

SPORTS

St. Johns softball team coughs up 10 homers, sinks to bottom of MFC

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St. Johns River State College softball coach Jill Semento got right to the point about her team's defense Saturday against Florida State College-Jacksonville.

"You can't play defense on balls that go over the fence," she said.

And that was the case. The Blue Wave hit 10 home runs in the Mid-Florida

Conference doubleheader in a sweep of the Vikings, taking the first game, 9-0, behind the six-hit shutout of Caitlyn Berry, then took the second game, 10-9, in nine innings – taking the lead, appropriately, on a home run, the second of the game, by Madison Williams.

"I don't know where to begin to solve that," said Semento when asked about reducing opponent home runs. "I've

never had to deal with something like that before. We did get squeezed a little by the strike zone of the umpires. They weren't giving our pitchers the corners, but that doesn't excuse all those home runs being hit."

Berry, who had one walk and two strikeouts in her shutout, delivered a home run in the first game. Selena Nunez went 3-for-3, while Maegan

Stone, Selena Bezares and Reganne McCarl all went 1-for-3.

In the second game, the Vikings tied it up in the bottom of the seventh when McCarl singled home pinch-runner Marissa Huggins with one out. But with the winning run on second, a strikeout and a flyout ended the threat.

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And it was Williams, who finished 3-for-5 with three runs scored and two RBI, who delivered the

deciding blow with a home run over the center field fence off losing pitcher Ariel McCullough that decided the nightcap.

For the Vikings (24-15), who now find themselves in the Mid-Florida Conference basement at 2-8 and losers of five straight, Kelsea Friend was 3-for-5 with two runs scored

and an RBI. Nunez was 2-for-5. Bezares, McCarl, Stone, Morgan Scala, Rachel Johnson and Jaime Valenta each collected one hit. Bezares' hit her 12th home run of the season.

"We're not playing anywhere close to where we did at the start of the year," said Semento, whose team

travels to Daytona State for a conference doubleheader with the Falcons at 4 p.m. today. "We've still got a chance (for a postseason berth), but we've got to start sweeping people. We had a good practice (Monday) and worked on things that need to be improved. Hopefully, we can start on getting back against Daytona."