

SPORTS

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Vikings place cap on difficult softball season with a victory

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One of the roughest seasons the St. Johns River State College softball team has had came to an end on Saturday.

But at least it came to an end on a happy note. After losing the first two games of a doubleheader-plus – which included the conclusion of a game that was suspended by rain on March 26 – the Vikings captured a 9-5 victory in the finale of the regularly scheduled doubleheader to finish the season at 15-33, while going 4-20 in the Mid-Florida Conference.

The Vikings lost the continuation game from three weeks ago, 5-4, and then lost the first game of the scheduled

doubleheader, 11-4.

“It was an eventful season, and I learned a lot from it,” first-year Vikings coach Marti Littlefield said. “I think it made me more patient as a head coach. I definitely grew a lot over the year. I had a lot to work with, but at times, I felt like I wanted to work more than they did.”

Tied at 1-all in the second inning, the Vikings broke the tie with two runs on RBI singles by JesseAnne Ackerman and Abby Ferlin. Ahead 5-2 in the fourth, the Vikings tacked on four more runs, highlighted by a two-run home run by Jaime Valenta.

The Vikings held on from there to salvage the final game against Daytona State

(23-22, 7-17), with whom they split four games this year. Ferlin was 2-for-4 with a run and an RBI, Cardaejia Talley and Valent each went 2-for-3 with Talley knocking in a run and an RBI, while Valenta scored three runs and had the two RBI. Ackerman, winning pitcher Amanda Jessel, Karsyn Barnes and Taylor Finney had one hit each.

When the Vikings and Falcons started the day Saturday, they picked up the suspended game with the Vikings down 5-2 in the top of the sixth inning. An error off a Savannah Law grounder scored Jessel and Kelsea Friend singled home Harli Phillips. Littlefield tried to wave home Finney with the tying run on the

hit, but she was thrown out at the plate and killed the rally. The Vikings loaded the bases in the seventh inning, but Law struck out to end the game.

Talley and Valenta each went 3-for-4 in the continuation game, while Ferlin was 2-for-4 with two RBI. Friend, Barnes, Jessel and Phillips all had one hit in the game.

The next game saw Daytona State swinging for the fences – the Falcons delivered five home runs, including three in a six-run sixth inning. Megan Donahue got things going with a three-run home run in the first inning off losing pitcher Maddie Tomas, and then Aberese Trotti had a three-run home

run, Morgan Arcia delivered a two-run home run and Alexis Baker added a solo shot in the six-run fourth. Giavonna Auricchio added a solo home run in the seventh to put it away.

Ferlin, Barnes, Talley, Jessel, Valenta all had hits in the second game, as did Palatka High product Kendell Moody, who blasted her third home run of the season, a solo shot in the fourth.

Littlefield said she has recruited 18 players, mainly from Texas and Florida, to come in and give the Vikings a totally new look next season.

“I have a lot of kids coming in next year,” Littlefield said. “I’m hoping we can turn this around.”