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KSCB's Top Ten Stories of the Decade

Here are KSCB's top 10 stories of the decade.

1. Mike Hargrove Shines a Light on Liberal. The 16 year Major League Manager guides th BJ's for two seasons. Hargrove led the 2008 team to a 4th place finish at the NBC before the 2009 BJ's placed third. Kansas Baseball Hall of Fame member and current BJ general manager Bob Carlile lured the Perryton native to Liberal. Hargrove brought national attention to Liberal from ESPN, Sporting News, and other media outlets. Junior college hall of famer Galen McSpadden served as Hargrove's pitching coach while long time Perryton baseball coach Bill Merrell was an assistant giving the BJ's a dream team of baseball coaches.
2. A Heavenly Season. Jim Littell's Lady Saints won the 2002 NJCAA championship going 38-0. After maybe the program's best game ever in the semis against Gulf Coast, the Lady Saints beat Northeastern Oklahoma in for the school's first national championship on a fateful night in Salina. Kim Ortega, Tracy Wynn, and Vaida Zagurskyte were named all Americans.
3. Back to the Future for the Bee Jays. Liberal won the 2000 NBC World Series title. It was the first in 15 years for the program during a summer in which the NBC went back to wooden bats for the tournament. Former BJ player and Tyrone native Darin Thomas managed the team while Kim Snell served as general manager. Cory Metzler was named the tournament MVP.
4. Track Dominance Unrivaled. Liberal won the first five boys track titles of the decade while the LHS girls won four of the first five. But since Gary Cornelsen left Liberal in 2004, Liberal has fallen far short of state supremacy.

5. Opponents Leave the Green House Feeling Blue. The Lady Saints won 135 game in a row in the Green House. That streak spanned 1994 until February 28, 2004 when sixth place Hutchinson handed the Lady Saints just their second conference loss 64-50 in Liberal.

6. Star Potential. Several area athletes played professionally. Jerame Tuman helped the Steelers win the Super Bowl. The 1995 LHS grad played nine seasons for the Steelers and one for the Cardinals. Former Saint basketball player Marcus Pollard played a 14 year NFL career with the Colts, Lions, Seahawks, and Falcons. Former Redskin and Saint Melvin Sanders played for the Spurs. Sublette's Shalee Lehning plays for the Atlanta Dream. Turpin's Lynn Scott played five years for the Cowboys. Liberal's Lamar Chapman played two years for the Browns. Former BJ's Hunter Pence, Rich Harden, Koyie Hill, Troy Percival, Ian Kinsler, Robert Ray, and Kelly Shoppach play in the Major Leagues. Former Elkhart Dusters John Lackey and Rod Barajas Liberal's Kasey Hayes continues his professional bullriding tour on the PBR's Built Ford Tough Series. Liberal's Tony Bruce is a short track racer. Liberal's Erica Davis is a Laker Girl.

7. Kickin' it Redskin Style. Liberal's soccer team is one of the most feared in the state. Liberal has advanced to the final four six of the past seven seasons. The only season in the span that they missed was 2007 during which they were ranked number one going into the post season. The Redskins have won nine straight WAC titles under coach Lori Navarro who began soccer as a coed sport at LHS.

8. Changing of the Guard. Coaching legends left Liberal during the decade. Gary Cornelsen left after a 118-17 record, seven state

title games, four state football titles, 14 boys track championships, and 10 girls state track championships. Cornelsen departed during the spring of 2004 and went to Amarillo Randall before going across town to Tascosa this year. Jim Littell left Seward after a national title, four region titles, nine conference championships, and a 418-61 record in 14 seasons. Littell led the Lady Saints from 1991-2005. He is the top assistant at Oklahoma State.

9. Bringing Home the Bronze. The Saints went 32-6 in 2008 under former Saints player and Johnson native Bryan Zollinger. Darko Cohadarevic was an NJCAA All American. The Saints won the region and the conference titles before placing third in the NJCAA Tournament at Hutchinson. The 2007 Lady Saints dubbed the "Magnificent 7" went 36-2 under Booker native Toby Wynn. Tegan Cunningham and Chontaye Walter were named NJCAA All Americans. Seward won the region and Jayhawk West titles. The "gals in green" won the region four times during the decade.

10. We're number 1. Area state champions include 2009 Sublette boys track, 2009 Turpin boys track, 2009 Southwestern Heights girls basketball, 2007 Hooker cross country, 2007 and 2005 Beaver boys track, 2007 Beaver girls track, 2001 and 2000 Turpin girls track, 2003 and 2001 Turpin girls golf, 2004 Forgan girls basketball, 2002 Elkhart baseball, 2005 and 2004 Sublette girls basketball, 2004 Stanton County boys cross country, 2002 Liberal girls cross country, 2001 Stanton County boys golf, 2001 and 2000 Ulysses girls golf, 2002 Elkhart softball, 2000 Stanton County boys track, 2004, 2003, 2002, 2001, and 2000 Liberal boys track, 2004, 2003, 2001, and 2000 Liberal girls track.

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