

TD Bank Classic



CHRIS DEVITTO / Palatka Daily News

SJR State starter Jaison Heard struck out seven and walked two in seven innings.

Multiple Mistakes

Vikings pay dearly for errors against 2017 national tournament team

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The St Johns River State College baseball team was shown the error of its ways Thursday – loudly and repeatedly.

Florence-Darlington Technical College of South Carolina capitalized on four errors over the first seven innings on its way to an 8-2 beating of the Vikings on opening night for the TD Bank Classic at a breezy Tindall Field.

FDT batters following teammates that reached on the first three errors came up with an RBI double, a two-out walk (after which a run scored on a wild pitch) and a tiebreaking three-run homer. The fourth error allowed another run to cross.

“We stunk it up. They took advantage,” said SJR State coach Ross Jones, who was ejected in the seventh inning after arguing a called ball and did not find the view from beyond the right-field fence any

better than it was from the dugout.

“Our errors were routine. We couldn’t catch a pop-up,” Jones said. “It’s maturity. We can’t take a bad at-bat. We take it with us to the field.”

“That’s what we did so well in the fall – pitch and defend the field.”

The Vikings’ mistakes and the Stingers’ timely hits turned a nifty pitchers’ duel into a one-sided game.

St. Johns starter Jaison Heard (2-1) struck out seven, walked two and allowed six hits over six and two-third innings, leaving after FDT had extended its lead to 6-2 on the Vikings’ fourth error. The Stingers’ Evan Odum won his first collegiate start, struggling only in the second inning and working into the sixth before leaving with what appeared to be a minor injury.

“Jaison Heard pitched his tail off,” Jones said.

Coming off an appearance in the NCJAA World Series in 2017, FDT improved to 3-0.

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SJR State takes a 7-2 record into today’s 4 p.m. contest with traditional power Miami Dade, the second of three games set for Tindall Field. The classic continues with five games on Saturday and two on Sunday.

The Vikings broke on top Thursday with two runs in the second inning. Jimmy Goldsmith sent a one-out single down the line in right and scored when Pablo Cedeno doubled a 2-1 pitch into right center. Cedeno was out trying for a triple, but Bubba Sangster singled, beginning his 3-4 night. Riley Wash reached on an error, Joe Gunn walked to load the bases and Joey Bellini chopped an RBI single between third and short to score Sangster.

Odum settled down after that, however, and it was 6-2 before SJR State got anyone else into scoring position.

One pitch after a dropped pop-up in the fifth, Gabe Austin’s three-run homer made it 5-2 and the Stingers were ahead to stay.

Only Sangster had multiple hits in the Vikings’ eight-hit offense. The others were Cedeno’s double and singles by Goldsmith, Bellini, Kerry Carpenter and Justin Farmer.