

SPORTS

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SATURDAY, MARCH 18, 2017

C SECTION

Santa Fe rallies, then holds off St. Johns

One run separates MFC rivals in 3-game series

Palatka Daily News

They've played three games consuming 32 innings and one run separates the St. Johns River State College and Santa Fe College baseball teams.

"This was the best three-game series I've been a part of in junior college baseball," SJR State coach Ross Jones said.

His Santa Fe counterpart, Johnny Wiggs, may like it better still. His Saints wound up winning the rubber game Friday in Gainesville, taking the lead with a four-run seventh inning and holding on for a 6-4 win after St.

Johns got runners to second and third with one out in the ninth.

Ricky Miranda struck out the last two Vikings for the save as Santa Fe improved to 21-8 overall and 4-2 in the league behind Daytona State (14-10, 7-2), which beat Florida State College-Jacksonville 7-4 Friday. SJR State beat the Saints 7-5 Wednesday on Pablo Cedenó's three-run homer in the

14th inning. Santa Fe won the series opener 1-0 last Saturday.

"Another nail-biter today. That's what we've come to expect in our games with them," Jones said.

In third place for the moment, St. Johns (21-12, 6-3) opens a three-game series at Daytona today. The Vikings

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host Daytona on Monday with a nonconference home game in between Sunday against Morton College of Cicero, Ill.

"Daytona's playing great right now. We've got to move on and we've got three big games against them," Jones said.

The Vikings led 3-0 after four innings on Friday, getting an RBI double from Justin Smith in the third inning and a two-run homer from Jimmy Goldsmith in the third. The Saints scored twice in the fifth.

Trying to protect a 3-2 lead, SJR State starter Clay Helvey (3-2) gave up a single, a walk, a sacrifice bunt and another single to start the seventh and Santa Fe took its first lead. Reliever

Jagger McCoy allowed a triple and a single and the Vikings were in a 6-3 hole before he could get out of the inning.

St. Johns opened the ninth with consecutive singles by Josh Broughton, Scott Kobos and Michael Koenig to pull within 6-4. Koenig and Kobos were on second and third with one out before Miranda closed the door with two strikeouts.

Santa Fe starter Sean Gabel

(4-1) pitched into the eighth for the win.

"The pitching on both sides was tremendous the entire series. We didn't pitch well in one inning on Friday," Jones said.

Koenig was 2-4 in an eight-hit SJR State offense. The other hits were Goldsmith's home run, Smith's double and singles by Broughton, Kobos, Kerry Carpenter and Nick Koslowski.