

## Bulldogs get 'weird' split with River Rats

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By EARL WATT

• Leader & Times

The Liberal Bulldogs had no problem scoring runs in a double header with the River Rats Monday at the Liberal Baseball Complex. Unfortunately, they had trouble maintaining a 10-run lead in the second game and ended with a split.

The Bulldogs won the first game 10-3 in a game that was called after five innings due to the eight-after-five run rule.

Stevie Lira started on the mound for the Bulldogs and had three solid innings. Brandon Terrazas came in relief and finished off the River Rats after the Bulldogs built an 11-0 lead in the first two innings.

“Scott City got off to a rough start,” Liberal coach Eric Olmstead said. “They didn’t play well at all.”

The River Rats committed six errors, and the Bulldogs were able to convert those mistakes into

runs. The River Rats also walked a number of Bulldogs.

"They kind of gave it to us," Olmstead said.

Both teams ended the game with four hits, but it the Bulldogs were able to capitalize on the walks and errors to help jump out to the early lead and preserve the win.

The offense continued for the Bulldogs in Game 2 early, but the defense faltered late in a 16-14 loss.

Liberal scored 10 runs in the first inning, and it appeared the Bulldogs were on their way to a sweep.

But that is when the game got "weird" according to Olmstead.

"That was the worst baseball game I've been associated with, and the weirdest," he said.

The Bulldogs forced the River Rats to make two pitching changes in the first inning.

With Timothy Fitzgerald on the mound, the Bulldogs were posed to protect the 10-0 lead, but Olmstead needed to save Fitzgerald for games later in the week, and after two innings he pulled him off the mound.

That was probably the best move for the River Rats who started to ship away at the lead, and right before the 10-run rule in the fourth inning kicked in, the River Rats scored three unearned runs to cut the Bulldogs lead to 13-5 and kept the game alive.

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"Our defense was shaky," Olmstead said. "They continued to score, and we couldn't play defense. We had trouble with routine ground balls, they got base hit over our heads. We couldn't do anything."

The River Rats scored six more in the sixth to cut Liberal's lead to 14-13.

"The wheels completely fell off," he said. "We had a lack of focus and poor base running. We threw strikes, that was all we did good."

The Bulldogs still had a chance to put the game away in the fourth and fifth, but the River Rattlers never went away.

"Give them credit," Olmstead said. "They didn't quit. They should have laid down, but they kept playing."

Abigail Gonzales hit an in-the-park home run for River Rats, and two more unearned runs in the seventh erased Liberal's lead.

The Bulldogs had a runner on first in the bottom of the seventh but could not score and lost 16-14.

"I think we had close to 10 errors in Game 2," Olmstead said.

The split made Liberal 14-13 on the season, and they will host the Woodward Travelers at 6 p.m. today in another double header.

So far, the Bulldogs are 2-3 against the Travelers this summer.

"They are good competition," Olmstead said. "We are glad to paly them. Hopefully we will raise our level."

After the debacle in Game 2 against the River Rats, Olmstead is glad for the opportunity to get his team back on the diamond.

"I told our kids this will remind you to stay focused," Olmstead said. "I am looking forward to tonight."

The first pitch is scheduled for 6 p.m.

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