

SPORTS

Four softball games, three walkoffs

St. Johns sweeps Thursday, swept on Friday

Palatka Daily News

The St. Johns River State College softball team had a very interesting 24-plus hours Thursday and Friday.

After throwing back-to-back shutouts Thursday at home against South Georgia State, including a first game, 1-0 walk-off win, the Vikings found themselves on the short end of two walk-offs Friday at St. Petersburg College, losing the first game 9-8, after holding leads in the seventh, eighth and ninth innings, then falling in the second game to St. Petersburg, 8-7, after the Titans (5-3) tied things up with a run in the seventh, then won it in the eighth inning.

"They've got to figure out a way to motivate themselves," first-year Vikings coach Marti Littlefield said. "Right now, they have no self-motivation and we're making too many mental mistakes. And part of it, too, was that this was their fifth and sixth games this week and all these games are starting to wear a little bit on them with nagging back and knee issues. (Today) we're going to be taking care of our bodies, but we're going to work at defensive situational play."

In the wild first game Friday, St. Petersburg tied the game at 4-4 when Isabella Huff delivered a two-run double and Kaylen Gill added an RBI single. The Vikings (5-5) took the lead in the top of the eighth when Bri Clapper delivered an RBI single and a grounder by Jaime Valenta was mishandled for an error, allowing another run to score, making it 6-4. But the Titans tied it up in the bottom of the eighth when Sydney Tulin drove in a run with a double and a forceout as the Vikings tried to get the game-ending double play off the bat of Samantha Crim plated Tulin.

In the top of the ninth, the Vikings went back ahead again when Karsyn Barnes singled in Jessi Clapper and a bases-loaded walk to Clapper brought

in Savannah Law. But again, the Titans responded. They loaded the bases and Valerie Colimodio hit a double down the left field line to knock in Kelsey Holbert and Huff, then a throwing error on the play allowed Gill with the winning run.

For the Vikings in the first game, Kelsea Friend was 2-for-3 with two runs and Clapper was 2-for-4 with three RBI. Law, Taylor Finney, Brooklyn Basile, Valenta, Abby Ferlin and Kendell Moody had one hit each for St. Johns River.

The Vikings held a 7-6 lead in the bottom of the seventh inning of the nightcap when an error on a groundball hit by Ashley Smith plated Tulin with the tying run. In the bottom of the eighth, Sydney Mickel sacrificed Gill, who started the inning on second as part of the extra-inning tiebreaker scenario, to third. Huff hit a groundball to second baseman Lauryn Markis, who played deep and threw to first for the out, but that allowed Gill to score the winning run.

For the Vikings in the nightcap, Markis was 3-for-3 with three RBI, while Finney was 2-for-4 with an RBI and Ferlin, Moody, Clapper and Friend added one hit each.

In Thursday's opener with South Georgia, JesseAnne Ackerman singled with one out. Friend singled her to second. One out later, Cardaejia Talley doubled home pinch-runner Savannah Law with the winning run. Winning pitcher Maddie Tomas went the distance on a four-hitter, walking two batters and striking out two. At the plate, Ackerman was 2-for-3 with Talley, Valenta, Friend and Finney each getting one hit.

In the nightcap, the only run the Vikings needed when Ferlin singled in Clapper. Markis singled in Friend in the fourth inning and Ferlin doubled home Valenta in the fifth. Ferlin was 2-for-3, while Clapper finished up 2-for-3, Barnes was 2-for-4 and Markis and Talley each had a hit.

The Vikings will be back on the road for a rare Sunday doubleheader when they travel to Pasco-Hernando. It begins at 1 p.m.