

SPORTS

SJR STATE ATHLETICS

Vikings hang on in baseball, split in softball

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Most baseball teams would crave to have a 7-1 record.

But in early February, it's a blessing when you aren't playing your best ball. And St. Johns River State College baseball coach Ross Jones knows it.

"We've got a long way to go to get better," Jones said after his team survived the last two innings to defeat Polk State, 6-5, Tuesday night at Tindall Field. "But that's why you play these games in February. We bunted three balls back to the mound (Tuesday). It's small things, but it cost us a run. If we execute six or seven plays, we should've won, 8-2."

Kerry Carpenter and Jimmy Goldsmith delivered RBI singles and Pablo Cedenó drew a bases-loaded walk to stake the Vikings to a 3-0 lead in the first inning. After Polk State (4-4) scored two runs to cut into the Vikings' lead, SJRSC answered with a two-run inning with Carpenter and Justin Farmer pulling off the double steal and Carpenter crossing the plate, then Goldsmith delivering his second of three hits on the day, an RBI single to bring in Farmer.

The Vikings got their sixth run in the sixth and had a 6-3 lead going into the final two innings. Polk got a run in the eighth, then with runners on first and third, reliever Jagger McCoy wriggled out of some trouble with a double-play ball that did score the run, cutting the lead to 6-5. Luke Sutko came in to induce a groundout and finish out the win, his third save of the season.

Joey Bellini had a big game, going 4-for-5 with two runs scored, while Carpenter was 3-for-4 with an RBI and two runs and Goldsmith finished 3-for-4 with two RBI. Farmer (one RBI, two runs), Francis Villaman and Cedenó (one RBI) added one hit each.

Matt Marini (1-0) picked up the win, going three solid innings in which he allowed no runs, no hits, walked no one and struck out two.

The Vikings will begin play in the TD Bank Classic Thursday night at Tindall Field against Florence-Darlington College of South Carolina at 6 p.m.

SOFTBALL

■ St. Johns River split a doubleheader at Indian River State, getting no-hit by pitcher Liz Gollin in the first game, 4-0, but bouncing back for a 6-2 win in the nightcap, handing the Pioneers just their second loss of the season.

Vikings

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Gollin had Vikings hitters chasing her riseball for the afternoon in the opener as she walked two and struck out 12 hitters. Crystal Grimaldo delivered a two-run home run off

starter Madison Roeshink (1-1) in the first inning and Taylor Strickland added an RBI double in the third for the Pioneers (11-2).

After Reganne McCarl delivered an RBI double in the first to knock in Morgan Scala, the Vikings opened it up with five runs in the third, highlighted by an RBI double by Marissa Huggins and an RBI single from Kelsea Friend.

Winning hurler Ariel McCullough (4-1) went the distance on a six-hitter, walking two and not striking out a batter. The Vikings made one error at the plate, Friend was 2-for-3 with a run and an RBI, while Huggins, McCarl, Scala, Taylor Nilsson, Brittany Lewis and Selena Bezares added one hit each.

"The difference in the second game was we walked seven times,"

SJRSC coach Jill Semento said. "And we cut our strikeouts in half in the second game (six). Being patient helped us in the third (inning) and in this game."

The Vikings (6-3) will be back in action Friday when they travel to Douglas, Ga., to face South Georgia State, then have their first home doubleheader of the year Saturday when they face St. Petersburg.
