

Tony's Interception Twists Tigers' Tail

By PETER TESTA

After 46 ½ minutes of almost dead-even football between Marian and Joliet West on the Tigers' home grounds Friday night, it seemed a virtual certainty that at least one overtime session would be necessary to decide the outcome. But Spartan defensive back Tony Jiganti had other plans.

The 5-foot-11, 185 pound senior stepped in front of the Illini-8's leading pass receiver, Joliet West's Pete Georgis, cradled a crossfield throw into his hands at Marian's 48-yard line and traveled a wide-open field for the touchdown that snapped a 6-6 tie and enabled the Spartans to record their third straight win, 14-6.

Jiganti's sprint was not a totally unexpected occurrence as his interception was the third in a streak of four enemy passes he has swiped in the last two games. He capped this thievery by picking off Tiger quarterback Jim Bolin's pass on the game's next scrimmage play to insure the fifth Spartan triumph in eight games, and a 4-2 I-8 ledger that clinches no worse than a third-place deadlock.

ONLY A 40-yard scoring play off an interception by Tim Barbour in 1968, and a similar jaunt by Dave Verbiscar in 1973 rivaled Jiganti's runback. The 52-yard effort set a new Spartan record in that category.

It was only logical that a defensive play would play the key role in the Marian victory, as the Spartans have only allowed two touchdowns in the three consecutive wins that have turned the year around.

Mike Petrarca, Marian's leading rusher in his junior season, dominated a 13-play drive that stretched over the first two quarters, gaining 46 of

his 73 yards on the march that ended with the 5-6, 155 pounder going over the goal line from two yards out. Sophomore Jimmy Dee was handed the assignment of breaking past the middle of Joliet West's line on a two-point conversion try, but was stopped.

Junior halfback James Fielder made sure that the Spartans wouldn't enjoy their six-point lead very long. He took Mike Bartolomei's boot after Petrarca's third touchdown of the year and returned it 40 yards to the Spartan 35.

TWO SWEEPS by the night's top rusher, Tiger tailback Gary Morrow (who gained 75 yards in 16 attempts) netted three yards before Bolin dropped back on third down and hit Georgis underneath the Spartan pass defense at Marian's 20. The Tiger end completed his journey to the end zone untouched for this third scoring pass in conference play just one minute, 48 seconds after the Spartan score, evening matters at 6-apiece, with 8:08 remaining in the first half.

Miller elected to try for the two points with another sweep by Morrow, but he was piled under by the Spartans' interior line, keeping the game tied.

Jiganti, Bartolomei, and senior tackle Todd Bruni took over along with the Joliet West defensive front for the rest of the game, as a 22-yard pass from Bohn to Georgis and a 16-yard run by Morrow were the only plays that accounted for more than 10 yards by the Tigers, and a nine-yard run by Petrarca in the final period was Marian's best scrimmage play for the final 32 minutes of action.

THE STAR
Sunday, October 30, 1977