

Vikings rally for split in Jax

Palatka Daily News

Although the chances of making it to the fourth and final postseason spot for the upcoming Mid-Florida Conference playoffs are very, very faint, the St. Johns River State College softball team has something to play for this weekend.

That and the fact the Vikings can have their second 30-win season in program history looms.

The Vikings split at Florida State College-Jacksonville on Thursday in a Mid-Florida Conference doubleheader, bouncing back from a 13-1 drubbing in the first game to collect a 12-6 victory in the nightcap to improve to 27-22 overall and 5-15 in the Mid-Florida Conference.

The Blue Wave, winding down its final season under the tutelage of long-time coach Jami Lind, are 18-22 overall, but 9-11 in the conference. One more FSC-J win or one more SJRSC loss in the final doubleheaders of the weekend will eliminate the Vikings from any hope of a postseason state tournament berth.

"We can play as freely as we want," Vikings coach Jill Semento said after the split. The Vikings host Daytona State at 1 p.m. in a conference doubleheader on Saturday, then travel to Seminole State for a makeup doubleheader at 1 p.m. Sunday. "We'll just going to have as much fun as we can."

The only hit for the Vikings in the opener against Caitlyn Berry (14-11) was a fourth-inning single by Reganne McCarl. Berry walked one Viking and struck out five. Madison Williams continued a big freshman year by going 3-for-3 with three runs scored and four RBI, two of those being home runs. The Blue Wave smacked four home runs, contributing to nine of the 13 runs they scored in the opener.

Trailing 1-0 in the second game, the Vikings bounced back with five runs in the second on a theft of home by Morgan Scala off a double-steal attempt and two-run home runs by Brooklynn Basile, her third of the season, and the first home run by former Interlachen High standout Rachel Johnson, a two-run shot. Johnson, hitting ninth in a lineup made up by her Vikings teammates instead of Semento, went 3-for-4 with two runs and four RBI, missing the cycle by a triple.

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"Our team moved some people around in the lineup with Rachel in the nine hole of the lineup," Semento said. "It was pretty close to what we've been doing all year. Karsyn Barnes got to play (she had a hit). I'll let them pick the lineup before the first game (Saturday). If the

team can get behind that, I can get behind it, too. If we win that first game, they can do it again for the second game."

Scala was 3-for-4 as part of the 17-hit attack in the nightcap. Brittany Lewis was 2-for-4 with three runs and Selena Bezares finished 2-for-5 with an RBI. Selena Nunez, McCarl, who hit a home run, her second of the year, Basile, winning pitcher Madison Roeshink (6-6), Kelsea Friend and Alyssa Rosenbaum also had hits in the

second game.

If the Vikings win one more game, they will match the 28-win season of Semento's first team in 2016. Three wins get them to 30, putting them second in doing so in program history behind the 2015 team of coach Katie Brosky that ended up playing in the state tournament.

"We're looking to finish the season on a high note, especially for the freshmen coming back next year," Semento said.