

Bee Jays sting A's in 15-0 shutout

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By EARL WATT

• Leader & Times

Before most Bee Jay fans had found their seats, Liberal already had a 7-0 lead and went on to dominate the non-league match-up with Dodge City at Brent Gould Field Tuesday, 15-0.

Liberal scored seven runs in the first inning including four runs on one play when Seth Stevens hit a single to right field with the bases loaded. The ball rolled under the right fielder's glove and all the way to the wall, and all four Bee Jays scored on the play for a 5-0 lead. The Bee Jays added two more runs before the inning was over.

While the Bee Jay batters were delivering quality at-bats, earning hits or walks, Justin Bethard was keeping the bases clear of A's. Bethard pitched six innings and did not allow a run.

Strong starting pitching has been the key for Bee Jay manager Brandon Kitch.

"We got a quality start out of Bethard, and the bullpen came in a continued the shutout," Kitch

said.

The early lead appeared to deflate the A's, and they struggled to get runners on base all night.

The A's also struggled in the field, committing five errors that helped Liberal build the huge lead.

By the time the final out was recorded, Dodge City only had three hits while the Bee Jays had 12 hits and 15 runs.

"We have the offense to put up big numbers like we did tonight," Kitch said. "Our pitchers are good enough to shut people out. Derby did a good job against us over the weekend. They hit the ball and couldn't miss. We talked about competing and staying in ball games."

Several players were able to show Kitch that when their number is called, they can contribute.

"Now I know I have guys on the bench that I can have confidence to come in and get base hits or home runs," Kitch said. "I talked to them about having quality at-bats. Drew Umbro did a great job for us. He may have to come off the bench later. (Cody) Tillotson comes in and gets a double off the wall. There are all kinds of things we can do to complement our guys on the mound."

The Bee Jays (8-3, 4-3) will travel to El Dorado (6-3, 3-3) Thursday for a three-game series with the Broncos, take a day off, and then head to Hays (7-1, 4-1) for a two-game set. So far, the Bee Jays have been on two short road trips to Dodge City (2-6, 0-4), and neither were overnight.

"This doesn't change our approach at all," Kitch said. "We have to stay healthy. We have a long road to go. The pieces are starting to fall together. More pitchers coming in. That will solidify our pitching depth, and we are trying to get another position player in. On the road they need to get a good night's sleep and understand what is at stake, and that is winning."

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To watch the game [CLICK HERE](#) .