

Marian Has Run Out of Points

By PETER TESTA

When Marian's senior half back Mark Blankenberger crossed the goal line to put the finishing touches on a 30-6 Spartan victory over Joliet East three weeks ago, little did anyone realize at the time how long it would be before the next Marian score.

Two Illini-8 losses and 97 minutes and 37 seconds later, Coach Dave Mattio is only able to hope that Saturday will be the day the Spartans break the drought against I-8 contender Joliet Central at Sarff Field.

"We'll be a different team this week, you can count on it," said Mattio, who has seen the two other undefeated conference squads (Joliet Catholic and Lockport) blank what was expected to be a powerful Marian offense that has broken down to a near halt.

"WE HAVEN'T been able to get a rushing attack going, and as a result of that, the teams we've been playing have taken the pass away," Mattio explained, also alluding to a heavy injury toll suffered by his offensive platoon that has contributed to a fourth-place standing in the I-8 and a season mark that has fallen under the 500 level at 2-3.

Five senior starters from the attack until that routed Hillcrest in the season opener have now

been lost; halfback Jeff Martin, guards Peter Aleck and Mike Sass, tackle Jim Denman and fullback and linebacker Jerral Stringer.

"The talent we put on the field week to week has not been consistent," Mattio declared. "We haven't had the same seven kids in the line at any time all year."

"Our offense hasn't been consistent, but our defense hasn't been doing a bad job, except in the Catholic High game." Senior down lineman Todd Bruni and Tom Shander, and junior ends Dennis McCarron and Mark Panozzo strung out Lockport's option attack effectively to hold the Porters to just 106 yards, all of them by rushing.

MATTIO was also pleased with the work of his linebacking crew, headed by juniors Mike Broderick and Mike Bartolomei, and senior Steve Moser, who filled in for Stringer in the Lockport game and graded out well in the films.

The Marian secondary was unsettled when the year began, but an all-senior quartet of Don Prior, Charlie Funk, Tony Jiganti and Dave Klupchak have molded themselves into the regular defensive backfield posts, all four of them making solo tackles against the Porters. Senior defensive back Jim Thompson also was impressive last week.

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