

SPORTS

CONGRATULATIONS



Photos by ANDY HALL / Palatka Daily News

Above, SJR State's Wes Weeks (2) is congratulated by Alec Dowell (20), Nick Koslowski (44) and Omar Villaman after a home run. Below, FSCJ's Cale Gibson steals second as the throw short-hops Villaman.

Riding the Wave

St. Johns hits four home runs in 12-4 conference win

BY ANDY HALL
Palatka Daily News

The ball carried well Wednesday at Tindall Field, even though it wasn't particularly windy.

Nothing like a little muscle to make sure the ball carries all the way out of the yard.

St. Johns River State College muscled it out four times, highlighted by Nick Owens' tiebreaking three-run shot in the sixth inning, in a 12-4 defeat of Florida State College-Jacksonville.

Wes Weeks, Hunter Alexander and Cole Perry had the other St. Johns homers – the Blue Wave hit two – as the Vikings improved to 35-7 overall and 13-3 in the Mid-Florida Conference. They remain a game behind Santa Fe (33-5, 14-2), which beat Seminole State on Wednesday.

"The ball was carrying today, but Hunter's (home run) is a no-doubter, Owens' is a no-doubter, Weeks' is a no-doubter," said SJR State coach Ross Jones.

FSCJ dropped to 10-25 and



5-11, but didn't go willingly, erasing a 4-1 deficit with a two-run homer by Walker Bailey in the fifth inning and a solo shot by Zach Smith in the sixth.

"They compete. They battle," Jones said.

The Vikings battled back.

Matthew Rhodes began the bottom of the sixth with his second hit of the day, a single between third and short.

Alexander's single got him to third, but Alexander was thrown out trying for a double. With two out and first base open, Dustin Fornari went 1-0 to Perry, who had homered in his last at-bat, so the Blue Wave elected to give him an intentional pass for Owens, the No. 9 batter and 0-for-2 to that point.

Vikings

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"They played the percentages," said Jones of the decision to walk Perry.

It didn't work out.

Owens homered down the line in left, a three-run shot that made it 7-4. Owens would come back with a two-run single in a five-run seventh inning, capping a 2-for-4, five-RBI day. "You get five RBI out of the nine hole and you expect to have a pretty good day," Jones said.

Daniel Williams (6-2) pitched the first six innings for the win, his second of the week after having gotten one in relief Sunday against Pasco-Hernando. Williams struck out five, walked two and allowed four runs, three earned. Rhys Pollock, Ryan Ross and Pearson McMahan each threw an inning of scoreless relief.

"Daniel pitched through it and competed for six innings and the bullpen did its job," Jones said.

Owens, Weeks, Rhodes, Alexander and Omar Villaman had two hits apiece in a 13-hit offense. The others were Perry's home run, a two-run single by Jimbo Reemsnyder and a single by Alec Dowell.

Jones was encouraged by the performance of Alexander, who began the season batting third but has moved down the order along with his batting average.

"I'm seeing really good things from Hunter Alexander. He's starting to see it. We need big things from him the rest of the way," Jones said.

The Vikings cap a three-game series with FSCJ Friday in Jacksonville before heading to Santa Fe on Saturday.

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