

They'll Call the Shots; This is Strength vs. Strength

By MARK SMITH and PETER TESTA

The Hawks are Plenty Good...

By MARK SMITH

Part of the attraction of football is the legitimate importance of opening day in no other major sport can the first contest be so crucial, let's say, to a Pittsburgh or a Notre Dame. To an Illinois against Michigan. Even the Bears and the Lions.

Or a Marian Catholic against a Hillcrest on Saturday. Aside from the rivalry permeating this natural pairing, what the Spartans do against the Hawks could put them in or out of post-season play and they will act like it day after tomorrow.

There's no way an Illini-8 co-champion or runner-up could be left out of the state playoffs, as Marian was last year, of one of their non-conference games had been a win or a tie in Country Club Hills.

"THIS is probably as big an opening game as we've ever had at Marian," says Dave Mattio who has just seven seniors back from his 7-2 Illini-8 co-champions.

"Dave always turns out good teams," warns Hillcrest coach Carl Zambo. "They're always tough and well disciplined." Even their side's 23-game home winning streak doesn't calm Hawk hierarchy.

"In these area games home doesn't mean much," explained assistant coach Tim Hart who did not think the Hillcrest schedule, in general, was easy just because six of nine slated tilts will be held in "Hawk Heaven." "Both teams have their crowd there and with all the people yelling on both sides it really doesn't make much difference where you are."

Zambo, Hart and assistant Gene Johnston shuffled their listings after Saturday's scrimmage and entering Tuesday's practice, this was the first thing.

THE all-senior defense had Frank Falls (6-foot, 170 pounds) and Jeff Baldwin (6-0, 180) at defensive ends with Bob Van Sleete (5-8, 185) and Tom Comstock (6-0, 210) at tackles. Co-captain Ron Coluzzi (5-9, 185) and Chris Shupryt (5-11, 165) are at outside linebackers with a 6-foot-3, 200 pound Ron Vaught, impressive to his coaches in Saturday's workout, at one inside LB post.

The other inside linebacker slot will be an

inverted safety as will the player lining up at safety. This means when an offensive play is run toward a side of the Hawk defense, the inverted safety on that side will close on the ball while the opposite "invert" will retreat to cover up.

Vic Harris (602, 180) and Tom McCarthy (5-10, 165) will man those two spots while backup QB Joel Seiner (5-10, 165) and Gerald Weaver (5-9, 155) will play cornerback. Offense had returning starters Tom Stupeck (6-2, 200) at center, tackle and tight end, Coluzzi and Van Sleete will double as guards as will Comstock at the other tackle.

CO-CAPTAIN Dolan Bozerman and lone junior first string Jeff Dudukis (6-0, 195) will halfback with Weaver listed as fullback, 6-foot-1, 190 pound Jack Phillips is listed at QB although Hart says, "I wouldn't be afraid to use either one of them" (Phillips or Seiner).

Wide receiver is still unsettled with varsity basketball center Deano Vuleano (603, 190) and Eugene Paradise (5-10, 190) almost even.

"That's pretty much the way we'll go," said Zambo, "and let people play themselves out of the lineup." Ends or backs will shuttle plays.

The third-year coach doesn't like players to have to go both ways so he hopes that junior defensive tackles Ralph Lewrenz (6-5, 210) and Mike Bolling (5-10, 175) or surgery-recovered senior Tim Hunter (6-2, 210) could eventually free Van Sleete and Comstock for just offense. Junior Mike Torner, 5-foot-8, 155 pounds, or Bozeman could similarly free Seiner or Weaver at cornerback. Fast junior Lowell Jones, holder of three SICA East track records as a sophomore, is just behind Kudukis and Bozeman at halfback. "He's looking better," says Zambo.

BOZEMAN is considered a valuable defender, possible the best in the secondary, but he is not slated to start there. His defensive availability depends on the offensive time he logs. "He doesn't care where he plays," smiles Zambo. "He just wants to play football."

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So Are the Spartans...

By PETER TESTA

Last year, it would have been quite a game.

This year, Saturday's Marian-Hillcrest meeting in Country Club Hills still figures to be a first-class football attraction.

Carl Zambo's Hawks swept to their fourth straight SICA divisional crown last year only to be knocked out in the first round of the Class 4A playoffs for the second consecutive season by Joliet Catholic, the Illini-8 title representative and state 4A winner the past two campaigns.

IF IT wasn't for a season-ending over time defeat at the hands of Joliet Central, none other than Dave Mattio's Spartans would have served as Hillcrest's opponent in post-season action, as Marian would have finished its I-8 play with a perfect conference mark in 1976 if they could have triumphed over the Steelmen.

Although Hillcrest participated in the playoffs while Marian stayed home, the Spartans can make the argument that they recorded a 16-6 victory over the same Hilltopper team that eliminated the Hawks by 28-14 count.

Playing Hillcrest in its home opener must be somewhat like facing Ohio State in Columbus, as Mattio is well aware of the Hawks' 23-game winning streak. "We'll be at a disadvantage going into this game," Mattio said of his inexperienced 38-man squad, "but a loss wouldn't be a catastrophe."

The Hawks, like Marian, also are faced with playing some new men at the skilled positions, but Hillcrest has a larger turnout of players than the Spartans, and as a consequence, many more lettermen. Commenting on the prospects for Saturday's game, Mattio stated, "Obviously, this is a very important game for both schools. The rivalry between us is strong, and both of us have good programs. Whoever can develop their players faster will have the advantage in this game.

SUNDAY's intra-squad scrimmage served to clarify Mattio's mind as to who will be Marian's first-team offensive and defensive players in most cases, but some positions are still unsettled just two days before the opener.

One Spartan who will enter the season in good condition is Marian's new quarterback, Karl

Volkman. The 6-foot-2, 185 pound senior had a productive afternoon in Sunday's scrimmage, as his passing and ball-handling brought a smile to Mattio's face. "Karl's been very impressive since we began our two-a-day workouts," said Mattio.

Jeff Martin's hard-running has given him one of Marian's halfback berths, but the other slot is still up for grabs, although Mattio is leaning towards 155 pound junior Mike Petrarca for Saturday's contest. Sophomore Dave Brockhagen and senior Jerrell Stringer are still dead-even for the fullback job.

Todd Bruni, a 240-pound senior, is the only Spartan certain of playing both ways, at tackle in both the offensive and defensive lines. Senior Jim Denman will line up opposite Bruni at offensive tackle, and senior guards Peter Aleck and Mike Sass, along with sophomore center Tom Van Dyck complete Marian's offensive interior.

JUNIOR Scott Janus, brother of last year's all-area Spartan end Shawn, will be the wide receiver, with a pair of juniors, Mark Panozzo and Chris Roache, still battling for the starting nod at tight end.

The defensive front four is ready with Bruni and 195 pound junior Jeff Scheld playing inside, and junior Dennis McCarron and either of a pair of seniors, Tom Shander or Tom Wieser, at the containment ends. Junior Mike Broderick will be in the middle of the linebacking trio that will also included Stringer and 195 pound junior Mike Bartolomei.

Don Prior, a 143 pound senior, is the only certain starter in the secondary, with seniors Tony Jiganti and Charlie Funk, and juniors Tim O'Meara and John Velo listed as possible starters. Bartolomei will take care of the place-kicking duties, with Martin handling the punting chores.

Many coaches have definite ideas about their offensive and defensive formations, but not Mattio. "We're blessed with intelligent players, so we'll use multiple alignments with out offense and defense," declared Mattio.

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