

SPORTS

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SJR STATE SOFTBALL

Central Florida flexes muscle

Patriots sweep conference opener, 8-0 and 9-1, Saturday afternoon in Ocala

Palatka Daily News

Let's just say the opening of the Mid-Florida Conference softball season did not go swimmingly for St. Johns River State College on Saturday.

After running out to the best start in program history after 29 games, the Vikings were taken down by arguably the best team in the conference.

Host College of Central

Florida defeated the Vikings by scores of 8-0 and 9-1, improving the Patriots, ranked fifth in the most recent state poll, to 29-7 overall. The Vikings slipped to 22-9.

"We started off against maybe the best team in the conference," said Vikings coach Jill Semento, whose Vikings will try to bounce back this afternoon with a conference doubleheader at her old stomping grounds as coach, Lake-Sumter. "I wish we'd have played better, but we hope we'll be better at home next time."

Kayla Jensen had a big doubleheader for the Patriots,

going 6-for-8 with four runs scored and an RBI. First-game winning pitcher Lindsay Markham tossed a two-hit shutout, walking one and striking out three, to improve to 14-2. In the second game, Morgan Cushman (9-3) allowed one run on three hits, walking none and striking out seven, the only blemish being a solo home run by Selena Bezares, who was 2-for-2 in the game. It was Bezares' 10th home run of the season.

Otherwise, Ariel McCullough, Kelsey Friend and Brittany Lewis had one hit each in the twinbill.