

# SPORTS

## Vikings beat Saints again, lose slugger the next day

First baseman Goldsmith probably out the rest of the regular season

Palatka Daily News

The St. Johns River State College baseball team was on its way to the perfect weekend.

A win at home Friday over two-time defending Mid-Florida Conference champ Santa Fe – the No. 1 team in state and national polls – was followed by a 9-6 victory over the Saints in Gainesville on Saturday. The Vikings were well on their way again on Sunday in a nonconference game with Morton College of Illinois when, in his second at-bat, Jimmy Goldsmith cracked his right wrist.

There's a cast on it now and St. Johns won't have its starting first baseman and cleanup batter back until the state tournament – if then.

The Vikings finished out the 10-4 win, improving to 21-8 overall. Saturday's win at Santa Fe upped their conference record to 7-2 and brought them within a game of first-place Central Florida. Central Florida and Santa Fe (23-6, 4-2) open a three-game series Wednesday.

"I've had at least 10 people ask me what would work out best for us (in that series). What would work best is for the Vikings to beat Daytona," said SJR State coach Ross Jones, whose club opens a three-game set with Daytona State (19-10, 4-5) at home on Wednesday.

They'll have to press on without Goldsmith, the .361-hitting sophomore whose two home runs, including a first-inning grand slam, highlighted Friday's 10-4 victory over Santa Fe.

"We take 1,000 swings a week. Freak things happen," Jones said. "Jimmy was having a great year. We've had to overcome injuries all year – Nick Romano, Darin Kilfoyl, Ray Gonzalez, losing Jorge Ramirez for the year.

"But other guys are starting to pick it up. Twelve games ago, Joe Gunn was batting a buck-80. Now he's batting .288. We lose Jorge, Riley Wash (.274) keeps getting better and better. Pablo Cedeneno (.293) has brought his average up 53 points."

Cedeneno's two-run homer was the big blow as St. Johns struck for five runs in the first inning Saturday at Santa Fe.

Joey Bellini reached on a wild pitch after striking out. Kerry Carpenter doubled, placing runners on second and third. Romano's sacrifice fly scored Bellini and Goldsmith singled to score Carpenter. Cedeneno homered with two out, then Wash and Gunn delivered back-to-back doubles to get another run across.

The Saints had the five runs back by the end of the second, having flares and pop flies go for extra bases at their notoriously windy park, but the Vikings took the lead for good with a three-run fifth.

## Baseball

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7A

Romano singled, Goldsmith reached on an error and Justin Farmer walked to load the bases for Cedeneno, whose single broke the tie. Two outs later, SJR State got a two-run double from .156 hitter Francis Villaman to make it 8-5.

That was enough offense for Elijah Gill (5-1), who pitched the first five innings.

Normal closer Luke Sutko went three and two thirds, striking out six, before Jagger McCoy got the last out for his second save.

"Elijah Gill was pretty good.

We had a fly ball fall in that should have been caught and a soft liner gets by your left fielder. There's no errors in the book, but it cost us five runs," Jones said. "A month ago in that same situation against Miami Dade, Elijah Gill crumbled. Saturday, he came back and pitched real well the third, fourth and fifth."

Cedeneno and Carpenter each went 3-5 with three RBI. Gunn was 2-3, Romano 2-4 and Bellini 2-5. Rounding out a 16-hit offense were doubles by Wash and Villaman and singles by Goldsmith and Gonzalez.

Sunday's game was never in doubt as the Vikings struck for six runs in the first inning against Morton College and led

9-1 through six. Backups received plenty of playing time – though ironically, Goldsmith was in the lineup because reserve first baseman Bubba Sangster is dealing with back problems.

Carpenter homered in a 2-5 afternoon that left his batting average at .487, second in the state by eight points behind Jake Randa of Northwest Florida.

Romano, Cedeneno and Jose Varela each went 2-3. Gunn and Farmer hit run-scoring doubles. Goldsmith had a two-run single before he was hurt. Bellini, Livingston Morris and Palatka freshman Rhett Lamoreaux all singled.

The win went to Rian Haire (2-0), the first of six pitchers.