

# SPORTS

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## Vikings plaster Patriots

Collect 16 hits - 15 singles - in  
whitewash of top-ranked team

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It's best not to low-ball the St. Johns River State College baseball team.

Not even the state's top-ranked (and the nation's fifth-ranked) team could put the Vikings down by keeping the ball down Wednesday.

St. Johns rang up 16 hits - 15 singles - in a 10-0 wipeout on a cold, windy night at Tindall Field, putting a halt to the game with a five-run sixth inning that invoked the mercy rule.

Six Vikings had multiple hits and eight had at least one in a 90-minute game that got the hardy handful of fans out of the cold quickly while improving to 22-12 overall and 7-6 in the Mid-Florida Conference - a game and a half behind the Patriots (31-6, 9-5).

St. Johns lefthander Elijah Gill improved to 5-1 with a three-hit shutout that included five strikeouts and just one walk; the only leadoff runner he allowed was erased on a double play.

Meanwhile, his teammates feasted on offerings down in the zone from Central Florida counterparts Alfredo Carabello (4-2) and Jeremy Goins.

"Our guys - they are low-ball hitters. Tonight, everything was down," said SJR State coach Ross Jones. "In this wind, you're not getting a lot of deep balls."

The Vikings got going early with three runs in the first inning off singles by Ryan Romano, Bubba Sangster and Riley Wash, an RBI groundout by Ray Gonzalez and a walk to Langston Provitt. They had four runs on seven hits by the third inning and that was all for Carabello.

No. 9 batter Chase Malloy was 3-3, scoring after a wild pitch in the fourth as the lead grew to 6-0. SJR State started the sixth with four straight singles - one each by Malloy, Provitt, Ryan Romano and Nick Romano, Ryan Romano's hit scoring Malloy. And after Sangster's

grounder scored Provitt, Gonzalez looped a single to right center that sent the Romano brothers home - along with everyone else, the score having reached 10-0.

Sangster finished 3-4 with two RBI. Wash was 2-3 with one RBI. Francis Villaman, Ryan Romano and Nick Romano were all 2-4, Villaman with two RBI and Nick Romano with the game's only extra-base hit, a double. Provitt was 1-3, Gonzalez 1-4 with two RBI.

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It was more than enough offense for Gill, who also benefited from sparkling defense, most notably a

slick double play in the sixth in which Malloy, Villaman and Nick Romano combined on a 4-6-3 wipeout.

"Elijah Gill was really sharp. He threw 73 pitches and not one changeup. They couldn't get to his fastball," Jones said. "The double play

in the sixth inning - Chase Malloy made a great turn.

"It's a simple game when you pitch like that."

Jones said the performance came on the heels of their best practice in two months.

Now the trick will be to see if the

Vikings can stand prosperity.

They were similarly convincing in their last nonconference game, a 9-1 win over Tallahassee, and in three-game sweep of Daytona State, only to lose subsequent games. St. Johns completes its three-game set with the Patriots in Ocala Friday.