



USA's softball team meets at the pitchers mound during its 5-4 win over Jacksonville Sunday.

ALYSSA NEWTON

Softball dominates USA Invitational

Lady Jags fall to Chattanooga, but bounce back to win three straight

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Sports Editor

The No. 22 South Alabama softball team improved to 11-3 last week, defeating Nicholls State and winning three of four games in the South Alabama Invitational over the weekend.

No. 22 USA 7, Nicholls St. 2

The Jaguars defeated the Nicholls State Colonels 7-2 on Wednesday in Thibodaux, Louisiana. USA out-hit the Nicholls State 5-3 and took advantage of two Colonel errors to secure the victory, which was its seventh in a row.

"I thought this was a great win," said South Alabama head coach Becky Clark. "[Nicholls State] is a great team, and they compete. I thought it was a well-played game, and I didn't think there was a point in the game that we started to press."

Emily Messer had one run, one hit and two RBI, and Kaitlyn Griffith

had one run, one hit and one RBI for the Jaguars.

Devin Brown pitched for 5 innings for USA, before being replaced by Kalen McGill, who earned the victory.

Chattanooga 3, USA 1

The Jags had their seven-game win streak snapped by Chattanooga on Friday, behind a strong performance by Mocs' pitcher Cori Jennings.

The Jaguars fell to Chattanooga 3-1, and had not lost since falling to Eastern Kentucky 1-0 at the Sand Dollar Classic on Feb. 7.

Jennings (2-1) held South Alabama to one run on just seven hits, while striking out five batters.

"[Jennings] had a legitimate off-speed pitch, and we had a hard time adjusting to it," USA head coach Becky Clark said.

South Alabama went up 1-0 in the first on an RBI single by sophomore catcher Chloe Rathburn, but

that would be the only time the Jaguars could score.

Devin Brown (4-2) allowed just three hits and struck out nine batters, but gave up three runs and a season-high five walks in 5 1/3 innings.

USA 14, Ball State 6

Two home-runs by Kaitlyn Griffith allowed the South Alabama softball team to beat the Ball State Cardinals on Saturday. Griffith's two homers and six RBI tied two game records during the 14-6 win.

"Last night we came out and lost to UTC, and it was a great game but they were the better team," said Griffith. "Today we said we would come out and play our game and that's what we did."

Blair Johnson had three runs and one RBI, and Amanda Herron finished with two hits and four RBI.

"The sign of a good team is one that responds after things don't go the way you want the day before, and our kids came out today and had

strong bats," said South Alabama head coach Becky Clark.

USA 8, Sam Houston St. 0

On Saturday, South Alabama beat Sam Houston State via the mercy rule, shutting out the Bearkats 8-0 in five innings.

Freshman Devin Brown (5-2) struck out 15 of the 20 batters she faced and allowed just two hits over five innings.

Stephanie Pilkington kicked off the scoring frenzy for South Alabama in the first on a two-RBI double to right center field. Blair Johnson also doubled to score Pilkington. In the second, Amanda Minahan knocked Kristian Foster on a single to left field and Emily Messer scored on Pilkington's second hit of the day. Minahan would later score on a sacrifice fly by Chloe Rathburn.

The Jaguars finished off the scoring in the fourth on an RBI ground-out by Taylor Bahos and a sacrifice fly by Kaitlyn Griffith.

Pilkington finished the day 2-for-2 with three RBI and two runs scored. Minahan also went 2-for-2 at the dish with two runs scored and an RBI.

USA 5, Jacksonville 4

Freshman Haleigh Lowe connected on a walk-off single in extra innings Sunday to power the South Alabama Jaguars softball team to a 5-4 victory over Jacksonville University.

The Dolphins (7-9) tied the game in the top of the seventh inning on a two-out RBI double by Kristen Griffith, and two innings later, Lowe would deliver her late-game heroics.

South Alabama (11-3) bounced back from Friday's loss to Chattanooga by winning three straight games in the South Alabama Invitational.

Stephanie Pilkington was 2-for-3 for the Jaguars with an RBI and two runs scored.

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CONTRIBUTED TO THIS ARTICLE

