

First in a Crowd



ANDY HALL / Palatka Daily News

Michael Rosario was the first of six pitchers SJR State used Saturday against the Rollins JV.

Vikings' Kryptonite

Lake-Sumter has that effect on St. Johns again, taking conference opener

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Just when it looked like the St. Johns River State College baseball team would get away with three hits in its conference opener, out came the kryptonite.

Lake-Sumter State jumped on three relievers for three runs in the bottom of the eighth and sailed through the ninth for a 6-4 victory over the visiting Vikings. SJR State (16-9, 0-1) was about to get by on three hits, including a three-run homer and a double by Chase Malloy, when the LakeHawks (12-10, 1-0) capitalized on wildness.

St. Johns was not the only traditional MFC contender to get down Monday. Santa Fe was a 7-6

loser at home to Daytona State. Defending champ Central Florida clubbed Seminole 14-5 in the other conference opener.

"Lake-Sumter is our kryptonite. Daytona is Santa Fe's kryptonite. I can't tell you how many times we've gone down to Lake-Sumter and lost in the eighth inning," said SJR State coach Ross Jones. "They got two big 3-2 base hits with two out. We had five three-ball counts in the eighth inning. You put yourself in that position."

Malloy put the Vikings in front when he homered to left with Nick Tripp and Juan Jamie aboard in the third inning. Lake-Sumter got two runs in the bottom half. St. Johns extended its lead to 4-2 after Malloy doubled in the sixth. He was on third when Chase Sanguinetti reached on an error.

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Starting pitcher Franco Aleman allowed four earned runs on eight hits with six strikeouts and two walks through seven innings, leaving after walking the leadoff man in the eighth. The loss went to the first of three relievers, Nic

Daniels (1-1), who had picked up his first college win in relief Saturday against the Rollins College junior varsity. Cameron Sereda and Jackson Hodnick also worked the eighth for St. Johns.

Bryant Heston (2-0) gave the LakeHawks two scoreless innings - he pitched a perfect ninth after they took the lead - in relief of Jake Janata, who held the Vikings to three hits over the first seven innings.

"Their kid threw the ball really well, kept us off balance with three pitches. We didn't hit the ball hard enough," said Jones, whose club hosts the second in the three-game series with Lake-Sumter on Wednesday night.

Hitting hard was hardly a problem in the first two innings of Saturday's 9-4 win over the Rollins JV. St. Johns struck for seven runs, getting a two-run homer from Ryan

Romano, a three-run shot from Charlie Welch and a two-RBI double from Joe Becker.

Welch wound up 2-3, Malloy and Becker both 2-4. Romano's home run and singles by Sanguinetti and Jaime rounded out a nine-hit offense.

The Vikings used six pitchers in their last tuneup before conference play. Daniels was credited with the win, pitching a perfect eighth inning.