

Marian Works Back Into I-8 Picture

By PETER TESTA

Friday night, the entrance to at least a portion of the Illini-8 throne room was cleared for Marian's taking.

Yesterday in Chicago Heights, the Spartans blasted their way briskly through that passageway, earning the right to enjoy a particularly memorable Homecoming celebration by rolling past Joliet Central 23-6.

Thanks to the assist dealt by Lockport, which dropped Joliet Catholic from the undisputed conference lead by stopping the Hilltoppers 19-6 the previous evening, Marian's victory served to create a three-way logjam at the head of the league. The Porters, Joliet Catholic, and the Spartans all hold I-8 records of 4-1.

COACH DAVE Mattio's squad rolled into its newly-acquired status in more ways than one, never attempting to throw so much as a single pass during the entire game. All of Marian's 62 snaps from scrimmage (as opposed to 29 plays run off by the Steelmen) were rushes.

Ten different Spartans had a hand in churning out ground yardage, and topped by junior halfback Tom Klupchak's 69 yards in 11 tries, Marian accumulated 287 yards over land, by far the best total of the campaign.

"I didn't really think about the fact that we hadn't passed until we got that big lead in the fourth quarter, and by that time, we had replaced our starters and we didn't want to throw because it might have upset the Joliet Central people."

Mattio explained following his team's fifth win in seven outings and ninth success in the last 11 games over the past two seasons.

LIMITING THE Steelmen (who slipped to 2-3 in conference play and 2-5 for the year) to no first downs and just one scant yard of total, offense in the opening quarter, Marian duplicated its feat of marching for a lengthy touchdown drive on the first offensive opportunity, which was accomplished in last week's blanking of Lockport.

Alternating among two sets of backs, fullback Tom Zarlengo, halfbacks Jim Schreiber and Greg Murray, Klupchak and Ranieri, the Spartans required 11 plays to travel 68 yards.

Never being held to less than three yards per attempt, a nine-yard scamper by Ranieri and an 11-yard pickup by Schreiber off guard Rich Fordon's blocking keyed the march.

After Klupchak delivered Marian to the 5 with 10-yard burst, Murray took the Spartans to within a yard before Zarlengo bulled across with 4:35 left in the first period. Ranieri added two more points with a conversion run.

THE SPARTANS improved their edge to 14-0 in the second quarter, scoring from quarterback Mike Joyce's fumble recovery which bounced back to the Steelmen 30 yard stripe.

Senior quarterback Mike Matchinis rolled out for a 22-yard gain on third down to place the Spartans on the 5. Two plays later, Klupchak dove over the left side for his fifth touchdown of the season. Another two-point run, this one by Klupchak, fell two yards short this time.

Midway through the third period, Marian was backed up to its own 20 after a Joliet Central punt carried into the end zone. A total of 14 plays were needed, but the Spartans went the entire 80 yards. Murray picked up 19 of those yards sweeping right end to carry Marian to the Steelmen 29, as the Spartans kept possession into the start of the final period.

Ranieri's 11-yard burst set up his teammates on the 12, and the senior halfback carried again for the final two yards with 10:40 remaining in the game for a 20-0 cushion, Matchinis missed connections with Jeff Boylan on the bonus conversion try.

FREE SAFETY Bob Klupchak pounced on the second Joliet Central fumble four plays after the next kickoff, a recovery which led to Rich Fordon's 22-yard field goal that gave Marian its final three points with 4:37 left.

Going for a string of nine straight scoreless periods, Marian saw that streak come to a sudden end when second-team quarterback Nate Wright motored down the left side line for a 60-yard scoring jaunt 29 seconds after Fordon's kick.

Through the first three periods, Joliet Central had managed only 46 yards.

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