

Schedule favors Bee Jays in 2nd half

Tuesday, 02 July 2013 10:26

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With 15 league games to be played, the bad news for the Bee Jays is they are five games behind Hays.

That is not impossible to make up, and the schedule seems to be aligned for the Bee Jays to make a strong run to finish the season.

History has shown that the Bee Jays are a second half team.

4th
& GOAL



EARL WATT

For years, the Bee Jays would get off to a slow start only to put together a string of victories late and head to Wichita for the NBC World Series with momentum.

That isn't exactly what happened this year. In the non-league games, the Bee Jays reeled off big numbers.

So far, the Bee jays have not lost a non-league game.

But in the Jayhawk League, the Bee Jays suffered a series sweep by El Dorado on the road, all three by one run, and the Bee Jays slipped to 4-6 in league play and have been looking uphill ever since.

The Bee Jays split a tow-game set with Hays and then returned to Brent Gould Field only to drop two out of three to Wellington.

And what appeared to be a runaway season for the Larks has become a battle at the top after Hays suffered a three-game setback to the Heat.

Liberal sits at 8-11 in fifth place, a position unfamiliar with the locals.

But the remaining schedule is lined up for the Bee Jays to reverse their trend in the second half of the league season.

And they will have to if they want to reach the NBC World Series.

Due to changes in the format of the tournament, only the top three teams from the Jayhawk League will be invited. There are basically no more wildcards, no more last-minute invitations. It's top three or nothing.

Liberal will start with a very winnable game July 4 against Dodge City.

There will be a huge crowd at Brent Gould Field, and the A's are currently in last place.

That will be followed by a two-game home set with the Larks.

A split keeps the Bee Jays respectable, but win them both and Liberal could be within two or

three games of first place.

July 7 is a one-game trip to Dodge City, and another winnable game.

If the Bee Jays win their next four, it will almost assure them a return to the top three of the league and make the race for the league title completely up for grabs.

That is not impossible — win four in a row.

The toughest challenge lies in the three games at Wellington. The Heat just swept first-place Hays, and they have a 2-1 advantage over the Bee Jays.

The Bee Jays will need to even up the season total by taking two out of three at Wellington.

At the same time, Hays will be at El Dorado, and those two series will play a major factor in the top four standings.

If Liberal can leave Wellington with a 2-1 series win, they travel to Hays for a two-game set and will need a split with the Larks. If that happens, the Bee Jays will have a 5-3 advantage over the Larks for the season.

Liberal then plays a home-and-home two-game set with Dodge City, and they should come out of that pair of games in good shape.

That leaves a three-game home set with the Broncos, a team that swept the Bee Jays in three one-run games. By then, the Bee Jays and Broncos might be playing for a spot at the national tournament, or if Hays continues to falter, they could be playing for the Jayhawk League title.

Liberal will then finish up with a single league game with Dodge City.

It is clearly a road that the Bee jays can have success, but they can not lose the games they are supposed to win, and they will have to find the bats to match the resurgent pitching that developed at Derby.

There is a lot of baseball yet to be played, and if ever there was a schedule to allow a team to make a comeback, the Bee Jays have it.

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