

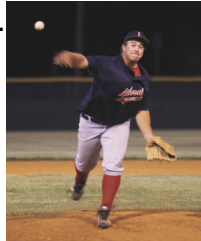
By EARL WATT

• Leader & Times

Liberal was host to eight teams in a 19-and-under tournament during the weekend, and the Liberal Bulldogs turned in a 4-0 performance to earn the championship.

Liberal started with a 10-4 win over Minneola.

Michael Begley took the mound in the second game of pool play and tossed all seven innings in a 9-2 win over Ulysses in pool play.



Liberal advanced to the championship bracket Sunday and faced an all-star squad with players from Scott City, Holcomb and Sublette. Stevie Lira earned the win on the mound with a 12-7 victory that sent the Bulldogs to the championship game, and after Hooker, Okla., scored two runs in the seventh against Hugoton to rally for a 6-5 win to advance to the title game.

The Bulldogs survived a late scare from the Horny Toads to earn a 5-4 championship win.

Law Greiner started the title tilt, and Timothy Fitzgerald came on in relief in the seventh with two

runners on base and was able to record the two final outs without giving up a run.

“We played pretty well,” Bulldog coach Eric Olmstead said. “Everyone was running out of pitching at that point.”

Greiner caught the first three games for the Bulldogs and had a solid outing behind the plate while Stevie Lira had a solid performance at shortstop. Brandon Terrazas handled the duties behind the plate in the championship.

Fitzgerald led the team at the plate as well as earning the championship save.

While the Bulldogs were earning a tournament win in the senior division, the Rattler 14-and-under team was busy winning the 15-and-under eight-team tournament, and all three fields were busy all weekend.

“I can’t thank the parents and umpires, ground crew, and volunteers enough for helping,” Olmstead said. “We didn’t think it would get that big. Everyone wants to come back. We are considering two separate weekends next year, and maybe another tournament in July this year.”

The number of people attending the tournament forced the parking lot to be expanded.

“We had to move some poles,” Olmstead said. “This was great for Liberal.”

The Bulldogs are now 6-3 on the summer and will play at 6 p.m. Tuesday at the Liberal Baseball Complex.

Bulldogs take tourney title

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