

2003 IHSA Class 6A Playoffs

Class 6A First Round: Providence Catholic 31, Marian Catholic 7

Kickoff: 7 p.m. Friday at Providence Catholic.

Where: 1800 W. Lincoln Highway, New Lenox.

Records: Providence Catholic 7-2; Marian Catholic 7-2.

Streaks: Celtics- 2 wins; Spartans- 3 wins.

Last week: Providence 24, Mount Carmel 10; Marian Catholic 21, St. Patrick 17

Last meeting: Marian 14, Providence Catholic 12 (1999 5A state semifinals).

Series: The Celtics own a 2-4 overall series edge, but Marian has won two of three playoff meetings.

Notes: The teams were former league rivals in the Catholic Metropolitan Blue.

Oct. 31	1	2	3	4	Total
MARIAN SPARTANS	0	0	7	0	-7
at PROVIDENCE CATHOLIC	7	10	7	7	-31



Marian senior Tim Kelly tried to ignite the Spartans with a key turnover Friday, but host Providence Catholic emerged with a 31-7 Class 6A playoff win.

Marian (7-3) concludes year with loss to third powerhouse

When a team has made a living with passing touchdowns in all nine games of the regular season- then completes just one of six passes in the first half- it can't be good news.

When Marian Catholic visited Providence Catholic Friday in an IHSA Class 6A playoff opener, it wasn't good news.

Things improved slightly in the second half, but the Spartans were never able to come back from a 17-0 halftime deficit, and saw their season come to a conclusion with a 31-7 loss to the Celtics. Providence (8-2) will visit Oak Forest in the second round, while Marian Catholic concludes its season with a 7-3 mark.

"I was really hoping we were going to be able to turn the momentum," said Marian two-way senior lineman Tim Kelly, who returned a mid-air fumble 27 yards to help the Spartans pull within 17-7 and begin thinking comeback.

"I finally made a play and was hoping it was a step that could turn things around. After that, we were only down 10 and we were hoping for a three-and-out and score again. You could hear the excitement in the crowd and on the sidelines after that, but we just couldn't sustain it."

The blueprint was there for a comeback when the bruised and bloodied Kelly made his big play. After all, the Spartans had delivered a huge comeback and upset on the same field to open the 1992 playoffs. Kelly, the heart-and-soul of a gritty Spartan squad, tried to get it going when he grabbed the errant pitch at Providence 44-yard line and rambled to the 17.

Four plays later, quarterback Joe Grubisic hit Mike Jedlicka with a 15-yard fourth-down scoring pass. Less than five minutes into the second half, Marian had trimmed the deficit to 17-7 when Matt Harris' conversion kick sailed through the uprights.

However, Providence responded like an eight-time state champion would. The Celtics drove 80 yards on their next possession to take much of the wind out of Marian's sails.

From that point on, Marian snapped the ball in Providence territory just one time.

The tone was set early when a couple potential disasters bounced the right way for the Celtics, who scored on drives of just 36, 45 and 6 yards (46-yard field goal) in the first half.

On the Celtics' opening possession, a third-down pass bounced off a receiver... but right into the hands of Providence's Mark Bennett for a 20-yard touchdown pass.

On the home team's next possession, Kyle Cornwell fumbled following a reception... but Providence managed to pounce on the all. One play later, Jeremiah Jobe rambled 28 yards for a 14-0 Providence lead.

Before Marian could get off its next snap, Sean Whitfield had a fine 31-yard kickoff return spoiled when the Celtics jumped on a fumble. Eventual result: Bobby Kelsey's booming 46-yard field goal and a 17-point deficit that proved too deep a hole for the Spartans.

While Marian's defense played gritty behind sacks from Ryan Vaughan and Brad Wisowaty, the poor field possession the Spartan defenders were dealt caught up in the end. A defensive front of Kelly, Ron Freeman, Ian Turak, Russell Rivers and Jacob Zsuppon made the Celtics work for their yards, but Marian's inability to move the ball eventually proved fatal.

Grubisic saw Celtic green in his face most of the night, as the senior signal-caller was sacked six times. That helped spell only 33 yards on the ground for the Spartans, as a pair of quarterback draws were the lone ground gainers of more than 6 yards.

In the air, Grubisic eventually completed 10 of 21 passes for 103 yards. However, Marian finished the night just two-for-11 on third-down attempts.

"We had a good team, but we just didn't make the plays when we had to," said Kelly, who watched his team sustain losses to Carmel, Joliet Catholic and Providence- three teams ranked in the top three in Chicagoland at one time. "It wasn't a lack of playing hard. We had a good team and had a heckuva run. We just didn't get it done in the end."

Jedlicka finished with three catches for 41 yards, while Ryan Owens (32 yards), Andy Lietz (17 yards) and Chris Rodriguez (7 yards) each grabbed two aerials.

CATEGORY	Marian	Providence
First downs	8	13
Rush attempts / yards	22-33	40-195
Passing yards	103	82
Pass completions	10	9
Pass attempts	21	14
Had intercepted	1	0
Fumbles / lost	2 / 1	3 / 1
Penalty yards	4-13	4-35
Next	season over	at Oak Forest

SCORING

PC- Mark Bennett 20-yard pass from Casey Colbert (Bobby Kelsey kick), 6:34 first.

PC- Jeremiah Jobe 28-yard run (Kelsey kick), 10:54 second.

PC- Kelsey 46-yard field goal, 9:14 second.

MC- Mike Jedlicka 15-yard pass from Joe Grubisic (Matt Harris kick), 7:44 third.

PC- Jobe 12-yard run (Kelsey kick), 4:02 third.

PC- Vincent Bland 11-yard pass from Colbert (Kelsey kick), 4:40 fourth.

INDIVIDUALS

Passing: MC- Grubisic 10 of 21, 103 yards, 1 TD, 1 INT. PC Colbert 9 of 14, 82 yards, 1 TD, 0 INT.

Rushing: MC- Grubisic 16-20, Zach Denny 1-6, Chris Rodriguez 4-5, Sean Whitfield 1-2. PC- Jobe 10-109 (2 TD), Bryan Bergbower 24-106, Keith Burfield 1-2, Bennett 1-0, Parker Cleveland 2-(minus 1), Colbert 2-(minus 21).

Receiving: MC- Jedlicka 3-41, Ryan Owens 2-32, Andy Lietz 2-17, Rodriguez 2-7, Bryan Smith 1-8. PC- Bennett 4-42, Kyle Cornwell 2-17, Bland 2-16, Cole Cullen 1-7.

Interceptions: Brian Piszczor (PC).

MARIAN (7-3)		
20	NOTRE DAME*	19
53	at St. Joseph*	6

PROVIDENCE (8-2)		
68	Fenger	0
64	Joliet Township	14

22	CARMEL*	37
40	at Nazareth*	0
49	at St. Viator*	16
23	JOLIET CATHOLIC*	46
28	at Marist*	10
20	BENET ACADEMY* (ot)	19
21	at St. Patrick	17
	Class 6A Playoffs	
7	at Providence	31

Appearances: 16.

Last: 2002.

Record: 23-14.

Best: 1993 Class 4A state champ.

Openers: 11-4 record.

68	Hales Franciscan	0
44	Leo	27
14	Brother Rice*	15
45	De La Salle*	6
2	Loyola*	12
12	St. Rita*	7
24	Mount Carmel*	10
	Class 6A Playoffs	
31	MARIAN CATHOLIC	7

Appearances: 24.

Last: 2002.

Record: 57-15.

Best: 8 state championships.

Openers: 16-7 record.

CLASS 6A FIRST ROUND PAIRINGS (in bracket order, seeds precede school name)

Quadrant A

#1 **Carmel** 42, #8 **Notre Dame** 18
 #4 Crystal Lake South 21, #5 Vernon Hills 14
 #2 Freeport 14, #7 North Chicago 0
 #3 Rockford Boylan 41, #6 Fenton 7

Quadrant B

#8 **Benet Academy** 28, #1 Chicago Harper 26
 #5 Burbank (Reavis) (6-3) at #4 Chicago (Westinghouse) (6-2)
 #2 St. Rita 24, #7 Simeon 8
 #3 Glenbard South 33, #6 Mount Carmel 0

Quadrant C

#1 Oak Forest 40, #8 Oak Lawn 8
 #4 Providence Catholic 31, **Marian Catholic** 7
 #2 Minooka 35, #7 TF North 6
 #6 Richards 8, #3 TF South 0

Quadrant D

#1 Bloomington 56, #8 Kankakee 6
 #4 Rock Island 41, #5 Mount Vernon 0
 #2 Normal 48, #7 Champaign Centennial 29
 #3 Peoria Richwoods 21, #6 Cahokia 8