reference, Helena is #1 and Sheridan is 13th. Remember, it is not always about wins and losses and in our case we have also played the 4th most difficult schedule of those 172 teams and of the top 18 in strength of schedule, we are the only team with a positive goal differential. I tell you this not because I want you to go to their website and think it is the answer – it is not – but it does once again support the whole premise of trusting the process and seeing a bigger picture than just a team's record.

We wrapped up the first portion of our Sled Program on Tuesday and I want to thank all our players who helped make this program successful. Eagle Mount regulars Zail, Weston, Jordan and Kevin have an infectious enthusiasm that rubs off on our guys and I believe I can say makes their experience with the Americans a little better. We will crank it back up again in mid-February and look forward to seeing these athletes get back after it.



Finally, as we head into the Holiday season, the Americans are offering a special

Great Falls Americans
Baldy Christmas Ornament
 Purchase yours and be entered into Stocking Stuffer Drawing Filled With Americans' Swag
 Powered by DASH

activation through DASH this week. You can purchase a limited-edition Baldy Christmas Tree Ornament and when you do, you will automatically be entered into a drawing for a Great Falls Americans "mystery stocking stuffer" package that will include a GFA stadium blanket, scarf, beanie and several other items that will brighten any fan's Christmas Stocking. The sale will end at 9:00 PM on Tuesday, December 17th and the drawing will be made from the team bus on Wednesday the 18th. For those in the Great Falls area, we can

arrange to meet to exchange the ornament(s) anytime during the 19th-23rd or you can also pre-pay for postage for your ornament to be mailed on the 19th. Either way – Santa needs the stocking stuffer for Christmas Eve and the plan is to get it into Santa's hands in time for Christmas. Check out the DASH QR code below to order your ornament and enter your chance to win.



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Player Profile – #27 Cooper Clouse (Fargo, ND) 5'11" 170 lbs. FOR - Shoots Left DOB 10/20/2005

Favorite Team: Pittsburgh Penguins **Favorite Player:** Sidney Crosby

Favorite Movie: Good Will Hunting **Favorite Actor/Actress:** Jim Carrey

Favorite Food: Pasta **Favorite Pre-Game Meal:** Sub

If you were animal: A Cheetah – They are the fastest!

Musical Group You Won't Miss in Concert: The Lumineers

Music Guaranteed to get you hyped: Rock-n-Roll

Person stuck with on a deserted Island: John Lang

Hobbies other than Hockey: Surfing at the lake

Three People you would invite to Dinner:

Shane Gillis, Donald Trump, Margot Robbie

College/University of Choice: University of North Dakota

Like Most About Great Falls: A great group of guys!

How would you define a successful season: Winning it all!



Here are the upcoming events for you to mark your calendars:

- December 15-17 – NA3HL Showcase in Blaine, MN. Sunday 7:30 PM MT versus Texas RoadRunners. Monday 2:00 PM MT versus New Hampshire Jr. Mountain Kings. Tuesday 8:30 AM MT versus New Mexico Ice Wolves.
- December 17-27 – Holiday Break
- December 28th – The Americans will practice at the Havre Ice Dome and then conduct clinics with their youth teams.
- December 31st – Home game versus the Butte Irish – 6:05 PM Puck Drop!

Thank you to all our existing **Eagle's Nest, Diamond and Platinum Level** partners for their continued support.



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Thank you for being a part of our hockey family!

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