

Alert Defense Sparks the Spartans

By PETER TESTA

Progress was roughly the same as efforts to solve the energy crisis, but Marian Catholic still survived to play another day. The Spartans, trailing 6-0 from the second quarter until only 3 minutes, 45 seconds remained, scored twice to defeat Holy Cross in a Chicagoland Prep Bowl opener.

The final was 14-6, and Marian will return next weekend for a quarter-final contest. To move past the next step, the Spartans may have to beef up their offense, for yesterday at River Grove they gained a mere 33 yards, 20 on the ground, and 13 by passing.

That was good enough because Marian's defense was outstanding, particularly the defensive backs. Tom Klupchak intercepted two of the four Holy Cross serials which went astray and he returned the first one 63 yards for Marian's initial touchdown.

THAT DEFENSE was to be the name of this game was made plain in the opening quarter. There was no score and only five first downs, one by each team. Excitement picked up in the second quarter, a Holy Cross punt backing the Spartans to their 4-yard line, Marian's difficulties had only begun.

Mike Wail was back to kick but the snap from center was low, and backed into a corner, Wail tried to run. He avoided being nailed for a safety. Instead he was caught at the 4-yard line. A golden opportunity for the Crusaders.

Holy Cross answered opportunity's knock - and quickly. On first down, Carl Vainisi legged it four yards for a score. Ares Popowicz' place kick for the conversion was low and wide. Holy Cross led 6-0 at the half.

Popowicz was to miss a field goal try from 37 yards out in the second period. This was the first step in settling the stage for a Marian score. The Spartans were again pinned deep in their own territory when Coach Dave Mattio ordered a third down quick kick. Tom Klupchak did the kicking, booting 34 yards, from his own 11 to the Crusaders' 45.

DAVE BECK, Holy Cross quarterback, passed - right to Tom Klupchak, who sped 63 yards to tie the score. Sophomore Dan Sheehan's placekick made it 7-6 and the Spartans held a lead they were not to relinquish.

The Crusaders took a necessary gamble late in the final quarter, passing from their own 18 yard line.

This time it was Tom Joyce who made the interception, at the 28. He returned 16 yards to the Holy Cross 12.

Moving the ball wasn't too difficult to begin. Tom Klupchak gained six yards and as offside penalty against the Crusaders put the ball on the 3 - first down. The next three yards were the hardest.

MARIAN IMMEDIATELY jumped offside and it was first down from the 8. Klupchak carried five yards in two tries by on third down the Spartans were hit by another five-yard walk-off. The Spartans overcame. On a keeper, quarterback Matchinis swept left end and went over standing up. Sheehan again booted the point and it was 14-6.

Only a minute and a half remained and Holy Cross still had a chance. Beck fired a long, desperate bomb and Tom Klupchak garnered his second interception. Marian ran out the clock.

Offensive statistics are hardly impressive. Marian made five first downs to three for Holy Cross, but the Crusaders rushed 33 yards to Marian's 20 and passed for 19 yards to 13 for Marian.

Matchinis completed two of his 10 passes and while Holy Cross also connected twice, four Crusader passes were intercepted. Marian takes a 7-3 record into the quarter-finals. Holy Cross ended its season at 6-won, 4-lost.

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