

SPORTS

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Hillsborough's Jones first to shut out St. Johns this season

Simonelli makes first start today since Feb. 15 perfect game as John Tindall Classic continues

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Bradford Jones was in control from the start Friday for Hillsborough Community College, even as the St.

Johns River State College baseball team was in better control than it had been two days before.

Jones pitched a five-hit shutout, allowing only one runner as far as third as the Hawks opened the John Tindall Classic with a 7-0 victory on a sunny afternoon at Tindall Field.

Jones (1-1) was helped out by two double plays and sparkling defense from Jose Cadenas in center field. He struck out just three, but the first of them stranded Vikings at the corners in the second with Hillsborough ahead 3-0. It

was 7-0 before St. Johns had another baserunner.

It was the second straight loss for the Vikings (13-5), who were blanked for the first time this season, but SJR State coach Ross Jones was willing to tip his cap to the winning pitcher, much more satisfied with his team's effort Friday than in a 3-2 loss to the NAIA Thomas University junior varsity in the second half of a Wednesday doubleheader.

"(Bradford Jones) had command of all three pitches and we get shut out, (but) we had more competitive at-bats

then we did two days ago," coach Jones said. "We've got to find a way to scratch out some runs, but if our effort's the same all three games, I'll be happy."

The Vikings play the first and third of four games on today's schedule - State College of Florida at 10 a.m. and East Georgia at approximately 4 p.m. The ninth annual John Tindall Endowed Scholarship, named for the program's original coach, will be presented just before the East Georgia game.

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One week removed from his perfect game at South Georgia State, Florida and NJCAA pitcher of the week Anthony Simonelli will start today's game against State College, with Jordan Dubberly set to open against East Georgia.

St. Johns goes against two-time defending national champion Chipola Sunday at 1 p.m.

The only SJR State hits in Friday's seven-inning game were doubles by Nick Romano and Michael Rosario and singles by Ray Gonzalez, Sandon Witt and Ryan Romano. Nevertheless, Jones was satisfied the batting practice he made the Vikings take after losing to the Thomas JV had gotten his message across.

"This is the first game we've lost by more than two runs and I walk away feeling better than I did two days ago," he said. "Their guy executed on two-strike pitches. Their center fielder saved

them three hits. He covered some ground."

Jones was even more encouraged by the four scoreless innings turned in by reliever Jackson Spiller, who came into the season challenging for a starting spot but entered Friday's game 0-1 with a 4.85 earned-run average. Spiller struck out two Hawks, waked none and gave up three hits.

"Jackson Spiller came in and threw the best he's thrown all year. That's the Jackson Spiller we saw in the fall," Jones said.

Starter Stephen Halstead (2-1)

pitched a 1-2-3 first inning, but gave up three runs on four hits and a walk in the second. Back-to-back errors helped Hillsborough to two runs without a hit in the third and Halstead's afternoon was over after giving up a two-run homer to No. 9 batter Nicholas Marrero with nobody out in the fourth.

"Stephen had a rough second inning, then in the third, we boot two balls," Jones said. "But you're talking about a high school short-stop who's never pitched. That's what February's about."