

SPORTS

SJR STATE BASEBALL

A blowout and a squeaker in a sweep

BY ANDY HALL
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The St. Johns River State College baseball team displayed the killer instinct coach Ross Jones wants in the first half of a Sunday doubleheader, then finished the sweep with some of last season's flair for the dramatic.

The Vikings mashed Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College 12-3 in the first game of 2017 at Tindall Field and rallied for two runs in the

bottom of the seventh in a 4-3 victory in the second game. The sweep left SJR State 3-1 for its season-opening series with the Tifton, Ga., team with another Georgia club, the Thomas University junior varsity, due in town for another doubleheader today.

Josh Broughton lined a two-out, bases-loaded single to center, scoring Kerry Carpenter with the winning run in the seventh inning of the second game.

Down 3-2, the Vikings loaded the bases on Nick Owens' bloop double, a

walk to Carpenter and a single by Justin Smith. The Stallions' Tristan Daugherty (0-2) struck out Cole Perry before giving way to Drew Martens, who walked Nick Koslowski with a 3-2 delivery, sending Owens home with the tying run. Martens struck out Michael Koenig, but then Broughton punched a 1-0 pitch into center.

The hit made a winner of Zach Greene (2-0), who inherited a runner at second with one out in the sixth and retired every batter he faced,

striking out four. Zach Blankenship got the first out in the sixth in relief of sophomore starter Trevin Eubanks, who went five innings in by far his longest stretch with St. Johns. He opened with three scoreless innings, striking out five straight in one stretch, before giving up a solo home run to Josh Jackson in the fourth – Jackson's third of the series – and two runs in the fifth on two hits, a sacrifice bunt and two errors.

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"Trevin threw the ball really well, made a couple of mistakes, kept his pitch count down," Jones said. "Both starters (Eubanks and Clay Helvey, who got the win in the opener) gave us a chance. Our bullpen was good. We defended the field a whole lot better than we did Friday (in a split at ABAC). Brian Moore made a couple of great plays at second base."

Broughton, Carpenter and Smith had two hits apiece in the second game. Smith reached base in each plate appearance in both of Friday's games and in Sunday's opener before he was retired for the first time this season on a groundout in the third inning of the second game.

Doubles by Owens and Perry rounded out the St. Johns offense in the second game.

Soctt Kobos' two-run double was the big blow in a four-run first inning in the first game. Kobos and Jimbo Reemsnyder homered in a 13-hit offense. SJR State led 12-1 through five innings.

"The biggest difference today was our approach at the plate," said Jones, whose team didn't get the bats going Friday until the last three innings of the second game. "They didn't change their pitching patterns."

Kobos, Perry and Koenig each went 2-3, Koenig with three RBI and Kobos with two in the first game. Carpenter and Reemsnyder were both 2-4. Moore had an RBI double and Smith and Owens both singled.

Helvey (1-0), David Pattinson and Jaison Heard combined for seven strikeouts and three walks.