

Defense improves for Bee Jays, win series over Derby

Monday, 01 July 2013 10:51

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By EARL WATT

• Leader & Times

When the Derby Twins visited Liberal earlier this summer, they were able to take two out of three from Liberal.

Over the weekend, the Bee Jays returned the favor.

The Bee Jays were able to win their first Jayhawk League three-game series of the year, taking two out of three games from the Derby Twins, and finishing the season series with the Twins at 3-3.

All three games were settled by one run.

After winning Friday's game 2-1, Liberal had to fight off a stiff challenge in the bottom of the

eightth by Derby Saturday and score one run in the top of the ninth for a 5-4 win.

The Twins had runners at first and third with no outs in the bottom of the eighth, but reliever Trevor Lundgrin came in and did not allow a run to score.

The Bee Jays scored one run in the top of the ninth, and again the bullpen stepped up in the bottom of the ninth to keep the Twins scoreless.

“He bulldogged it,” Liberal manager Brandon Kitch said of Lundgrin’s performance. “He won’t overpower you with velocity. He will hit his spots and trick you. He slammed the door shut.”

In the final game of the series, the Twins struggled to score, but so did the Bee Jays.

For the first time this season, the Bee Jays were shut out in a 1-0 loss.

Neither team scored in the first nine innings, and Justin Bethard dominated for nine innings. But the Twins were able to push a run across in the bottom of the 10th against standout Chad Nack for the win to avoid the sweep.

“It’s hard to beat someone three times,” Kitch said. “That’s baseball.”

While the Bee Jays were able to win the series, and make up a game on first-place Hays, they slipped a game behind Wellington for third. The Heat won both games against league-leading Hays over the weekend and will face the Larks again today.

The Bee Jays are only a half-game behind the Twins for fourth.

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Liberal will not return to league play until July 4 when the Bee Jays host Dodge City. Liberal still has five games to play against the last-place team in the league and four against Hays.

Liberal will step out of league play today and Tuesday and will host the Owasso Angels, a team the Bee Jays defeated three times earlier this season.

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