

SPORTS

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Prince of Pasco pitches six-hit shutout at St. Johns

Vikings begin last leg of conference competition Friday

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The St. Johns River State College baseball team won't have to deal with Sam Prince again this season, which is good news for a club with postseason aspirations.

Prince pitches for Pasco-Hernando State College, an NJCAA Division II program. He and the Bobcats have

knocked off some of the state's elite Division I teams. He got the fifth-ranked Vikings on Sunday, throwing a complete-game shutout in a 6-0 Pasco victory on a chilly afternoon at Tindall Field.

Prince struck out five, walked one and held St. Johns to six singles while improving to 9-1.

"He threw the ball really well," said SJR State coach Ross Jones, whose 29-12 team is supposed to have a rematch with the Bobcats today in New Port Richey, but there is a 90 percent chance of rain.

Prince opened with four perfect innings before Justin Farmer singled

up the middle with one out in the fifth. He issued his only walk an out later, but served up a fly ball that ended the Vikings' first scoring opportunity.

St. Johns had better chances the next three innings, but came away empty each time.

Francis Villaman was cut down at the plate trying to score from second without sliding on Kerry Carpenter's infield hit to end the sixth. Nick Romano singled and Farmer bunted himself aboard to start the seventh, but Prince escaped with two fly balls and a strikeout. In the eighth, Villaman drew a leadoff walk and raced to third when Raymond

Gonzalez flared a single to right, but Prince again worked his way out of trouble.

It was a 1-0 game until a four-run Pasco seventh, when Zach Ghelfi, Brad Hession and Ryan Russell delivered run-scoring hits after a one-out error.

"When the game's being played in the sixth, seventh and eighth, we don't slide and don't score, make an error, don't make a pitch and they score four unearned runs," Jones said.

"We were flat, not able to get anything going."

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The biggest positive the Vikings got out of the afternoon was the work of starter Jaison Heard (4-3), who struck out six and walked one over five innings, allowed a run on

three hits. It was his second straight solid start after a rough outing in a Mid-Florida Conference loss to Central Florida two weeks ago.

"Jaison Heard pitched really well. He's getting back to where he was," Jones said.

Farmer wound up 2-4. Romano, Gonzalez, Carpenter and Villaman had one hit apiece.

St. Johns is about to begin the final leg of conference play. The Vikings have single games with each of the six MFC rivals starting Friday at home against Seminole State. They're 13-5 in the conference, Santa Fe 14-2 and Central Florida 12-5.

"We've got to play great baseball this last couple of weeks," Jones said.