

SPORTS

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St. Johns takes two, takes time

Vikings in three-way tie for second,
host Seminole this afternoon

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The St. Johns River State College baseball team got the wins it needed at Lake-Sumter State College on Friday, if not as quickly as the Vikings would have liked.

Elijah Gill threw five hitless, scoreless innings and Bubba Sangster led off the 17th with a monstrous home run as they completed a suspended game with a 6-5 victory, play having been stopped after 12 innings because of darkness March 4.

Nick Romano was 4-5 with a home run and a double in the regularly scheduled contest, and it was his two-run single that keyed a four-run sixth inning as St. Johns took down the LakeHawks 9-6.

The wins lifted the Vikings to 30-13 overall, 12-7 in the Mid-Florida Conference and into a three-way tie for second with Santa Fe and Seminole, which comes to Tindall Field today after losing 17-8 to first-place Central Florida on Friday. SJR State coach Ross Jones isn't sure how many pitchers the Raiders used in the loss but knows his bullpen was stretched against Lake-Sumter.

"It took a lot out of us, to be honest with you," he said. "To play 14 innings is not what we wanted to do. We wanted to finish this first one quickly. Our bullpen will be a little taxed going into (today)."

Gill (7-1) struck out three and walked two over five innings in the suspended game and went on to start the next, but went just two innings, his pitch count for the day nearing 100. The Vikings needed four relievers to finish the job.

The win went to the third pitcher, Stephen Halstead (6-1), who struck out one and walked one over two and two-third scoreless innings.

Lake-Sumter (19-23-1, 6-13) took a 5-3 lead to the bottom of the sixth when Michael Rosario, Francis Villaman and Garrett Sheppard came up with consecutive one-out singles, Sheppard driving in Rosario. Langston Provitt drew a two-out walk, Ryan Romano singled to score Villaman and tie the game, then Nick Romano put the Vikings ahead to stay with his two-run single.

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"He was seeing the ball really well today," Jones said. "His outs were hard today."

Villaman was 3-4 with a home run to complement Nick Romano in a 15-hit offense. Sheppard and Provitt were both 2-4, Provitt with a double. St. Johns' other hits were a triple by Ray Gonzalez and singles by Sangster, Rosario and Ryan Romano.

SJR State also had 15 hits in the suspended game, the biggest being Sangster's shot to left in the 17th. The game was the program's longest since a 17-inning state tournament victory over Gulf Coast in 2015.

While Gill got the win, Jones emphasized the role of Jordan Dubberly, who started back on March 4 and went eight innings. He struck out eight, walked three, allowed three hits and one earned run.

"The thing that goes unnoticed is Dubberly's performance. He was fantastic," Jones said. "Our bullpen blew it for him in the ninth inning that day. Dubberly gave us a chance to win it."

It is Dubberly (4-1) who will start today against Seminole.

Gonzalez was 3-8 in the suspended game. Sangster, Villaman and Chase Malloy had two hits apiece, Sangster with the winning home run and Villaman with a double. Nick Romano was 1-6 with a home run and three RBI. Garrett Blaylock had an RBI double. Provitt, Ryan Romano, A.J. Mathis and Riley Wash all singled.