



By EARL WATT

- Leader & Times

After jumping out to a 4-0 lead, the Redskins were in jeopardy of letting a win slip through their fingers against Guymon, Okla., Friday at the Liberal Baseball Complex. But an offensive explosion in the bottom of the sixth secured a 12-7 win and brought the Redskins back to .500 on the season.

The Redskins scored two runs in the first inning and added two more in the second to take an early 4-0 lead.

Alberto Aldaz kept the Tigers off the scoreboard through the first three innings, but the Tigers started to chip away, scoring a run in the fourth, two in the fifth, and adding two in the top of the sixth to take a 5-4 lead when a Liberal outfielder misplayed a routine pop fly to center that allowed Guymon to score the go-ahead run.

The Redskins struggled through the middle innings to get base runners, but in the bottom of the sixth, Liberal was able to push runners across with ease. The Redskins took advantage of struggling Tiger pitchers and mixed in some key hits to score the runners. Christian Hernandez hit a key two-RBI double that put the Redskins back on top, and then Liberal added a few

insurance runs to jump out to a 12-5 lead.

Guymon scored two runs in the top of the seventh and had two base runners on when reliever Hernandez was able to record the final out for the win.

"We prepared extremely well," Liberal coach Eric Olmstead said. "We had kids out here at 11 (a.m.) getting cuts. This team won't give up. We could have folded after giving up the lead. We had some mistakes on defense and mental lapses on offense, but they battled through it."

Liberal will have to be able to battle through adversity this season with no seniors on the squad and several freshmen contributing at the varsity level.

"We knew there would be a learning curve with younger players," Olmstead said. "The juniors are leading by example."

Liberal will not have a go-to senior, and that will require a variety of players to provide big plays.

"Getting on base at the top of the order is key," Olmstead said. "We did that with (Jared) Hasik, (Timothy) Fitzgerald and (Christian) Hernandez. (Lorenzo) Pando had a great bunt. Collin Ware put down a squeeze. It will be a different kid every day."

Liberal started slow with a loss to Woodward and a pair of losses to Hugoton to start the season. Since then, Liberal went to Ulysses and swept a double header and returned home to defeat Guymon.

The Western Athletic Conference slate will begin Tuesday when the Redskins (3-3) host Great Bend.

“I want to see us against a WAC opponent,” Olmstead said. He will at 4 p.m. Tuesday in Liberal.