

SPORTS

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B SECTION

SJR State softball team stumbles Sunday

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The St. Johns River State College softball team is at a crossroads early in their first season under new coach Marti Littlefield.

The Vikings lost a pair of games Sunday to struggling host Eastern Florida State in Melbourne, falling in the first game of the doubleheader, 8-3, then taking it hard in a 12-4 mercy-rule loss in the nightcap, leaving the Vikings at 6-8 with a trip to 7-8 Polk State today for another doubleheader. The Vikings have lost five of their last six.

"I've tried being fun, being tough, being desperate," Littlefield said when asked how frustrating the first 14 games have been. "I'm just trying to find the right mentality with this team. We're stuck right now and we need to

change this around."

The Vikings' Bri Clapper singled home Brooklynn Basile to tie the opening game at 2-all. Eastern Florida State (4-10) got Nikki Pennington's leadoff home run off losing hurler Amanda Jessel in the bottom of the fifth broke the tie. The Titans added another run to make it 4-2, but the Vikings bounced back with a run in the sixth when JesseAnne Ackerman grounded out to score Kelsea Friend. With the tying run on third base, Karsyn Barnes grounded out to end the threat.

The Titans added four runs in the bottom of the sixth to put the game away. Pennington was 2-for-3 with two runs scored and an RBI, while Caitlyn Meyer finished 3-for-4 with a run and an RBI.

Cardaejia Talley finished 2-for-4 with a run scored, while Abby Ferlin ended up 2-for-3 with an RBI. Adding solo hits for the Vikings were Barnes, Clapper, Reganne McCarl, Basile and Jaime Valenta.

In the second game, four Vikings errors helped extend innings and Emily Bartlett and Madison Neuhaus took advantage. Bartlett finished 3-for-3 with a run and three RBI and Neuhaus was 1-for-3 with three runs scored and three RBI. The Titans jumped out to a 3-1 lead on starting pitcher Kendell Moody and never looked back.

Friend was 2-for-3 with a run and an RBI in the five-inning nightcap for the Vikings, while McCarl, Talley, Ferlin and Lauryn Markis had one hit each.