

# *Intensity Major Objective For Marian-Hillcrest Clash*

By PETER TESTA

On more occasions than have seemed within the realm of possibility over the past couple of years, Marian would manage to make life extremely uncomfortable for a number of highly-touted opponents, only to fall tantalizingly short of crowning that effort with a victory.

So it might prove to be a good omen that the Spartans started-off the season last week by instead turning in something less than an overwhelming exhibition against Bremen, but accomplishing the desired objective, escaping from Midlothian with a three-point scalping of the Braves.

You can take your cue from Marian coach Dave Mattio to realize that the Spartans must register improvement to cope with the challenges they'll face as the campaign progresses.

"WE'RE FORTUNATE we won, considering how we played offensively," Mattio confessed. "We have a concept, about extending your performance and that's going to be our goal now."

The win brought about today's trivia question, namely: Who has the longest current winning streak among Illini-8 schools? For the longest time, there could be only one answer to that quiz, as Joliet Catholic rolled up its impressive list of conquests.

Last Saturday of course, the Hilltoppers learned the often painful lesson that nothing goes on forever, and the margin of defeat could imply that Joliet Catholic is not necessarily a cinch to capture another conference title.

If so, Marian, which now owns a somewhat more modest five-game string, might find itself in a position to ascend to the throne room.

SHOWINGS such as the one given by the Spartan defensive unit adds fuel to Marian's chances. "The defense played very well with the exception of the one touchdown," Mattio

commented. "Bob Klupchak (free safety), Bill Ranieri, and Tom Zarlengo (both linebackers) did one whale of a job.

"Earlier in the week we (the coaching staff) talked with the defense about situations where we might need to generate a big play," Mattio continued.

Trailing 9-6, Bremen reached midfield on the first playoff the final quarter. A quarterback sneak was the selection, but Ranieri led a gang of Spartans who plugged the opening, halting the drive. Senior defensive backs Don Zych, Joe Plomin and Mike Joyce helped limit the Braves to merely 40 yards and three first downs in the second half.

Switching from the 1-formation into a T-alignment sparked as 8 1/2 minute drive from the second half kick-off which set up senior Rich Fordon's decisive field goal. "When we went into a T, that eliminated the shifting in their defense," Mattio explained.

WITH THE Bremen contest safely tucked away, Marian embarks on Saturday's home opener with Hillcrest at Sarff field. Although the Hawks dropped their inaugural, Mattio is wary of Hillcrest's potential. "They'll present a lot of problems for us. Their overall team speed is so impressive. They can score from anywhere on the field."

The Hawks own an explosive backfield tandem. "The keys for our defense," Mattio pointed out, "will be to prevent their halfback, Tony Ramsey, from breaking loose, and to contain their quarterback, Terry Johnson."

Recent history has been all on Marian's side, since the Spartans have scored two straight lopsided victories in the series. "They've got the motivational edge," stated Mattio.

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