

Vikings fall from playoff chase

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A year ago, St. Johns River State College's softball team saw its hope for a state tournament bid end at Santa Fe College.

But that was after sweeping the Saints. The Vikings had the bad luck of Florida State College-Jacksonville sweeping state-bound Seminole in the final doubleheader of the season to gain the fourth and final Mid-Florida Conference postseason spot.

On Tuesday, it was Santa Fe ending the Vikings' faint hopes of a post-season spot again. This time, though, the Saints were getting a twinbill split and the win helped to get them to the state tournament after a year's absence.

Kaylan Tucker scattered five hits and the Saints salvaged the split with a 4-2 win at St. Johns River State College in the nightcap of the Mid-Florida Conference doubleheader.

The Saints (29-18 overall, 12-10 in district) grabbed the final MFC playoff spot and joined Seminole State, Central Florida and Daytona State as the conference representatives playing at the Dodgertown complex in Vero Beach starting April 28.

After losing eight straight conference games, the Vikings (26-27, 6-14), who won the opener 3-0, put themselves in a hole they could never dig out of, but Vikings coach Jill Semento said she likes what she's been seeing of her team of late.

"The girls are playing more relaxed," she said. "They literally have nothing to lose at this point and it's nice to see them playing well again."

The Vikings won the opener behind freshman left-hander Madison Roeshink, who allowed just four hits in her shutout, while walking two Saints and striking out one. The big play in the first game with a scoreless tie in the fifth. The Vikings loaded the bases with two outs Christiana Marasa hit a slow grounder to shortstop. The play went to second, but SJRSC's Sydney Shows beat the play sliding in safely. Jordan Phillips scored the first run from third and Taylor Nilsson, who was on second, kept going on the play and scored the second run.

"It was a close play at second, but I felt (Shows) was safe," Semento said. "Taylor just kept coming on the play. She did it all by herself."

Maegan Stone's single in the sixth scored pinch-runner Marissa Huggins with the third run after Phillips had delivered her second double of the game.

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Nilsson and Phillips each finished 2-for-3 with a run scored, while Stone, Shows, Marasa, Kayla Kight and Brittany Lewis had one hit each.

Semento went with Roeshink to start the second game, but the Saints jumped on her in the first two innings with three runs. Evelyn Arguelis' RBI single and an error off an Adrix Paradizo Ramos groundball plated two runs in the first inning. From there, Tucker took care of matters in throwing the complete-game win, walking one and striking out three.

Sky Davenport went 4 1/3 innings in relief for the Vikings, allowing a run on three hits, walking four and striking out two. At the plate, Lewis finished 2-for-2, while Marasa (a run), Kayla Kight and Stone had one hit each.

The Vikings have a conference twinbill at Daytona State on Thursday, then host Central Florida in the final conference doubleheader of the season.

"I just want to see our sophomores go out with a bang," Semento said. "I want to see our freshmen do things they haven't done yet. Mostly, I want to see us go out on a good note."
