



2018 RMJALL Season Report

The 2018 season started with a feel good vibe. We had just finished our breakout at the 2017 AGM with a clear vision of where we were going & our league was hosting the Minto Cup for the 1st time in 7 years. Then it all started. There was a huge problem with the dissolution of the Blues to strengthen the Edmonton area team. We were not advised there was a condition precedent for right of 1st refusal for the former owner of the franchise. The situation could not be resolved to everyone's satisfaction & the Blues did not fold & participated in the 2018 midget draft & season. The resultant fallout was the Red Deer conditional expansion franchise offer was rescinded & it created unnecessary havoc with Tier 1 & 2 schedules & rosters.

The regular season began with the Minto Cup co-hosts Okotoks Raiders & Calgary Mountaineers as the co-favourites despite being in a rebuild scenario with only 4/5 returning last year juniors. The Swat were gaining momentum from the previous year & had a veteran crew & a future star in goal. The Edmonton teams had a talented group of graduating midgets in their draft, but struggled to maintain their 25 man rosters. The Swat roared out to a quick start & were in 1st place for most of the season, besides sweeping a weekend series against the Raiders, they also sported a 3-1 record against the Mountaineers. The Mounties had an up/down season as their young players got seasoned & finished the season strong. The Blues went 3-1 versus the Miners, but neither team garnered a point against the top 3 teams. There was one significant deal done by the Miners & Blues just before the trade deadline, a monumental deal that saw 11 players change teams. The deal solidified the Blues roster for the playoffs. The Raiders did catch the Swat on the last game of the season to end up tied for 1st place & won the top spot by .518 percentage points on the tiebreaker.

The playoffs started with a best of 7 series between the Raiders & much improved Blues. The Raiders swept the series 4-0, but a game crew from Edmonton gave them everything they could handle, including a thrilling overtime contest in Calgary. Meanwhile the Swat & Mounties faced off in a back & forth battle that saw the Mounties prevail in 6. Every game with the exception of game 2 was close, with numerous lead & momentum changes. The Swat won their first 2 Jr.A playoff games ever and are on the verge of upsetting the perennial favourites. The final was originally scheduled to be a best of 5 event, but the Raiders & Mounties agreed to expand it to a best of 7. The series began on a strange note with the 1st four games of the series at Stu Peppard, giving the Mounties home floor advantage due to Max Bell being unavailable for the 1st 4 games. Home floor was not much of a factor however, with the Mounties winning the 1st 2 & the Raiders winning the next 3. Mounties took Game 6 at Max Bell, setting up game 7 at Max Bell 2 on the hottest day in Calgary's history, in an arena with no A/C, a large crowd & the provincial crown on the line. In a typical see-saw battle that saw these kids leave everything on the floor, the Raiders prevailed 9-8 to become back to back provincials champs for the 1st time in many years. The upside for the Mounties was that they were in the Minto as the host team & could make amends during the competition for national supremacy.

In closing, we would like to express our gratitude to the RMLL for their generous contribution to our Minto Cup aspirations & congratulate all the league champions. Special congrats to the St. Albert Miners for their 3rd consecutive President's Cup & the new wave of Alberta midgets, fresh off their 2nd consecutive national championship. Both are amazing accomplishments.

Yours in Lacrosse,
Mike Fynn, RMJALL Commissioner

