

SPORTS

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Weekend split lifts spirits for SJR State softball's Littlefield

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Another 2-2 weekend for the St. Johns River State College softball team has coach Marti Littlefield feeling somewhat good about her Vikings.

This time, she said, because of the competition.

"We were playing teams that were much tougher this time," she said. "There's still a lot of improvements to be

made and we're continually making adjustments. Right now, we've given up too many walks and hit batsmen with our pitching. But things are getting better."

The Vikings did well for themselves at the CMI (Courtney Miller Invitational, named after Seminole State's longtime successful coach) Tournament at Boombah Sports Complex in Sanford.

The Vikings beat Gulf Coast State, 7-6, in eight innings before losing to perennial power Indian River State, 5-0, on Saturday. On Sunday, the Vikings beat Broward, 10-2, then lost to St. Petersburg College, 6-4.

Taylor Shelley proved to be the hero in the win over Gulf Coast State on Friday. Shelley delivered a two-run home run in the sixth inning to finish a

five-run frame that tied the game at 5-all. Two innings later, Breanna Cefaliello started the inning at second base and was moved to third on a sacrifice bunt by Palatka High product Kendall Moody. Shelley delivered the single to knock in Cefaliello. Madison McAllister and Ashley Kirkbride were

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2-for-3 each with three runs combined in the win, while Cefaliello was 2-for-4 with two RBI and Shelley ended up 2-for-4 with a run scored and three RBI. Madison Houtz (one run, two RBI) and Kimberly Cheung had one hit each.

Taylor Owen's two-run home run highlighted a four-run second inning for Indian River in the second game for the Vikings on Friday. Winning pitcher Casey Kurent allowed six hits, walked five and struck out seven. For the Vikings, McAllister, Kirkbride, Houtz, Cefaliello, Soraya Hernandez and

Morgan Adamek had one hit each.

Syha Marks picked up her first career college victory against Broward, pitching five innings, scattering four hit, walking one batter and striking out four. The highlight of a six-run first inning for the Vikings was a Houtz solo home run. McAllister went 2-for-2 with three runs scored and two RBI, while Kirkbride was 2-for-4 with two RBI and Houtz finished 2-for-2 with two runs and an RBI. Cefaliello, Hernandez and Shelley had one hit each.

The Vikings (7-9) never recovered from a four-run first inning by St. Petersburg in the finale. For the Vikings in defeat, McAllister and Kirkbride were each 2-for-4 with a run scored, while Houtz was 2-for-4 and

Cefaliello was 2-for-4 with two RBI. Kaylee Anthony hit a home run for the Vikings.

The Vikings will next take on the Georgia Military College in a neutral site game at Valdosta State Wednesday starting at 3 p.m. Littlefield won a national championship on the NCAA Division II level at Valdosta State as a senior shortstop in 2012.