

# *The Big 2 of Illini-8 Renew Old Rivalry*

By PETER TESTA

The situation is so similar to last year's that it's eerie.

Marian, all victorious with the exception of a non-conference loss, facing Joliet Catholic, defending class 4A champions, rated as the top football team in the area, with an undefeated record and another lengthy winning streak.

Even when the site of the game will be the same, Chicago Height's Sarff Field, where last season Coach Dave Mattio directed an inspired group of Spartans to their finest hour in sports, a 16-6 decision over the Hilltoppers that was the lone blemish suffered by Gordie Gillespie's squad on its way to its second consecutive state title.

DAVE Mattio has only seven players who know what its like to defeat Joliet Catholic in a football game, seniors Karl Volkman, Mark Blankenberger, Jeff Martin, Peter Aleck, Jim Denman and Todd Bruni, and junior Mike Petrarca. But the number is really less than that since Martin, who waited two years for the opportunity to play regularly at halfback, fractured his ankle at the conclusion of an outstanding display of versatility in Marian's 30-9 opening game win over Hillcrest.

Meanwhile, the 6-foot-1, 170-pound Volkman has developed in the first three games into the top quarterback in the area on a statistical basis, completing 53 per cent of his passes for an average of 104 yards per game. This, in his first season as starting signal-caller. He contributed to last year's memorable victory over the Hillmen form a defensive secondary position.

But Gillespie has may returnees from his 12-1 squad of 1976, who will quickly recognize the tam and the field that forced them to take a rare defeat. "Joliet Catholic will be up for us, no doubt about it," said Mattio. "They want to make amends for what happened to them last year."

Offense is the place where Marian must stand out to come up with another win over Joliet Catholic. The Spartans came up with 30 points in each of their two winning efforts, but committed six turnovers to stop themselves in 20-6 loss to Shepard two weeks ago. "We're a multi-faceted team," said Mattio in referring to his offensive and defensive alignments.

"FOR this game, we'll need to have more explosiveness from our backs," Mattio said. There

were only two occasions when Marian backs broke loose in last Saturday's 30-6 win over Joliet East, the first in the final stages of the third quarter when junior Mark Jurczyk ran for 20 yards before consecutive 1207ard pick-ups by Petrarca and Volkman, and the second combination run by the latter two as Volkman lateraled to Petrarca as the quarterback was being tackled for a 36-yard gain that set up the fourth and final Marian touchdown.

Bruni, the Spartans' all-area candidate at defensive and offensive tackle paced Marian's stoppage of Joliet East's attack last week by dropping 10 Kingsmen by himself and assisting on another 11 tackles, and the giant (603, 240 pounds) senior will be tested by a pair of Hilltopper offensive linemen Saturday, tackle John Meade who's 6-5 and 230 pounds, and Tom Thayer, a 6-4, 225-pound tackle.

Mattio will employ a 4-3-3 defense with a rover (senior Charlie Funk) to counter the Joliet Catholic offensive alignment of a power-1-formation with double tight ends. The Spartan defensive front of Bruni, 170-pound junior Dennis McCarron, 195-pound junior Jeff Scheid, and 165-pound senior Tom Shander have provided Marian with some outstanding individual play in the first three games, along with 190-pound junior linebacker Mike Bartolomei.

Since the injury to Martin, the Spartans have used four backs to team with Petrarca the only healthy 100-yard plus rusher Marian has. Juniors Mark Jurczyk and Byron Anderson, senior Jerral Stringer (also an outside linebacker defensively) and sophomore Jimmy Dee has accounted for 146 ground yards between them and Jurczyk and Anderson recorded their first touchdowns of the year in last week's victory.

Although Joliet Catholic has captured five of the last six I-8 football crowns, the Spartans have never been an easy team for the Hilltoppers to play. "With the exception of that game three years ago when they beat us 38-6, we've always had well-fought games," said Mattio. "It's always an emotional game on both sides," Mattio continued, "and neither of us will need any motivation for this one."

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