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By ROY ALLEN

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The Seward County Saints and Frank Phillips Plainsmen locked up Wednesday afternoon at Brent Gould Field in Liberal in a good old fashioned shootout on the baseball diamond. In a game that featured 32 hits and 35 runs, it was Seward holding on for an 18-17 victory over the Plainsmen to improve to 18-11 overall on the year.

It didn't take long for the scoring to get started. The first four Frank Phillips hitters of the top half of the first inning reached base, including a two-run home run and an RBI double to quickly put the Plainsmen up 4-0 before the Saints even had a chance to hit.

The Saints got a run back in the bottom half of the inning on a sacrifice fly from Brent Williams to make it 4-1, and Seward escaped a jam in the top of the second when pitcher Chris Juracek left the bases loaded with Plainsmen to keep the score 4-1.

A two-out Seward rally drew the Saints to within one in the second when Alex White ripped an RBI double and John Solberg followed with a single to make it a 4-3 game.

Frank Phillips once again loaded the bases in the top half of the third on just one hit, but for the second straight inning the Plainsmen were unable to push a run across, and this time the Saints took full advantage.

Williams and Kevin Connolly singled to start the Seward half of the third and a one-out double from Hayden Killam scored them both to put the Saints on top for the first time, 5-4. After a two-out walk to White to load the bases later in the inning, Solberg earned his second RBI of the

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game, drawing a seven-pitch walk to put the Saints up 6-4. Down to their last strike in the inning freshman outfielder Brandon Urquizo smacked a bases-clearing double to score three runs, and Seward was in front 9-4 at the end of three.

Seward pitching dealt its first zero in the top half of the fourth, and the Saints tacked onto their lead when Williams left the yard with a solo home run to put the Saints on top 10-4 after four.

The Saints big lead didn't last long. Their bullpen imploded in the fifth. Seward pitching allowed six runs in the top half of the fifth aided by three free passes and an error on the mound to allow Frank Phillips to tie the game at 10.

Once again the Saints offense picked up the pitching. After a pair of walks loaded the bases for Seward with one out, Williams just missed his second home run in as many innings, clearing the bases with a double to put Seward back in front 13-10. Williams later came around to score on a double from Max Lusk and after five Seward led 14-10.

Grant Glaze worked a rare 1-2-3 inning for the Saints in the sixth, and the offense built onto their lead in the bottom half of the frame.

For the third straight inning, the Saints loaded the bases early in the inning and productive outs from Solberg and Urquizo added two runs to take a 16-10 lead.

Just when it looked like the Saints had regained order and control, Frank Phillips responded with five runs in the top half of the seventh inning, once again helped out by wildness on the mound by Seward to cut it to a one-run game, 16-15.

A Frank Phillips error in the bottom of the eighth gave the Saints two insurance runs to make it 18-15, and Seward would need both.

A one-out Seward error in the ninth extended what would have been a 1-2-3 inning and a pair of

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two-out RBI singles drew the Plainsmen to within one once again at 18-17. For the second time in the week, Adam Guay was called upon to close, and that he did with his second two-out save in five days to seal a wild 18-17 win for Seward County.

Frank Phillips outhit the Saints 17-15 in the game, and Seward committed five errors to the Plainsmen's two. There were 17 walks between the two teams and Seward pitchers hit five Frank Phillips batters.

Williams had a huge day at the plate for Seward, going 3-for-4 with five RBIs and missing the cycle by just a triple for the second time this season. Urquizo finished 2-for-4 with two doubles and four RBIs. In spot starts, Solberg and Killam both performed well as each finished with two hits, two runs scored, and the two combined for five RBIs in the win. Thomas Garland earned the win for Seward out of the bullpen in another wild twist to this one. Garland allowed four hits and three runs in just 2/3 innings of work, but statistically was still credited for the victory. Guay earned his second save of the year, working just one batter for the save.

The Saints improved to 18-11 overall while Frank Phillips dropped to 12-9.

Seward returns to Jayhawk West action this weekend in a huge conference series against the rival Hutchinson Blue Dragons at Hobart Detter Field. The Saints and Dragons enter the Saturday/Sunday series tied atop the conference standings. Seward is 8-4, and Hutchinson is 6-2.

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