

Marian Opens I-8 Schedule

By PETER TESTA

There have been some major repairs constructed along the highway named, "Marian Football. Route 1979."

When the season began two weeks ago, the Spartans originally planned on traveling down a relaxing straightway stretch for much of the first half of the journey, tuning up their vehicle as they inspected the landscape.

Coach Dave Mattio's team wasn't permitted much of an opportunity to enjoy the scenery, because an unexpected crossroad is hazardously beckoning in the relatively new town of Bolingbrook, where Marian will take its initial Illini-8 step Saturday.

IT WASN'T any work crew, or even Johnny Carson's outrageous late-night movie character who deposited that fork in the road, rather a tenacious Hillcrest squad which must be held partially responsible.

The Hawks might be well-advised to turn their talents toward science fiction in their spare time, as they sent the Spartans reeling off course in more ways than one. Not only was Marian dealt its first defeat by a 20-14 margin, but the manner in which the decision was reached really induced nightmares.

An overtime period looked to be the only solution to the contest until Hillcrest carried an interception all the way back for the winning touchdown with just four seconds remaining, keeping intact a jinx affecting the Spartans.

"THERE'S NO other explanation for what happened other than that we did not execute like we had done in practice," said Mattio. "We did not play with emotion. When we were leading 14-6, you'd have thought we were four touchdowns behind," the Spartan coach added.

Despite the loss, halfback Tim McGugan continued his many-sided offensive show. Tallying every Marian point with a touchdown run, scoring pass and an extra-point reception, McGugan boosted his rushing total to 182 yards, and has accounted for 20 of the 23 Spartan points.

The Raiders, who finished in the league cellar last year, will be much tougher club to handle this time around, as they're the lone undefeated team in the conference, shadowing Rich South in their inaugural before belting Argo 31-0.

THE STAR
Thursday, September 20, 1979