

SPORTS

St. Johns solid in winning opener at Eastern Florida

Four-run first sets the stage; home opener is today at 3 p.m.

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It was just about everything the St. Johns River State College baseball team could have wanted in its opener.

The Vikings greeted host Eastern Florida State with four runs in the first inning, rang up 11 hits and had three pitchers combine for 13 hits in an 8-2 victory on Friday, setting the stage for today's 3 p.m. rematch at Tindall Field.

Chase Sanguinetti hit a three-run

homer in his first St. Johns at-bat and the Vikings scored five of their eight runs with two out. Starting pitcher Michael Rosario turned in two strong innings and after wobbling in the third, Jackson Spiller and Jackson Hodnick took it from there. The three held the Titans to seven hits, walking two while striking out 13. Spiller (1-0) got the win.

"Spiller and Hodnick were tremendous – overpowering," said SJR State coach Ross Jones. "Their one triple should have been an out. We score five runs with two outs. We had some really timely hitting."

Charlie Welch drove in the first run of the season on the first of his two doubles on the day with one out in the first, plating Ryan Romano. With two down, Sanguinetti delivered with a three-run blast to right, scoring Welch and Rosario, who had singled.

Eastern Florida got its two runs after two were out and the bases were empty in the third, but did little against the Vikings bullpen.

Andre James got the St. Johns sixth going with a one-out single. He stole second, went to third on a wild pitch and came around on a two-run hit up the middle by Romano. Scoring with

him was Chase Malloy, who had walked and stolen second.

James again supplied the spark in the eighth with a one-out double to left center. Malloy walked again and they scored on Rosario's two-out single.

James wound up 3-4 with two runs and a double in his Viking debut. Rosario and Welch were both 2-5. The other hits were Sanguinetti's home run and singles by Malloy, Romano and Sandon Witt.

SJR State was eighth, Eastern Florida 10th in preseason state rankings released Friday.