

SPORTS

St. Johns survives 15-13 duel

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The wind was blowing out Monday at Seminole State College, not only carrying the ball out of the famously hitter-friendly park but turning an infield already lacking rain rock-hard.

Leave it to a former pitcher to describe the conditions.

"It was brutal," Ross Jones said. "If you hit the ball, you better hit it right at somebody or it's a base hit. Everything was going through."

And this was from the winning coach.

Jones' St. Johns River State College Vikings hit four home runs, including two grand slams, and got a bases-loaded triple in the eighth to outlast Seminole 15-13 in a Mid-Florida Conference game. It was only the second time in five conference games St. Johns (15-14, 2-3) scored more than three runs.

The Vikings got grand slams from Chase Malloy in the second inning and Charlie Welch in the fifth, solo shots from Michael Rosario in the first and Chase Sanguinetti in the third and took an 11-5 lead into the bottom of the sixth, only to see the Raiders (13-11, 2-3) strike for six runs and even the game.

"In their big-run inning, they hit choppers," Jones said. "It's part of it. You just have to deal with it."

They dealt with it.

SJR State loaded the bases in the eighth and win two out, Nick Tripp delivered a three-run triple to right center. Nick Romano brought another run home in the ninth and reliever Jackson Hodnick (2-0) withstood a two-run Seminole ninth with the help of an unassisted double play by the second baseman, Malloy.

Tripp wound up 2-3 with a double and a triple, Sanguinetti 2-3 with his home run. August Haymaker was 2-4, Romano and Andre James 2-5 and Malloy and Rosario 2-6. Welch was 1-5 with five RBI, getting a sacrifice fly to go with his grand slam.

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"The most important thing is we won the game and have a chance to

win the series Wednesday," Jones said.

The bullpen blew up after six scoreless innings from starter Stephen Halstead in a 6-2 loss to the Raiders as the series began Saturday at Tindall Field.

Haymaker's double got SJR State going in a two-run fifth inning, but four relievers could not protect the 2-0 lead Halstead had after leaving.

Halstead struck out three, walked four and allowed no runs in four hits in six innings. The loss went to

Rosario (0-3), the first of the four relievers. The bullpen was charged with six runs, three unearned.

Haymaker finished 2-4. Malloy, Welch and Sanguinetti had one hit apiece. Rosario was 0-4 with an RBI.