

# SPORTS

## Vikings no-hit Gulf Coast in cold Classic opener

Team's first since '13 perfect game

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It was a stunning debut for Anthony Simonelli, not to mention a rude welcome to the Kevin Miller Classic for the traditional host from the temporary host.

Simonelli sailed through the first six innings of the first St. Johns River State

College baseball no-hitter in six years as the Vikings smoked Gulf Coast State 10-0 on a cold Thursday night at Tindall Field.

A Coastal Carolina transfer, Simonelli faced one over the minimum in his first game for St. Johns, striking out five and allowing only a two-out walk in the third inning. He threw 75 pitches – his limit for the night by SJR State coach Ross Jones – then Jackson Spiller got through the seventh inning with one walk and the game was halted by the 10-run rule.

“He pitched inside so effectively,” said Jones of Simonelli (1-0). “With their five lefthanded hitters in the lineup, he had to go inside and he got the changeup going early. That was the key.

“His slider was really good. He pitched inside so well he did not allow them to take good swings.”

It was the Vikings' first no-hitter since Trae Ratliff and Brad Torres combined on a nine-inning perfect game against Lake-Sumter in 2013.

Ironically, Gulf Coast normally hosts the Kevin Miller Classic, named in

memory of a former Commodores player, but the Panama City school is still recovering from the effects of Hurricane Michael last fall, so SJR State agreed to serve as host this year.

The Vikings (3-0) went right to work, scoring three runs in the first inning off two walks and a pair of two-out RBI hits, a single by Bubba Sangster and a double by Francis Villaman. It was the beginning of a 2-for-4, four-RBI night for Sangster, whose bases-loaded double

See **VIKINGS**, Page 8A

### Vikings

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7A

down the line in left broke the game open in the second inning.

All four second-inning runs came with two out. The bases were empty before Langston Provitt, A.J. Mathis and Nick Romano all singled and Garrett Blaylock walked before Sangster's big blow.

“They got two outs on three pitches and we had six great at-bats in a row,” Jones said.

The Vikings added two runs in the third and one in the fifth.

Provitt, Mathis, Romano and Sangster had two hits apiece in a 10-hit offense. The other St. Johns hits were doubles by Villaman and Luke Belanger.

Simonelli and Spiller were supported by errorless defense.

“Luke had a backhand ball (at third base), Garrett Shephard made a great play on a bunt and Francis (at second base) on a deep ball,” Jones said.

Starter Jack Guzek (0-2) got the loss for the Commodores, who fell to 2-3.