

# SPORTS

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PAGE 7A

## Uneven Vikings lose second straight to Pasco-Hernando

BY ANDY HALL  
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Through no fault of its own, the St. Johns River State College baseball team moved into first place

in the Mid-Florida Conference on Wednesday. Santa Fe lost to Daytona State, dropping the Saints a half-game behind St. Johns in the win column. The Vikings, meanwhile, lost a nonconference

game to Pasco-Hernando State for the second time in two days. It was 5-3 on a sunny afternoon at Tindall Field as SJR State dipped to 30-15 overall.

See **VIKINGS**, Page 8A

### Vikings

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7A

An NJCAA Division II program, Pasco improved to 22-17.

Known for pulling out games in their final at-bat, the Vikings coughed up two runs in the top of the ninth, breaking a 3-3 tie, and went 1-2-3 in the bottom half.

While the loss didn't hurt the Vikings in the conference standings, it didn't help them establish momentum for the MFC stretch drive that begins

next week.

"They think they're on vacation," said SJR State coach Ross Jones. "There's a difference between getting beat and losing. We lost this game and I hate losing. I know their minds are on conference, but champions don't play like that."

It wasn't just the ninth inning that irritated Jones, who seemed pleased only with the middle relief work of Trevin Eubanks and Pearson McMahan.

"We didn't execute on offense. We don't run hard and miss out on a double. We had poor starting pitching two

days in a row. At the end of the game, (Andrew) Vaccacio and (Zach) Greene don't execute pitches. They score the tying run when we can't execute a double play."

That pretty much covered it.

St. Johns had leads of 2-0 and 3-2. Justin Smith, Nick Koslowski and Josh Broughton hit consecutive singles that produced two runs in the first inning. The Conquistadors put up single runs in the second and third innings, chasing Vikings starter Clay Helvey in the process.

The 2-2 tie stood until the sixth, when Michael Koenig drew a leadoff

walk. Cole Perry bunted him to second, Andrew Williamson's deep fly ball got him to third and Nick Owens punched the next pitch into left, scoring Koenig to make it 3-2.

Pasco had runners on the corners with one out in the seventh when Vance Gutierrez grounded to third. Brad Hession broke for home while Vikings went for a double play, but Broughton's throw to force Trey Pierce at second didn't give the second baseman, Koenig, time to get Gutierrez at first.

"The feed from third was at Koenig's feet," Jones said.

The Vikings had just one base runner over the last three innings. Vaccacio (3-2) got the Conquistadors in order in the eighth, but walked Alex Reynolds and surrendered a double to Zach Ghelfi to start the ninth. Center fielder Scott Kobos' throw home to Williamson was in time to get Reynolds, but Ghelfi, who took third on the throw, scored when Hession chopped a single off Greene through a drawn-in infield. Hession scored on Pierce's two-out double for a 5-3 lead.

SJR State plays its final nonconference game on Friday when it hosts the Rollins College junior varsity.