

John Tindall Classic



ANDY HALL / Palatka Daily News

SJR State's Chase Malloy bunts his way aboard after an error in the third inning.

Finding the Way Back

SJR State rallies twice, then holds off South Carolina opponent in the ninth

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The bounceback trail is longer than one game.

Having snapped a four-game losing streak with a resounding win at Polk State on Tuesday, St. Johns River State College baseball coach Ross Jones wanted more as the John Tindall Classic began Thursday.

He and the Vikings got more – a come-from-behind, 6-4 victory over Florence-Darlington Tech of South Carolina. Michael Rosario's two-run homer broke a 4-4 tie in the seventh and reliever Nic Daniels pitched out of a one-out, second-and-third jam in the ninth as St. Johns improved to 13-6. It was only the second loss in 10 games for the Stingers.

"It's a good win for us. Florence-Darlington's really good. We played well at Polk and we needed to have another good game after losing four (in the Capital City

Bank Classic) last weekend," Jones said.

The Vikings were never in trouble in Tuesday's 14-1 rout, but had to come back from deficits of 1-0 and 4-2 on Thursday. After getting a run in the bottom of the fifth to pull within 4-3, they scored three in the seventh.

Activated just this week after J.J. Sousa suffered a season-ending injury on Saturday, No. 9 batter Josh Haygood got things going with a single. Chase Malloy followed with a sacrifice bunt, his second of the day, and Ryan Romano's single brought Haygood home from second with the tying run, then Rosario hit his sixth home run of the year – he leads the state – for SJR State's first lead of the day at 6-4.

Daniels, who took over in the eighth, got the first out in the ninth but hit the next batter and surrendered a double that left runners on second and third. He came back with a pair of strikeouts for his first save.

The win went to Cameron Serada (2-2), who struck

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out the only batter he faced on three pitches to finish the Stingers in the top of the seventh. "We brought him in for a lefty-on-lefty matchup and he got the win," Jones said.

Starter Jackson Spiller went six and two-third innings, allowing four runs (three

earned) on six hits while striking out five and walking none.

Romano and Ben Spittler had two hits apiece in an eight-hit St. Johns offense. Romano and Rosario each had three RBI. Haygood and Malloy were both 1-3, Chase Sanguinetti 1-4.

"We had good, competitive at-bats all day. We're facing other teams' No. 1 (pitchers) every time out," Jones said. "Juan Jaime had a little trouble in his second game playing third base, but he's going to be fine."

The classic continues with three games today, capped by SJR State facing State College of Florida at 6 p.m. The Vikings play Hillsborough on Saturday, then East Georgia on Sunday. The 1 p.m. Sunday game will be preceded by the awarding of the John Tindall Endowed Scholarship, presented in honor of the coach who led the program from 1964-93 and in whose honor the field is named.

All of Tindall's former players are invited to Sunday's game at no charge.