By EARL WATT

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Any Jayhawk fan for the past 25 years will remember the 1988 season that ended with the national championship.

Earlier that year, the Jayhawks lost twice to the Sooners, the team they eventually defeated in the national championship game.

I couldn’t help but think of that season when Liberal faced Haysville Tuesday in the NBC World Series in Wichita.

Earlier this season, Haysville defeated the Bee Jays four out of six times and won the Jayhawk League championship.

But there is a difference between a conference game in the first two weeks of the season and an NBC match-up between the final two undefeated teams in the tournament.

While the offense was all that was expected, the two teams combined for nine fielding errors, not exactly what is expected from the two titans of the tournament.

Tht reminded of a saying form legendary Lady Saints basketball coach Jim Littell — “At this

point you don’t grade them. You win and move on.”

Finding a way to win might define the Bee Jays run to this point in the tournament, including an improbable ninth inning rally against the St. Joseph Mustangs Sunday, ad regaining the lead twice after losing it to Haysville Tuesday.

Coach John Martin says it often, “There is no quit in this team.”

What’s more, the Bee Jays believe it.

There isn’t a feeling that the Bee Jays are some dominating team that can’t be touched.

To the contrary, they play like an underdog team that believes no challenge is too big, no opponent too strong.

As the Jayhawks faced Vanderbilt, Duke and Kansas State on their way to the title game, the Bee Jays so far have faced the Santa Barbara Foresters and Haysville Heat, two teams with recent success at the NBC World Series.

And much like the Jayhawks of 1988, the Bee Jays have the pedigree to reach the finalists, but the question remains — can they win it all?

By Friday we will all know.

Perhaps there are some words of inspiration for the Bee Jays, the same words shared by Larry Brown to his upstart Jayhawks in 1988 before the national championship: “Don’t be afraid of winning.”