

# SPORTS

## Vikings get split with Pats

Beat top-ranked Central Florida in second game, boost playoff hopes

*Palatka Daily News*

Things have changed dramatically for the St. Johns River State College softball team.

All it took was bouncing back after a tough opening-game loss against the current No. 1 team in the country on Tuesday.

After the College of Central Florida scored two runs in the bottom of the sixth inning, then held on for a 4-3 win, the Vikings jumped out to a 7-0 lead and went on to a 7-3 victory in the nightcap to split the Mid-Florida Conference twinbill with the Patriots, who drubbed the Vikings by an 18-1 count last month in Palatka.

That was huge for Daytona State – with which the Vikings were tied for third place in the conference – swept by surging Seminole State College by scores of 4-3 and 1-0 on Tuesday, to drop behind SJRSC. Meanwhile, Florida State College-Jacksonville, which swept SJRSC last Thursday to threaten the Vikings' state tournament hopes, mowed down Lake-Sumter in Leesburg, 6-0 and 6-3, to improve to 11-11 in the conference and move into a .500 percentage third-place tie with SJRSC (32-18 overall, 10-10 in conference) with Daytona State at 9-11.

On Thursday, the Vikings have their final home doubleheader of the season against Seminole (39-7, 17-5), which

swept Central Florida in a Saturday and is one game behind Central Florida (47-7, 18-4) for the conference lead. Meanwhile, Daytona State hosts the reeling Patriots and the mission for the Falcons (20-21) is to stay within at least two games of the Vikings going into Friday's 4 p.m. completion of a doubleheader started Saturday at Daytona State when inclement weather reports halted the first game tied at 2-2. That doubleheader is to be picked up in the fifth inning of the opener.

The Vikings took advantage of four Patriots errors in the nightcap to build a 7-0 lead. Haley Wildes drove in two runs and had a hit and Alexis Martinez was 2-for-4 with an RBI. Tikeya Strong, who had a big doubleheader, was 2-for-3 with three runs scored and an RBI. Julie Leduc, Jen Valle, Savannah Montgomery, Hannah Sommers and Erin Klein had one hit each in the nightcap with winning pitcher Nicole Brock also driving in a run.

Brock (16-5) allowed three unearned runs on three hits, walked three and struck out one.

In the opening game, the Vikings took the lead twice, 2-0 in the second

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## Vikings

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and again had a 3-2 lead in the sixth. But in the bottom of the sixth, a double by Taylor Morrow and a single by Autumn Hanners started the inning against starter and losing hurler Hunter Scharf (13-12). A forceout at second on a Jordan Lane grounder allowed Morrow to score to tie the game. An error off a ball hit by Rebecca Enter and a single by Mariah Wise loaded the bases for Erin Chester, who hit a forceout to the plate. But Cheyenne Blaha hit a grounder that third baseman Savannah Montgomery could not handle for an error to bring in Enter with the go-ahead run.

Former North Marion standout Holly McKinnon (25-2) held on from there to get the win, scattering seven hits and allowing three runs, walking none and striking out four. Scharf allowed four runs, two earned, on seven hits, walked two and struck out three. For the Vikings in the second game, Montgomery was 2-for-3, Strong was 2-for-4 with two runs scored and Wildes, Valle and Brock had one hit and one RBI each.

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