

SPORTS

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B SECTION

NJCAA REGION 8/FCSAA BASEBALL TOURNAMENT

Vikings survive wild, up-and-down battle with Tallahassee

BY ANDY HALL
Palatka Daily News

LAKELAND – St. Johns River State College was determined not to be a two-and-through team in the FCSAA baseball state tournament.

Thus the Vikings twice came back from three-run deficits and finally got shut-down pitching for the last three innings of a 13-11 duel with Tallahassee Community College in a Saturday elimination game that consumed three hours and 52 minutes at Joker Marchant Stadium.

SJR State sent 11 batters to the plate in a five-run eighth inning that included doubles by Justin Smith and Nick Koslowski and a single by Michael Koenig along with three walks and two hit batsmen. The fourth St. Johns



TOM HAGERTY / Special To The Daily News

St. Johns River hitter Justin Smith gets a low-five from third base coach Cory Elasiak after blasting a two-run, first-inning home run against Tallahassee on Saturday.

pitcher of the afternoon/evening, Jagger McCoy (4-2), pitched three scoreless

innings, striking out four and shutting the Eagles down after an inherited runner

scored on a sacrifice fly.

“That’s a freshman coming into the state tournament

with the game on the line and he stopped them,” said Vikings coach Ross Jones. “He’s such a competitor. He got us that one right there.”

The first three St. Johns pitchers were charged with 11 runs, 10 earned, on 10 hits and five walks. An early 5-1 lead evaporated with a fourth inning that included Josh Nothdorft’s solo home run and a six-run fifth that included two-run shots by Jordan Curtis and Tanner Thomas and a two-run double by Jack Hartman.

Tallahassee lost despite four home runs. St. Johns won despite stranding 11 baserunners to the Eagles’ three.

The Vikings erased an 8-5 deficit with a three-run sixth highlighted by Koenig’s two-out, two-run single, scoring Pablo Cedenno, who had drawn a leadoff walk, and Nick

Owens, who had singled. Kerry Carpenter singled and went on to score when Josh Broughton drew a bases-loaded walk.

The Eagles broke the 8-8 tie with two runs in the bottom of the sixth and added another in the seventh. Then came SJR State’s five-run eighth.

“It’s an example of how we competitive we were and how hard the guys worked,” Jones said. “We had contributions up and down the lineup.”

Koenig wound up 3-5 with three RBI in a 14-hit offense. Koslowski was 3-5 with a double. Smith was 2-5 with a double and a two-run homer that got the Vikings on the board in the first inning. Owens was 2-4, Carpenter 2-5. Jimbo Reemsnyder and Cole Perry were each 1-4 and Jimmy Goldsmith had an RBI.