

Sept. 11	1	2	3	4	Final
MARIAN SPARTANS	10	0	0	7	17
LOYOLA RAMBLERS	7	0	3	0	10

Spartans topple Loyola to go 3-0

A pair of premier offensive performers turned in sterling plays on the other side of the ball to make things happen on Saturday at Loyola Academy.

Tailback Tom Bijak combined with linebacker Michael Parro on a clutch fourth-down stop in the fourth quarter and receiver Devon Clark came up with an interception on the Ramblers' final possession.

The heroics on the defensive side of the ball made Bijak's 1-yard plunge with 8:51 to play stand up for the deciding score in the Spartans' 17-10 victory that kicked off the Catholic Metropolitan Conference Blue Division.

The victory improved Marian to 3-0 heading into Friday's CMC-Blue showdown against Mount Carmel Friday in Chicago Heights.

"It was just a lot of hard work," explained Bijak, who seldom came off the field. "We knew Loyola would be a great challenge, but we all knew what we had to do."

Bijak followed linemen David Vittori and Nick Lopez into the end zone for the winning score. For the day, the Spartan workhorse toted 19 times for 85 yards.

"The offensive line did a good job," Bijak praised. "The yards were tough, but it was just a matter of perseverance and hard work."

While Loyola (1-2) proved tough against the Spartan running game, the Spartans adapted and opened up things with an effective passing attack.

Making Luke Carreras (eight catches, 97 yards) his primary target, Marian quarterback Mike Gavin finished 12 of 21 for 177 yards. Gavin and Carreras hooked up for a 17-yard tying score in the opening period after Loyola had used a punt return to take a 7-0 lead.

"They were double-teaming Devon a lot, so I just got some chances," Carreras said of his big day. "We do a lot of checking off and our quarterback reads, so we just go opposite the defense. And the offensive line did a very good job protecting today."

Rod Middleton added a 32-yard field goal late in the opening stanza to send Marian to a 10-7 halftime edge.

Loyola answered with a 24-yard field goal in the third period for a 10-10 stalemate, but it was the only points actually allowed by the Spartan defense for the day.

With strong play in the secondary from Middleton, Eric Papp, Chris Baker and Marcus Taylor, the Spartans yielded only 24 yards through the air for the day. Ted Karagias and Papp each notched a pair of tackles behind the line of scrimmage.

CATEGORY	Marian	Loyola
First downs	17	11
Rush att./yards	34/86	40/155

Passing yards	177	24
Pass completions	12	7
Pass attempts	21	14
Had intercepted	0	1
Fumbles/lost	2/1	1/1
Penalty yards	55	35
Next	Mt. Carmel	St. Rita

SCORING

- L-** Collins 41-yard punt return (Caruso kick), 9:14 (1st quarter).
MC- Carreras 17-yard pass from Gavin (Middleton kick), 6:27 (1st).
MC- Middleton 32-yard field, 0:13 (1st).
L- Caruso 24-yard field goal, 2:18 (3rd).
MC- Bijak 1-yard run (Middleton), 8:51 (4th)

PASSING: MC- Gavin 12 of 21, 177 yards, 1 touchdown. L- LaCassa 7 of 13, 24 yards, 1 interception; Caruso 0 of 1.

RUSHING: MC- Bijak 19-85 (TD), DiGuilio 5-14, Bradley 1-0, Gavin 9-(minus 13). L- Bradley 18-111, Schwabe 13-45, Sloan 1-3, Collins 3-(minus 1), LaCassa 5-(minus 3).

RECEIVING: MC- Carreras 8-97 (TD), Clark 2-47, Bijak 1-22, DiGuilio 1-11. L- Woods 2-12, Danielak 2-12, Collins 2-4, Bradley 1-(minus 4).

INTERCEPTIONS: Clark (MC).