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By ROY ALLEN

- Seward assistant athletic director

As the Seward County Saints looked for their final tune-up before the Region VI Tournament Tuesday in a non-conference game against Dodge City, they might have found a couple more leaks under the hood, falling 8-2 to the Conquistadors in a game in which they were in trouble from the start. Seward pitching struggled to find the plate early on and Dodge City grabbed a 6-0 lead after just three innings of play. The Saints offense wasn't much better as they had just one runner reach second base in the first five innings. Dodge added two more runs in the seventh to go up 8-1 and went on to win 8-2.

It was a long top half of the first inning for Seward in the field as a four-pitch walk started the game off and another walk two batters later put two on with one out for Dodge. A 1-6-3 double play got the Saints out of the mess, but it was more of the same in the top half of the second. Another four pitch walk started the inning and a single followed by a hit batter loaded the bases with nobody out.

A balk allowed one run to score and a double into the left field corner scored two more to make it 3-0 Dodge City after an inning and a half.

The Saints went down in order in their half of the 2nd and Dodge City was back on the attack in the 3rd.

Again Seward pitching could not find the strike zone in the third and the Conqs loaded the bases without an out to start the frame. The second hit batter of the inning gift wrapped Dodge's fourth run of the game and a wild pitch and a sacrifice fly extended the Dodge City lead to 6-0. Seward reliever Keenan Hall kept Dodge in check over the next three innings, but the Saints offense couldn't find a way to get them back into the game.

Seward had long baserunners in the 3rd, 4th, and 5th innings, but couldn't get a runner past first base as they remained behind 6-0. Seward finally got on the board in the bottom of the 6th when Francisco Bolanos walked to start the Saints half of the inning and later scored on an RBI double from Bryson Allen to make it 6-1. Dodge came right back though and used a Seward error to vault into a two run 7th inning to extend their lead to 8-1. Singles from Bolanos and Jake Fuller in the 8th in front of a sac fly off the bat of Allen gave the Saints their second run of the game to make it 8-2, but that is all that the Seward offense would muster as Dodge City went on to win 8-2.

Bryson Allen and Alex Scanlan combined for 5 of the Saints 7 hits in the loss as Allen was 3 for 3 with 2 RBI's and Scanlan finished 2 for 4. Garret Smith suffered the loss on the mound for the Saints, lasting just 1-plus inning and yielding 3 runs on 2 hits and 3 walks. Hall and Johnny Griffith were the only two Seward pitchers that were unscored upon on the day as Hall went 4 scoreless, allowing just 1 hit while striking out 4 and Griffith finished the game up on the hill with 2 scoreless innings of 2 hit ball. The Saints emptied their bench in the game, playing all 18 active players in contest.

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