

Rough Going



CHRIS DEVITTO / Palatka Daily News

Pictured in a game earlier this season, SJR State's Ariel McCullough dropped to 15-10 with a loss in the second game of Thursday's doubleheader.

Struggles Continue

Vikings swept by conference-leading Central Florida as losing streak reaches 9

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And the struggles keep going for the St. Johns River State College softball team.

The Vikings dropped a home doubleheader to the top team in Mid-Florida Conference play and the No. 3 team in the state, Central Florida, by scores of 9-1 and 11-0 on Thursday.

The losses extended the Vikings' losing streak to nine and dropped them to 24-19 overall and 2-12 in the Mid-Florida Conference. With 10 confer-

ence games left in the season, the Vikings find themselves four games behind Daytona State and Santa Fe for fourth place and a possible postseason date in hopes of a trip to the state tournament.

After giving up a pair of grand slams to Daytona State's Sammi Poehlman in the Vikings' 10-1 loss in the nightcap of the last doubleheader on Tuesday at Daytona State, the Vikings gave up a grand slam in each game of Thursday's twinbill.

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In the first game, it was Tiffany Steczo who connected for the grand slam as part of a six-run third inning that broke a 3-0 lead wide open. She finished 2-for-2 with a run scored and five RBI.

Winning pitcher Lindsay Markham, who leads the state in wins with a 21-3 record, allowed five hits, walked one batter, hit one batter and struck out nine. Maegan Stone went 2-for-2, while Morgan Scala, Kelsea Friend and Selena Bezares had one hit with Bezares providing the lone highlight of the day for the Vikings, connecting on her 13th home run of the season.

In the nightcap, it was Elaina Lukas delivering the crushing blow with a grand slam in the second inning off losing hurler Ariel McCullough (15-10). The Patriots (40-8, 13-1) scored six runs in the second, then added five more runs in the third with Anina Fernandez adding a two-run home run. Morgan Cushman scattered singles by Bezares and Reganne McCarl, while walking one batter, hitting two others and striking out six.

The Vikings will host Lake-Sumter (28-21, 7-7) in a conference doubleheader at 4 p.m. Tuesday.