



The Bee Jays may have started playing before June, but for some of us the season doesn't start soon enough.

Those who have grown up in Liberal know the Bee Jays are right up there with apple pie and Chevrolet. From Fairgrounds Park to Brent Gould Field, a summer's evening was not complete until you headed to the ballpark to watch the Bee Jays.

Even if it is only one summer, these players are a part of our community. They wear the home jerseys that a host of big leaguers shared. Folks like Mike Hargrove, Hunter Pence and Ian Kinsler just to name a few.

**4<sup>th</sup>**  
**& GOAL**



EARL WATT

They come here in a quest to make it to the majors, to improve their game, and they could have picked hundreds of similar programs across the country.

But our program is different, and it is because of the consistent drive from the community and the Bee Jay board.

Hargrove shared the story about seeing the "Home of the Bee Jays" sign on the south side of town when his family would travel to Liberal from Perryton.

As a kid, I, too, took pride in seeing our "National Champions" sign. Someone had to make the investment in that sign and put it up, and it brought a sense of pride and success to the community.

That commitment continues today.

In 2010, the Bee Jays captured another national title, the fifth in the storied past of the program. No, these players aren't from Liberal any more than the Cubs are from Chicago or the Cowboys are from Dallas.

But they come here and wear the powder blue and red to become better at what they do, and they inspire our community at the same time.

Our children will watch these players as though they are already pros. They will get their autographs and hope for a high five or even the chance to speak to them.

For our youth, these players are larger than life, and bringing that to our community each summer provides the motivation for our youth to push themselves to attain excellence at what

they do, whether it is baseball or something else.

Our community also expects a quality performance on the field, which is an added fuel for the team to succeed.

It is our summer fling, and some of these players will get their shot in the majors. But we knew them, and watched them, in Liberal first.