

# SPORTS

## Vikings rock Raiders in MFC opener

### Smith, Perry homer in 15-2 beatdown

BY ANDY HALL  
*Palatka Daily News*

The St. Johns River State College baseball team got pretty much everything it could have wanted out of its Mid-Florida Conference opener Wednesday night:

- A win.
- Five scoreless innings out of its

No. 1 starter, who had been struggling.

- Clutch hitting.
- Error-free defense.
- And a win. The bit about winning cannot be emphasized too strongly for a team playing .500 ball over the last two weeks.

"It's so important to get that first series, that first conference win," said SJR State coach Ross Jones, whose club throttled Seminole State 15-2 at Tindall Field in a game shortened to seven innings on the 10-run rule.

"We needed that."

The Vikings improved to 16-9 overall, 1-0 in the MFC while dropping Seminole to 12-11 and 0-1. The same teams meet Friday at Seminole and the three-game series ends Saturday back at Tindall Field.

It had been a struggle for McMahan much of the season and for St Johns hitters in the last few weeks. But McMahan (1-2), a Mississippi State signee who led the team with six wins in 2016, held the Raiders to three hits over the first five innings, striking out seven, walking four and hitting one. McMahan pitched his way out of jams

in the third and fourth innings and was rewarded when the Vikings, already leading 5-0, put up five-spots in both the fifth and sixth innings.

"We got five good innings out of Pearson," said Jones, who pulled him after a leadoff walk in the sixth, SJR State having spent an extended period at the plate the previous half-inning. "He needed a good outing. This was a confidence builder for him."

The hitters boosted their confidence, not to mention their batting averages.

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## Vikings

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Michael Koenig delivered RBI singles in each of his two at-bats and Nick Koslowski looped an opposite-field, two-run single to left at the Vikings built a 5-0 lead through three innings.

They scored five runs in the fifth on singles by Nick Owens, Josh Broughton and Jimmy Goldsmith along with four walks and a sacrifice bunt by Kerry Carpenter. Justin Smith clubbed a three-run homer, Cole Perry a two-run shot in the sixth.

"The difference tonight was the way we competed at the plate," Jones said. "A week, 10 days ago we couldn't buy a two-out hit."

Owens ended up 2-2 with three runs, Koenig 2-4 with two RBI. Smith (1-2) and Koslowski (1-2) each had three RBI. SJR State's other hits were Perry's home run and singles by Carpenter, Goldsmith, Broughton and Clellan Barnes.

Seminole did not get on the board until the seventh inning.

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