

# SPORTS

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## Vikings can't find Way against Northwest Florida

Capital City Bank Classic continues with four games today

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A stiff wind blowing out to right field invited lefthanded batters to try their luck against Beck Way of Northwest Florida State College at the start of the Capital City Bank Classic Thursday at Tindall Field.

Way never gave St. Johns River State College a chance.

The wind died down, but Way didn't, keeping the Vikings at bay as the Raiders went on to a 9-1 victory. A 6-foot-4, 200-pound righthander who has signed with LSU, Way struck out 11,

walked one and allowed one earned run – his first of the year – on five hits before turning it over to relievers.

"I thought I was in the SEC again," said SJR State coach Ross Jones, the former Florida and Vanderbilt assistant. "That is the best arm I have seen in 12 years of junior college. I made some calls during the week and asked how to get to this guy. They said put as many lefthanders (in the lineup) as possible. I put seven."

It didn't matter.

Way (2-0) gave up just one hit over the first five innings, an off-the-glove single that barely got out of the infield. Northwest Florida (6-2) led 9-0 before St. Johns (11-3) got anything going. No. 9 batter J.J. Sousa singled sharply up the middle to start the sixth, then raced to



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SJR State first baseman Chase Sanguinetti waits for a pickoff throw.

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third when Chase Malloy sliced a double to right. Ryan Romano got Sousa home with a sacrifice fly to center, but that was the last run of the game.

The Vikings got consecutive one-out singles from Chase Sanguinetti and Sean McArdle in the seventh before Way put an exclamation point on his outing with his 10th and 11th strikeouts.

"His fastball was 94 (miles per hour) with life. I told Joey (Pound) and Cory (Elasik, assistant coaches) to let everybody see him," said Pound, who emptied his bench. "They can say they saw him."

The loss went to starter Jackson Spiller (3-1), who struggled both his changeup and a backup catcher, Charlie Welch sidelined with a hamstring issue. Already ahead 3-0, the Raiders reached Spiller for five runs on six hits in the fifth.

"Jackson never got comfortable. He was too hard with his changeup," Jones said. "When you lose some confidence in a guy trying to block a

baseball, it took Jackson out of his rhythm. In the fifth inning, he threw good pitches."

The third St. Johns pitcher, Nic Daniels got a handle on Northwest Florida, inheriting a bases-loaded, no-out mess in the sixth and getting out of it with only one run scoring on a passed ball. Daniels pitched three innings, striking out five, walking one and allowing one hit. Kavin Kroll pitched a scoreless ninth for the Vikings.

"Nick threw really well tonight," Jones said.

St. Johns wound up with six hits – two by Sanguinetti, one each by

Malloy, McArdle, Sousa and Sandon Witt.

The Classic continues today with four games. The third is at 4 p.m. when SJR State takes on Miami Dade. Lefthander Cameron Serada will start for the Vikings.

SJR State is ranked seventh, Northwest Florida fourth in the current state coaches' poll. Miami Dade is third.

"It doesn't get any easier, but the guys will be ready," Jones said. "We were ready tonight."

Unfortunately for them, so were Way and the Raiders.