

SPORTS

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PAGE 7A

St. Johns comes away with Saturday split in TD Bank Classic

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Having taken its lumps the first two days of the talent-laden TD Bank Classic, the St. Johns River State College baseball team came back a little stronger, but mostly smarter on Saturday.

The Vikings managed a split, losing

4-1 Saturday in a seven-inning game with Broward College before coming back to take a nine-inning contest from Gulf Coast State, 6-4. The split left them 1-3 for the classic and 8-4 for the season.

“Take away two innings and we pitched really, really well,” said SJR State coach Ross Jones, whose team gave up four runs in the first inning against

Broward and allowed a three-run first to Gulf Coast. “I feel like Saturday we got better. Broward’s guy was really good and we hit seven balls on the screws and they’re all outs. Against Gulf Coast, the hits went through.

“We’ve still got a lot of things to clean up, we’ve got to get some kids healthy, but we competed well. For the first time, some freshmen began to see how

the game speeds up.”

St. Johns was coming off losses of 8-2 to South Carolina’s Florence Darlington on Thursday and 12-1 to Miami Dade on Friday.

Answering Gulf Coast’s three-run first on Saturday, the Vikings scored as many runs in the second inning as they

See **BASEBALL**, Page 9A

Baseball

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7A

had in the first three Classic games combined.

Jimmy Goldsmith reached on an error, Francis Villaman walked and Pablo Cedenó singled to load the bases. A one-out walk to Riley Wash brought Goldsmith home, Joey Bellini scored Villaman with a sacrifice

fly and Kerry Carpenter doubled to straightaway center, scoring Cedenó and Wash for a 4-3 lead.

It was the first of three hits for Carpenter, whose solo home run in the bottom of the fifth put the Vikings ahead to stay at 5-4. A leadoff single from Goldsmith, a sacrifice bunt by Villaman and a double by Cedenó produced an insurance run in the sixth.

Austin Parsley (1-0) inherited runners at first and second with nobody out in a 4-4 game in the

fifth and escaped with two fly balls and a grounder. He went on to four scoreless innings, allowing one hit and striking out four while walking none. Luke Sutko pitched a perfect ninth, striking out two, for his fourth state-high save.

Carpenter’s 3-3 game pushed his batting average to .563, tops in the state; he is second in both home runs with four and RBI with 19.

Carpenter’s first-inning home

run was the extent of the Vikings’ scoring against Broward. Their other hits were a double by Goldsmith and singles by Bellini, Villaman, Wash and Joe Gunn.

Starter Matt Marini (0-1) took the loss, giving way to Jagger McCoy in the fifth inning.

“That’s the best team Broward’s had in my 10 years here,” Jones said.

The Vikings go to Polk State College on Wednesday.