

SPORTS

Blaylock blast lifts SJR State over Gordon State in Classic

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A mile long, a mile high and inches fair.

So went Garrett Blaylock's walk-off home run Friday as the St. Johns River State College baseball team clipped Georgia's Gordon State 3-2 on the second day of the Kevin Miller Classic at Tindall Field.

Until Blaylock's blast, the Vikings (4-0) had nothing to show for seven hits and a brilliant pitching performance by starter Elijah Gill, who struck out 12, walked none and allowed four hits in six innings. They were down 2-0

in the ninth when leadoff man Langston Provitt's low liner to center was mishandled for a two-base error. Nick Romano's one-out infield hit left runners on the corners for Blaylock, who had walked eight times in three games before Friday.

Given something to hit, he didn't hesitate.

"The guy threw him a slider right into his barrel and he hit it right down the (left-field) line. It was above the 30-foot foul pole when it went out. It was just a question of whether it would stay fair," said St.

Johns coach Ross Jones.

The home run completed a 2-for-5 night for Blaylock. Romano was 3-5, Francis Villaman 2-4. Singles by Jorge Ramirez and Sandon Witt rounded out the offense.

Uneven in his first start of the season last Sunday, Gill was strong for six innings Friday but left the mound trailing 1-0 on an unearned run in the fifth.

"He pitched so well to their righthanded hitters. He struck out nine on fastballs," Jones said.

Stephen Halstead, Evan Waterbor and Luke Sutko (1-0) all threw in relief

for the Vikings.

"Great game all the way around. The pitching on both sides was outstanding," Jones said. "It was one of those games in nonconference you like to have. We saw the type of arms we'll see in conference.

"To win coming from behind - we struggled to do this a year ago."

The Classic continues today with three games, capped by SJR State against another Georgia school, Andrew College, at 5 p.m. The Vikings have a 3 p.m. rematch Sunday with Gordon State.