

SPORTS

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Vikings' glove work keeps Patriots at bay

Jones notches 300th win as coach Saturday

BY ANDY HALL
Palatka Daily News

Scouts showed up Monday at Tindall Field for Nate Pearson and the College of Central Florida fastballer did not disappoint.

He didn't have Scott Kobos' supporting cast, either.

Pearson struck out nine in six innings, a dozen or so radar guns regu-

larly showing numbers in the 90s, but he was made to work in the third inning – in part by his teammates and in part by Kobos' teammates with St. Johns River State College.

The Vikings scored four runs on four hits and three errors in the third inning and that turned out to be enough offense in a 4-1 victory as St. Johns swept its three-game series with the Patriots. The Vikings were 9-1 winners in Ocala on Saturday behind the 10-strikeout performance of Pearson McMahan.

The series sweep pushed SJR State to 28-12 overall and 12-3 in the Mid-

Florida Conference. Central Florida fell to 11-26-1 and 4-11.

Kobos (3-2) won his second straight Monday, striking out seven, walking two and allowing one run while scattering eight hits, benefiting from a defense that was brilliant at times.

It was never more important than in the sixth. Third baseman Josh Broughton went horizontal and fired to first baseman Jimmy Goldsmith in time to rob Christian Smallwood of a leadoff single. Two batters later, with Patriots at second and third, shortstop Nick Owens speared a sharp line drive for the second out and Kobos would get

out of the inning with his 4-0 lead intact.

Broughton also made an impressive stop on a second-inning grounder and lunged to snag a pop foul in the fifth. Right after that, second baseman Michael Koenig stopped a sure single up the middle.

Central Florida got its run on Steven Lugo's two-out homer in the seventh. After Kobos left with one out in the eighth and runners on first and second, David Litchfield ended the inning with a groundout and a strikeout.

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Andrew Vaccacio struck out the side in the ninth for his fourth save.

"When you pitch and defend like that, you're always going to be in it," said SJR State coach Ross Jones, who sensed a good game was in the making after practice on Sunday.

The Vikings got by on just five hits, but put three together after Central Florida mistakes in the third inning.

Leadoff man Jimmy Goldsmith flared a ball to shallow left that shortstop Vincent Addona reached, but dropped. Jimbo Reemsnyder was safe on

a sacrifice bunt after an errant throw and Brian Moore loaded the bases with the first of his two bunt singles.

A wild pitch got Goldsmith home, then Owens drilled Pearson's 1-2 delivery to left for a two-run double. Owens scored on a throwing error after Kerry Carpenter's infield hit and it was 4-0. Nothing came of Nick Koslowski's one-out single, but the lead would be enough for Kobos and his defense.

"Nate Pearson – that guy's pretty good. He's going to go in first five rounds of the draft. He's going to get his strikeouts, but we had good at-bats against him tonight," Jones said.

McMahan, too, is a potential high draft pick, and showed it Saturday. Winning his third

straight, McMahan (3-2) struck out 10, walked none and gave up one run on five hits over eight innings. Litchfield and Vaccacio threw the ninth.

"It was the Pearson McMahan show. It's the best he has ever been," said Jones, who marked his 300th win with the Vikings. "And we played good defense again Saturday. We've had two great games against them."

Kobos homered and doubled and Carpenter had a triple and a double for St. Johns, which broke a 1-1 tie with four runs in the fifth inning.

Koslowski was 2-4, Broughton 2-5, Koslowski with a double. The Vikings also got a double from Koenig and singles from Owens and Cole Perry.