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By EARL WATT

- Leader & Times

Walks can come back to haunt you never meant more than it did Friday night at Brent Gould Field.

The Derby Twins took advantage of eight free bases and two beaned batters to score five runs on only two hits in the first three innings, and Derby's pitching staff was able to make it stick in a 5-2 Bee Jay loss.

The Bee Jays outhit Derby 8-6, but Justin Schnedler struggled in the early innings, allowing Derby to get base runner without the benefit of a hit, and with runners loading the bases the Twins were able to get a double that cleared the bases in the second inning and gave the Twins a 3-0 lead.

The situation repeated in the third inning, but only two Twins were able to score, and the Bee Jays trailed 5-0 even though Derby only had two hits.

Bee Jay manager Brandon Kitch made a switch on the mound, and the scoring ended the rest of the night for the Twins.

But Liberal struggled to push runs across the plate.

The Bee Jays started the fourth, fifth and sixth innings with singles, but none of them were able to score.

Two of those runners were caught trying to steal second, and the other was part of a double play.

Liberal loaded the bases in the fifth inning but came away without a run when Tanner Rainey had a rare strike out with runners in scoring position.

The Bee Jays broke through in the seventh when Alec Isaac hit a home run with a runner on base over the miniature monster 15-foot high fence to cut the lead to 5-2.

Liberal had a chance in the bottom of the ninth to score when they again loaded the bases with two outs, but Darian McLemore struck out to leave all three stranded and hand Derby the 5-2 win.

“We started off slow,” Kitch said. “We didn’t get a quality start out of Schnedler.”

But Kitch was pleased that despite the slow start the Bee Jays were able to stop the bleeding and continue to attempt a rally.

“We outscored them the last four innings,” he said. “Our guys competed. I told them to give themselves a chance in the ninth, and they did.”

That chance disappeared with the final strike-out, but the Bee Jays had the tying run on base, and the winning run at the plate when the final out was recorded.

“Guys were pulling off the ball a little bit,” Kitch said. “They had a couple good arms on the mound. They pitched around some of our better hitters. They kept our lead-off guys off base.”

Starting in a 5-0 hole in the first three innings was not part of Kitch’s recipe for success, and he reiterated the importance of being effective from the beginning.

“It all starts on the mound,” Kitch said. “You get a quality start. We had them at two outs, and we didn’t get out of the inning. When we gave up the three runs, we had a 1-2 count on the batter, then we hit him, then we fall behind on the next two batters and then have to throw one right down the middle.”

The Bee Jays didn’t lose any ground in the Jayhawk League since Hays was able to rally from an early deficit and force extra innings with league-leading El Dorado by scoring two in the bottom of the ninth and getting a walk-off home run in the 11th inning.

Tyler Buss took the mound for Liberal Saturday against Derby.

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