

Marian Adjusts to Loss

By PETER TESTA

It came as no surprise to Marian coach Dave Mattio that his squad's Illini-8 opener last week at Bolingbrook carried an extra measure of importance.

"Even before the season started," Mattio explained prior to the contest, "I felt that this would be one of our 'turning point' games."

The world's most accurate prophet, though, couldn't have foreseen just how critical the condition of the Spartans was about to become.

THAT MOMENT of truth struck Marian with dramatic shock after just 8:43 had elapsed. On their initial possession, the Spartans were lifted out of danger by halfback Tim McGugan's 58-yard quick kick out of his own end zone. The next time Marian gained control. McGugan raced 14 yards to the Raider 45, propelling the Spartans as he had done so many times over the past couple of years.

As both teams returned to their respective huddles, McGugan remained motionless on the turf, lying flat on his back. Trainers and coaches quickly located the distress, slicing apart the fleet senior's left sock to work on his ankle.

A plastic cast was applied on the spot, enabling McGugan to be safely placed on the stretcher which carried him to a waiting ambulance along the Bolingbrook side of the field.

Fears that McGugan would be lost for the rest of the season were confirmed the following day when it was determined that the 5-foot-10, 160-pounder had suffered on broken bone just above the ankle, and another shattered bone right next to it. The damage was so severe that possibilities of a college career (McGugan has received numerous letters from schools across the country) can only be termed a question mark.

Since this represented the third major injury to remove a vital ingredient of the Marian offense, the

prognosis for the Spartans could hardly have seemed more bleak.

TOWARD THE end of the second quarter, promises were beginning to take shape. A pair of touchdowns by junior halfback Tom Klupchak jumped Marian ahead 12-0; the defense took over from there, allowing Bolingbrook only 16 yards in the second half to cement an encouraging 15-7 verdict.

Building upon that victory will be the objective for the Spartans when conference rival Joliet East visits Chicago Heights Saturday.

"The only way I can describe it is to say that it was really a team win," said Mattio who went on to detail some of the finer points. "I was glad to see that we controlled the ball for 58 plays to just 36 for them. Part of the credit has to go to our offensive line" consisting of center Tom Van Dyck, guards Ed Ziltz and Pat Murphy, and tackles Rich Fordon and John McGarry, "and the rest should go to our defense, which forced three plays and a punt most of the time," Mattio remarked. "Don Zych, Mike Joyce and Mark Lindbloom all played a super game."

After losing six turnovers the previous week against Hillcrest, Klupchak's 27 carries paced a more efficient attack which surrendered only one fumble. "The penalties are the thing we have to cut down on," Mattio pointed out as the Spartans gave up 100 yards worth of infractions.

The Kingsmen are similar to Marian in many respects. Like the Spartans, Joliet East captured its league opener (dumping Joliet Central 8-0) has won two of its first three outings, and depends heavily on coupling a ground-oriented offense with its experienced group of stoppers.

THE STAR
Thursday, September 27, 1979