

SPORTS

COLLEGE SOFTBALL

Vikings split twinbill with 3-19 Palm Beach

Begins conference play Saturday with Central Fla.

Palatka Daily News

The nonconference part of the St. Johns River State College softball team's season is over.

The Mid-Florida Conference portion of the schedule is now upon the Vikings and with six days to practice before the opener in Ocala against state powerhouse College of Central Florida, first-year Vikings coach Marti Littlefield is trying to make the most of that time.

"We'll be spending a lot of time working on endurance and focus," Littlefield said after the Vikings split their last nonconference doubleheader before the MFC schedule kicks in, splitting Saturday at 3-19 Palm Beach State. They won first game, 8-7, before losing 9-1 in five innings in the nightcap.

"My goal at this point is to keep them focused and in it every out and every at-bat of every game," Littlefield said.

In a back-and-forth first game, the Vikings (11-13) broke the 7-7 tie in the top of the seventh winning when Cardaejia Talley reached on an error, moved to second on a sacrifice bunt and scored on a single by Abby Ferlin.

The Panthers threatened in the bottom of the seventh inning against pitcher Maddy Tomas by putting two runners on base with one out, but back-to-back strikeouts ended the threat and game as Tomas improved to 7-2, scattering 11 hits, walking three batters and striking out nine.

Ferlin finished 3-for-4 with four RBI, while Reganne McCarl ended up 3-for-5 with two runs and an RBI. Bri Clapper and Talley each went 2-for-5 with two runs scored with Clapper knocking in two runs and Lauryn Markis added a hit and an RBI.

In the nightcap, the Vikings mustered singles by Talley, Karsyn Barnes and JesseAnne Ackerman against winning pitcher Destiny Cornelius, who walked none and struck out none.