

By EARL WATT

• Leader & Times

The long ball that gave the Bee Jays an 8-4 come-from-behind win Thursday night in Dodge City never showed up Friday night at Brent Gould Field.

The Bee Jays lost the Fourth of July clash with the A's by the same score, 8-4 after holding a 4-1 lead.

Dodge City manufactured a run in the first inning with three straight hits, but JB Olson was able to avoid a big inning.

The first seven Bee Jays batters were retired in order, and the first four outs came with grounders and a line shot, all to the A's second baseman.

The Bee Jays finally earned a hit in the third inning with a bunt, and it started a three-run frame for Liberal.

The Bee Jays added another run in the fourth to take the 4-1 lead against A's pitcher Jagger Harjo, but Liberal did not score again the rest of the night.

Olson was roughed up in the top of the third and was credited with three A's runs while Chad Nack came in to try to minimize the damage.

But Nack, too, was battered in the seventh when the A's scored four runs, three of them with two outs.

After allowing the Bee Jays to score four runs in the first four innings, Harjo settled down and kept the Bee Jays off the scoreboard for the next five innings.

Liberal never mounted a comeback, and the Bee Jays dropped the Fourth of July contest 8-4.

The Bee Jays were also outhit 16-10.

"They were better than us today," Liberal coach Adam Anderson said. "Their pitcher was tough. He never gave in. He battled and battled and battled. They had timely hitting and played solid defense, and when you go across the board, they were better than us tonight. That happens. You run into a team that has a guy on the mound hooking it up for them and they played well behind him."

The wind was blowing out to left, and after hitting four home runs in Dodge City, the Bee Jays couldn't push one out of the Brent Gould Field Friday.

"With the way the wind was blowing you would expect the ball to fly," Anderson said. "But with the way their pitcher was keeping the ball down in the zone, it's tough to elevate a ball like that. We hit a couple balls hard, and their center fielder was playing deep and he ran them down. Their pitcher did a good job not allowing us to get one out of the yard."

Both sides struggled with called third strikes.

"The umpire was consistent all night," Anderson said. "It was both sides. Both teams had to deal with the zone. You have to make an adjustment."

The A's may have done that by not waiting for deep counts.

"Their hitters were attacking early in the count and saw pitches up," Anderson said. "We have struggled with that. When they are up, they will get hit. They are good hitters."

With only 13 league games to go, the Bee Jays are running out of room to make the top three spots and a guaranteed spot in the NBC World Series. However, the Bee Jays were invited after last year's fourth place finish.

"You have to take it one game at a time," Anderson said. "Win one tomorrow and then the next day. You try to win one game at a time and go from there."