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A Winner in a Wild One

In a game which had the intensity of an NCAA regional, the Liberal Bee Jays moved back to within a half game of first with an 8-7 win in 11 innings at Dodge City's Cavalier Field Wednesday night. Wichita State's Tyler Baker slugged a solo homer over the right field wall to give the BJ's an 8-7 lead in the 11th and Coffeyville's John Branum worked a scoreless 11th for his fifth save.

Liberal scored one in the first when Seward's Tanner Rainey singled home UTA's Derek Miller. The A's took a 2-1 lead when Taylor Drake blasted a two run homer over the left field wall in the second. Liberal tied it in the third when Rainey singled home UTA's Travis Sibley.

The BJ's took a 3-2 lead in the fourth Dalton Bernardi doubled with one out and scored after Seward's Jake Barrios singled and Bernardi scored on an error by the left fielder. Rainey's suicide squeeze bunt scored Miller in the fifth to make it 4-2 BJ's. Dodge Scored a run in the sixth to make it 4-3.

Liberal made it 5-3 in the seventh when Miller hit his first homer of the season over the left field wall. Dodge scored in the bottom of the inning to make it 5-4. Liberal took a 6-4 lead in the eighth when Barrios singled home Louisiana Tech's Stephen Gandy. The A's scored in the bottom of the inning to make it 6-5.

The A's scored a run to tie it in the ninth when the BJ second baseman misplayed a ground ball which would have been the final out of the game. But UTA's Sibley drove home Arizona's Tyler Parmenter with a single in the 10th. Dodge was down to their last strike on multiple occasions in the 10th but came back with three straight singles against reliever Dalton Bernardi to tie the game. Baker hit his first homer of the year in the 11th over the rigth field wall for the lead.

Keegan Hucul started the game and pitched five innings allowing three runs. Grayson's Ray Ashford pitched two innings and allowed two runs but in the sixth, got out of a no out situation with runners on 2nd and 3rd without a run scoring. Bernardi (3-1) pitched two innings and allowed two runs for the win. Branum pitched a perfect 11th for his fifth save.

Two Seward County Saints led the BJ's at the plate. Barrios was 4-5 and Rainey was 3-4 with three RBI's.

Liberal is 16-10 while Dodge City is 16-9. The A's play at 14-10 Hays Thursday night. Liberal (22-10) hosts the Greeley Grays in a non league game Thursday night at 7 p.m. at Brent Gould Field. The Leader and Times newspaper is the buyout sponsor.

Elsewhere in the Jayhawk, Derby beat Haysville 3-2 in 14 innings.

Dodge City 16-9
Liberal 16-10
Hays 14-10
Derby 14-15
El Dorado 12-17
Haysville 9-20

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