



By EARL WATT

- Leader & Times

With a stiff wind blowing out to left field Friday night at Brent Gould Field, two Bee Jays hit three home runs to lead Liberal to a 10-5 win over the Wellington Heat.

Liberal fell behind early 2-0 before a home run by Dylan Delso over the center field mini monster in the bottom of the first tied the game.

“It was nice to start to answer back,” Delso said. “That shows the pitcher you are behind him. A home run, a double — RBIs are what count.”

Delso received a fast ball away, and he sent it over the 15-foot wall in center.

Austin Murphy added another home run in the fifth to center field that gave the Bee Jays a 7-3 lead.

Murphy hit his second home run in the seventh inning to give the Bee Jays an 8-5 lead.

Lewis Guilbeau added an RBI double in the eighth inning, and Murphy walked with the bases loaded to add the final RBI of the night for the 10-5 win.

Chad Nack gave up two runs in the top of the first but was able to stop the damage, and Tyler Buss provided solid middle relief.

Lefty Trevor Lundgrin finished the game on the mound for the Bee Jays to preserve the win.

The win was the second in a row for the Bee Jays after dropping four straight on a tough road trip.

“You can only get punched in the face so many times before you start punching back,” Liberal manager Brandon Kitch said. “We got tired of getting punched in the face. We got a good start out of Chad (Nack), not great, but the bullpen put up some zeroes and that really helped.”

Liberal has struggled with falling behind early during the four-game losing streak, and Wellington scored the first two runs Friday. But Delso’s home run tied the game in the first.

“That’s huge,” Kitch said. “We have the offense to do just that. We had the right guys at the plate. Dylan (Delso) squared one up. I knew we could do it. It gives hitters confidence when the wind is blowing 40 miles an hour.”

Struggling on the field, the Bee Jay defense committed five errors, but with the loss of shortstop Tanner Dearman to injury, Kitch had to adjust his line-up and bring outfielder Tanner Rainey on to the dirt.

“He hasn’t played shortstop since junior high,” Kitch said. “Tanner gives us the best shot of keeping the ball on the infield. He is doing the best he can. Until we get someone else he will have to be our guy.”

Despite the fielding challenges, the Bee Jays were able to keep the Heat scoring to only five runs, while Kitch believed his offense could do better.

“A lot of the offensive side is about confidence,” he said. “We can put up 10-15 runs a night. I don’t think anyone has an arm that can shut us down offensively. We can make up some ground these next seven league games.”

And that is what Kitch passed on to his players.

“Kitch told us we need to sweep, which we want to win every game,” Delso said. “It’s not the beginning of the season any more.□ You either separate or fall into the pack. We want to separate.”