

SPORTS

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Young St. Johns softball team salvages extra-inning victory from tournament

Palatka Daily News

With a roster of just three sophomores and 19 freshmen, the St. Johns River State College softball team is going to have some difficulties early in the 2020 season.

But by scoring two runs to tie it in the bottom of the seventh inning, then scoring the game-winner in the bottom of the eighth to beat East Georgia State, 9-8, the Vikings at least could get away from the JUCO Kickoff Classic at the Eddie Moore Softball Complex with a victory on Saturday.

"I was upset for the longest time after (the tournament)," second-year head coach Marti Littlefield said. "But

every game we competed in. I have to understand I'll have eight starters on the field every game that is a freshman. We're really young, but the talent is there. The energy is there. We need a little more time and experience under our belts.

"I was relieved to get that win (to end the event)," Littlefield said. "I wanted that win for our young players. They worked hard and they needed that win."

Down 8-6 going to the bottom of the seventh and down to the final out, Madison McAllister singled. Soraya Hernandez and Brealyn Holley reached on errors to load the bases for

Kimberly Cheung, and the Wesley Chapel product delivered a double to center field to score both McAllister and Hernandez to tie it up.

Starting with Madison Houtz on second base in the eighth, McAllister singled to center field with two outs to bring in Houtz for the game-winner.

McAllister and Houtz were each 3-for-5 with a run scored in the win, while combining for three RBI. Cheung was 2-for-5 with two runs and Ashley Kirkbride finished 2-for-4 with three runs scored and two RBI. Breanna Cefaliello. Kaylee Anthony, Hernandez and Holley had one hit each.

Earlier on Saturday, the Vikings lost a slugfest with Miami-Dade, 13-8. Cefaliello and Taylor Shelley each went 2-for-3 with Cefaliello scoring once and Shelly twice. Kirkbride (three RBI), McAllister (two runs), Hernandez (two RBI) and Morgan Adamek had one hit each.

On Friday in the opening day of the event, Polk scored twice in the bottom of the seventh to beat the Vikings, 4-3, then East Florida State took down the Vikings, 8-4.

Osheiauna Phifer's two-run single in the bottom of the seventh won the game for Polk. The Vikings had taken the lead in the top of the seven against

the Eagles on a two-run double by Houtz, bringing in Cheung and McAllister. Houtz was 2-for-4 with two runs scored and an RBI, while Cheung, Anthony, Kirkbride, McAllister, Jessel and Cefaliello had one hit apiece.

Against East Florida, a four-run fifth by the Titans overturned a 4-3 deficit into a lead they never gave up. Kirkbride was 2-for-4 with a run and two RBI, while Houtz finished 2-for-4. Cheung, Anthony and McAllister had one hit each in the loss to the Titans.

The Vikings will host Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College at 1 p.m. in a doubleheader on Wednesday.