

Marian Sees the Dark Side

By PETER TESTA

There's one dream every football coach must entertain in the moments before his squad prepares for an important contest: Just what would happen if my team plays a perfect contest?

In most cases, it's the kind of fantasy which never gets much of an opportunity to materialize. If you're Joliet Catholic's coach Gordie Gillespie though, there's apparently no limit to the bounds of your imagination, because the first half of the Hilltoppers' 28-0 blitz of Marian yesterday at Sarff Field was about as close to the ultimate as it's possible to achieve in the sport.

No fumbles, no passes intercepted, no mistakes, not so much as a single penalty throughout the opening 25 minutes, after which the Hillmen had the verdict more than well under control with a 22-0 margin.

JOLIET CATHOLIC marched for 48, 62 and 74 scoring drives, stopped without a first down just once when it was backed up to its own 15-yard stripe. By that time, Joliet Catholic's 19th straight Illini-8 win over a four-year period was already a foregone conclusion.

Shackled for an advance of only two yards going against a strong wind on the game's initial series seemed to be a bad omen for Marian. What happened when the Spartans punted just served to confirm the suspicion?

Paced by full back John Querio and halfbacks, Al Mondrella and Marty McGuire, who piled up 203 of the devastating total of 266 yards Joliet Catholic totaled rushing, the constant pounding of the Spartan defense began.

Darting briskly through the spaced opened by giant offensive tackles Pat Blatti, Mike Tucci and Kevin Nicoli, Querio and McGuire ripped off 15 and 10 yard gains for back-to-back first downs. Joe Fitzgerald, who was the first of three quarterbacks Gillespie was able to award playing time to, then rolled around end to deposit his club on the 11.

STAYING exclusively on the ground, Querio added another four yards before McGuire sprinted the final seven yards through the middle for the first touchdown after merely 4:54 of play. When the two-

point conversion was added by another McGuire burst, the Hilltoppers sped ahead 8-0.

A short Spartan punt enabled Joliet Catholic to start another run moments later. Eight runs pushed the Hillmen all the way to the Marian 22, and then Fitzgerald connected for the first of his three completions in as many attempts to end Tom Pondel.

It was back to the running game after that, with Querio crashing over from a yard out on the third snap of the second period. Fitzgerald carried around right end for another bonus conversion, hiking the lead to 16-0.

Taking over following Joliet Catholic's lone punt, Marian enjoyed its only first half spark when quarterback Mike Matchinis found tight end Jay Schwelkart for an 18-yard pickup. That surge stalled on consecutive quarterback sacks, and the Hillmen found room for a third tally before halftime.

Querio snuck out of the backfield for a 50-yard reception down the right sideline, placing Joliet Catholic on the Marian 14. Two plays later, Mondrella drove over the right side with 40 seconds left in the quarter. This time, the two-point pass dropped incomplete.

MARIAN took a chance with an on-side kick to launch the second half, and like everything Marian tried, that ploy back-fired as well. Eight rushes in succession moved the Hilltoppers to the 20, but back-to-back penalties looked to be too much of any obstacle for Joliet Catholic to overcome.

A pass interference foul called against the Spartans kept the march alive however, and a sudden 25 yard touchdown burst by Mondrella ended the scoring.

In dropping Marian to its first conference loss against two wins and a second loss in five games, Joliet Catholic held a commanding edge of 23 first downs to six for the Spartans, limited the previously effective Marian ground game to eight yards and permitted just 72 yards in all while accumulating 335 yards themselves.

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