

SPORTS

Vikings snap out of it, split with Polk

Palatka Daily News

After losing eight of its last 10 games, first-year St. Johns River State College softball coach Marti Littlefield said her team played "substantially better" in the second game of a doubleheader Tuesday at home.

As for the first game that extended the losing ways to nine losses in 11 games, well, that was a different story.

"I nearly lost my mind," she said. "I ended up saying some very mean things, maybe hoping to spark a fire under them."

It didn't in the first game as the Vikings lost to Polk State, 10-9, but the team's fortunes turned a complete 180 degrees in the second game after taking down Polk, 7-4, in the nightcap to gain a split and improve to 8-12 for the season.

"The second game came and we were a different team," Littlefield said. "They took care of business. They threw the ball to where it needed to be thrown and got the timely hits. It was much better."

Down 3-1 in the second game to Polk State (9-10), Brooklynn Basile began to light that spark under her team by blasting a three-run home run to make it 4-3. Polk State tied the game in the top of the sixth, but the Vikings took the lead in the bottom of the sixth when Taylor Finney doubled home Abby Ferlin and Jaime Valenta, then scored herself on a Reganne McCarl double.

Maddie Tomas (4-2) got the win by throwing 3 1/3 innings of relief, walking one batter, striking out two, while giving up just one hit and one run. Valenta was 2-for-2 with an RBI, while Finney finished 2-for-4 with a run and two RBI and McCarl was 2-for-4 with a run and an RBI. Basile and Brianna Clapper each had one hit for the Vikings in the nightcap.

In the first game, Megan Wilder's single brought home Krista Hoyt in the top of the seventh inning to give Polk a 10-6 lead. But the Vikings made it interesting in the bottom of the inning when Abby Ferlin hit her first home run of the season, a three-run shot, to cut the lead to a run. However, the next batter made an out to end it.

The Vikings, who did not help themselves with six errors in the first game, were led by Kelsea Friend's 3-for-4, three-run, one-RBI performance. Clapper was 2-for-5 with two runs and an RBI, Ferlin finished 2-for-5 with a run and three RBI and Karsyn Barnes was 2-for-3 with two runs scored. Cardaejia Talley, McCarl, Valent and Finney had one hit each for the Vikings, who host Pasco-Hernando in a twinbill on Thursday.