

## 2003 James McFall Award - AJ Jomha

Started his career as a player over 2 decades ago. He and his 4 brothers were and still are one of the premier lacrosse families in the province.

Got his first taste of success playing with the Enoch Tomahawks, which in 1980 became the first, and for 20 years, only western team to win the Founders Cup.

Started coaching a peewee team in 1983, and in his first year as a coach won the Provincial championship.

In 1985 coached the Alberta entry in the Canada Games in New Brunswick to a silver medal.

Started coaching the Miners team when they turned Senior and took the Alberta team to the Presidents Cup for seven consecutive years coming away with 3 bronze (89 Nanaimo, 92 Brantford, 95 Prince George) and 3 silver(90 Fergus, 91 Edmonton, 93 Northshore) medals between 1989 and 1995. He also played on each of these teams as goalie.

Coached the Miners junior team starting in 1995 to present winning a bronze in 1996 (Edmonton), silver in 1995(St. Catherines) and 2001(Edmonton) and the gold in 1999(Milton). The only 2 western teams to win the Founders Cup had AJ on the team.

As good as his success in box lacrosse is, few know of the triumphs of the Miners field program that he plays and coaches in.

As a big stick he was a member of the team that won the Victory cup in Montreal in 1987 and again in Ottawa in 1994.

With AJ as coach the Miners started taking high school teams to tournaments in the USA in 1990 with the aim of getting local players into US colleges on scholarships. The spring time tours started in Seattle and stayed on the west coast until 1993. The team then headed East and toured Philadelphia, New York, Connecticut and Colorado gaining experience and exposure.

1996 saw the team go back to the west. The following years at San Diego proved that the Miners were one of the top teams in the West amassing a record of 32 - 9 over the next 5 years and winning the San Diego Lax Festival in 1996 and the New Mexico tournament in 2000.

The high school team concept blended well with the 1st Nations Tournament and allowed a core of players to stay together for most of the year. Since 1997 the Miners have been the top U19 club team in the country. They have won the silver in (Oshawa 97), gold (Vancouver 98), silver (Calgary 99), silver (Manitoba 00) and bronze (Sask 01) and in that time have only lost to all star teams from BC and Saskatchewan.

The success of the Miners teams coached by AJ is reflected in the quality of the players going on to higher levels of play starting with the players getting scholarships in the USA:

Jamie Bowen to Sonoma

Chris MacIssac, Dave McCrimmon and Marc Wong to St. Joe's

Devon and Taylor Wray to Duke  
Blaine Manning and Ben Prepchuk to Radford  
Jon Harasym to UMBC  
Brad Scott and Nick Quinn to Whittier  
Peter Gut to Northwestern.

Players making national teams:

Jamie Bowen - Commonwealth Games team and Mens national team

Jon Harasym, Devon Wray, Taylor Wray, Darren Hillier, Peter Gut, Blaine Manning to the U19 World team

Look at box teams everywhere for Miners alumni:

Calgary Roughnecks, Vancouver Ravens, Toronto Rock, Buffalo Bandits, Victoria Shamrocks, Okanagan Thunder, Coquitlam Adanacs, Orangeville Northmen, Burnaby Lakers, New Westminster Salmonbellies.

A.J. has sat on the RMLL Executive for many years as scheduler. He has been instrumental in getting major lacrosse to where it is in Alberta. A.J. has also been very instrumental in trying to get Junior A to Alberta. Besides spending so much time as scheduler of the RMLL, President of the Edmonton Miners, taking teams to Nationals or other tournaments he also has a busy law practice.

A.J. has been successful in bringing Junior A lacrosse to Alberta. The Edmonton Miners participated in Ontario in 2004 and were the first Alberta host in 2005. A.J. has led the Miners to the Minto Cup each year as the ALA Provincial Champion.

In addition, at the CLA (Canadian Lacrosse Association) level, A.J. has been instrumental in developing the Minto Cup contracts and the CLA Transfer policy. This policy helps the Alberta teams be more competitive at this National competition and make it more difficult for the other provinces to recruit Alberta players.

A.J. has volunteered at the CLA for the past 5 years as the CLA Box sector chair.