



By EARL WATT

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After the Bee Jays knocked off Hays Wednesday 6-2, Larks manager Frank Leo told Bee jay manager Brandon Kitch that the Bee jays were the best team they've faced.

Why wouldn't he?

Hays only has two losses all year, and both have come to the Bee Jays.

Both times Tyler Wiedenfeld was the starting pitcher, and he did not allow a hit for five innings, and in the top of the six the Bee Jays broke through for five runs.

"That is what we needed, a good start out of him," Kitch said. "It was a very gutsy and great performance. It is what we needed as a team."

The five runs in the sixth inning were considered unearned, but Kitch believed that some of the errors should have been hits.

“The balls we hit last night were just out of their reach and kicking off gloves,” Kitch said. “The ball (Seth) Stevens hit up the middle kicked off second baseman’s glove. It was scorched. They gave it an error. I give that a hit. The guy had a jump and it kicked off the glove.”

The key was making the defense execute, and by putting the ball in play, the Bee jays put the pressure on the Hays defense in the sixth.

“Their guys had to dive, and it bounced off their glove,” Kitch said. “Those are hits. We are at their park, so they score it. We put it in play and made things happen.”

Hays cut in to the lead in the bottom of the sixth by pushing a run across to cut the lead to 5-1, but the Bee Jays added it right back in the seventh.

Hays pushed one more across the plate in the bottom of the eighth, but the Bee jay bullpen was able to preserve the lead and get the 6-2 win.

“I have been telling the guys in this mini slump, ‘we are good,’” Kitch said. “‘You have to believe you are good.’ We can hit, play defense, we can pitch.”

Liberal will host Wellington over the weekend, and it is a chance to crawl up the standings. The Bee Jays are only a half game out of third, and with 20 league games remaining, a run could flip the standings in a hurry.

“We are seeing a progression,” Kitch said. “Our guys see it. They are getting tired of getting punched, and they punched back. I think we are a couple players better than last year’s team, but our guys have to compete all nine innings.”