

SPORTS

Good and bad for St. Johns softball during 2-2 tournament performance

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After a 2-2 weekend with her St. Johns River State College softball team, new coach Marti Littlefield said there are issues to clean up.

But she said she saw a lot of good things in the JUCO Kickoff Classic at Edward Moore Complex in Clearwater, where the Vikings beat Richard Bland College of Virginia, 5-4, and the Puerto Rico national

team, 11-3, but fell to Iowa Central Community College, 11-9, and Broward, 8-2.

"I feel OK about coming out of the weekend," Littlefield said. "Right from the beginning, you know your team is not going to perform perfectly. Beside the basic mistakes we need to fix, we have good pitching, defense and hitting. I'm neither mad nor surprised by what I saw.

"This was a chance to see what kinks we need to work out. It's a matter of going over coverages more and just communicating. You understand that there's going to be throwing and fielding mistakes, but once we get the other things under control, I think we're going to have a good season."

In the opening loss to Iowa Central, Parker Mathews' RBI single

broke a 9-9 tie in the top of the seventh inning. In defeat, Cardaejia Talley was 2-for-3 with a run scored, Kelsea Friend scored three times and Brooklynn Basile went 1-for-4 with a run and two RBI. Lauryn Markis, Kendell Moody, Taylor Finney, Jaime Valenta and JesseAnne Ackerman had one hit each.

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The Vikings were down 4-2 to Richard Bland when Moody scored on a passed ball in the third sixth inning to cut the deficit to a run, then Friend scored on a passed ball and a groundout by Talley brought in Finney with the go-ahead run. Finney was 2-for-4 with a run, Moody was 2-for-3 with two runs and Bri Clapper

finished 2-for-2 with two runs. Valenta added the other run. Maddie Thomas got the win in relief, allowing no hits in two innings, walking one batter and striking out five.

On Saturday, the Vikings lost to Broward, now coached by former Palatka High standout pitcher Devin Higginbotham. Haley Hendricks finished 2-for-3 with three RBI to lead the Seahawks, who went 4-0 during the week-end event. Raquel Galvan went the distance on a five-hitter, walk-

ing two and striking out three. For the Vikings, Karsyn Barnes was 2-for-3 with an RBI, while Clapper and Talley had a run and an hit each and Friend had a hit and RBI.

In the win over the Puerto Rican team, Moody, a Palatka High product, was 2-for-4 with two runs and an RBI and Finney finished 2-for-4 with a run and an RBI. Friend (two runs), Barnes (a run), Talley (run, RBI), Clapper (run, RBI), Ackerman (run, two RBI) and Savannah Law had one

hit with Law's hit being a solo inside-the-park home run, the Vikings' first home run of the year.

Amanda Jessel went the first four innings to collect the win, allowing one run on three hits, while walking none and striking out four. Tomas came in to finish, striking out six in two innings, allowing two runs, one earned, on two hits with one walk.

The Vikings will host St. Petersburg in a doubleheader on Saturday.