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By EARL WATT

• Leader & Times

After winning the close ones to reach the championship, the Liberal Bulldogs ran out of gas at the Dodge City Rangers senior baseball tournament over the weekend.

Liberal started with a 15-4 win over Lamar, Colo. George Fitzgerald pitched five innings in the win.



Michael Begley took the mound against Valley Center, and the Bulldogs earned a 4-3 win.

Timothy Fitzgerald helped break a 3-3 tie in the bottom of the seventh with a triple, and Stevie Lira followed with a walk-off RBI single.

The Bulldogs faced Hooker in the semi-finals and knocked off the Horny Toads 3-2.

Lira pitched six innings, and George Fitzgerald earned the save.

“Jacob Mettlen caught a line drive at second to start a double play and caught another to end the game,” Liberal coach Eric Olmstead said.

In the championship game, the Bulldogs gave up six runs in the second inning and struggled to throw strikes in an 11-0 loss.

Lorenzo Pando had Liberal's only hit in the game.

"We played extremely well at times," Olmstead said. "We were a little inconsistent defensively. We hit the ball well against Lamar. We were rising to the level of competition, and then we laid an egg against Dodge."

Liberal 12-9 on the season and will travel to Holcomb to face Scott City today. Thursday the Bulldogs will travel to Hugoton.

After the long road trips, Liberal will return to the Liberal Baseball Complex Monday to host Scott City to open a three-game homestand for the week. Other opponents include Woodward and Hooker.

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