

To challenge for the title of best Rural City Atom A hockey team in the Manitoba . The Black and Orange chartered a bus and set a course for the Automobile City, via St. Vital Mall where the mom's had a chance to show off their best game, shopping like it was the Stanley Cup.

Being a long way from home seemed to suit the Miners just fine as they came out flying in their first game. The Dauphin Kings did put the first points on the scoreboard but Thompson had them on their heels through all three periods. It was only a matter of time before the black jerseys would find the mark. The team's leading scorer Nicolas Rickett's padded his stats with two more G's as the inevitable happened and the King Miners relentless attack wore down the Kings. Jerome Linklater and Harley Horning hooked up on a sweet back and forth passing play late in the third with Linklater eventually banging it home. Linklater also assisted on a goal by defenseman Gordon Ruther who found himself in foreign territory all alone in front of the opposing cage but instinct kicked in and he flipped it home. Even a 5-4 loss in the pizza shoot-out didn't take the smile off the Miners faces as they left Steinbach's Centennial Arena with a 4-2 victory.

Later Friday the Miners were featured in the Opening Ceremony game pitted against the home town Millers. Lulled to sleep by a delay in starting and the long winded speeches it took the Miners two periods to wake up. The King Miners did win the third period 3-2 but sadly being down 5-0 before they came to life, it wasn't enough to march another W in to the win column. Shining lights were Josh Sweeney and Brittany Johnston who led by example hustling to inspire their troops. Matthew Rempel part of the "Energy Line" along with Harley Horning and Linklater scored late in the game for his second of the season with assist coming from Murphy Krentz and Sheldin Howard. Nicolas Ricketts continued his scoring charge getting a couple goals with assists from Krentz and Carter Seymour. Seymour, despite not putting many points on the board is playing with a passion not seen since the early days of Brad Pitt and Jennifer Aniston.

The Men in Black only hit the ice once on Saturday but they packed three games worth of excitement in to those three periods. It was a do or die showdown with the Morden Hawks that drove the adrenaline meter to 11 on a scale of 1 to 10. Our boys got right down to business, constantly pressuring their southern opponents. That work was rewarded with two goals. Captain Pimentel struck first with apples going to Liam Gallagher and Josh Sweeney. Soon after D-man Murphy Krentz dangled his way from the blue line to the goal line making the score two – zero. The Miners took their foot off the pedal for a bit in the second and Morden made them pay, sneaking one past Goalie Jordan Bayer. Crazy back and forth action had coach Barry Rempel reaching for the heart attack medicine but when the buzzer finally sounded, Thompson had held the 2-1 lead and Morden were headed home.

Sunday brought a chance for sweet revenge with the home town Steinbach Millers lined up on the other side of the red line. Unfortunately that little treat will have to wait for the next time the two face off. The Millers carried the balance of the play, with the Miners not quite ever tipping back the scale. Goal keeper Luc Bonner-Audette was the shining light turning Steinbach away repeatedly but it is hard to win if you don't score any goals. A 4-0 final meant the Miners were on their way to the Bronze medal game.

Two northern rivals took the ice and filled the stands as Thompson and Flin Flon met just miles from the 49th parallel to add another chapter to their on-going saga. The Miners dressed in black were poised to play the villain and steal a win from the Bombers who had taken all three previous meetings and were ranked higher after the round robin. Early in the game the energy line again provided a spark as Matthew Rempel rung a lazer beam backhand off the crossbar serving notice the Miners had come to play. In a story line all too familiar with this crew, they controlled the play but not the scoreboard, finding themselves down 1-0 after the first period. In hockey as in life hard work pays off. King Miners Gallagher and Harley got the fruits of everyone's labour with goals in the second period. Helpers on those went to Remple and Sweeney. The start of the third brought an early insurance marker off the stick of Jerome Linklater on a pass from forward turned defenseman Sheldin Howard. The scoring was over for the black jerseys but the heart pounding wasn't. With 2:27 remaining Flin Flon managed to get within one. Jordan Bayer channelled Roberto Louongo and the team stuck to the game plan swarming the Bombers to run out the clock.

A well deserved bronze medal framed the smiling faces of the Atom A's and made the long Sunday night bus ride home just a little easier to take. Peaking at just the right time, all that is left for this bunch is more success at the Munn Cup