

**GAME 6: Joliet Catholic 21, Marian Catholic 14****Kickoff:** 7:30 p.m. Friday at Joliet Memorial Stadium.**Where:** 3000 W. Jefferson Street, Joliet.**ESCC records:** Marian Catholic 3-2; Joliet Catholic 5-0.**Streaks:** Spartans- 2 wins; Hilltoppers- 10 wins.**Week 5:** Marian 27, St. Viator 15; Joliet Catholic 48, Benet Academy 14.**Week 7 (Fri., 7:30 p.m.):** Joliet Catholic at Notre Dame; Marist at Marian Catholic.**Last year:** Joliet Catholic 46, Marian Catholic 23.**The series:** The Hilltoppers have captured four straight to take a 22-8 command in the longtime rivalry. Marian's last victory came with a 26-14 decision in 1994.**Notes:** Joliet Catholic was one of two (Carmel) eventual state champions on the Spartans' schedule last year... The Hilltoppers have won 11 state titles, while Marian won the state crown in 1993... The Spartans seek their first three-game win streak since the last three regular-season games of 2003... Marian has nine rushing TDs and six passing TDs this year.

Oct. 1	1	2	3	4	Total
<b>MARIAN SPARTANS</b>	7	0	7	0	<b>-14</b>
<b>JOLIET CATHOLIC HILLMEN</b>	6	8	7	0	<b>-21</b>



**Marian's Ian Turak came up with a big fumble recovery Friday, but a strong effort saw the Spartans' upset bid at Joliet Catholic fall just short in a 21-14 decision.**

**Joliet Catholic fends of inspired Marian effort**

Just 8 yards separated Marian Catholic from a chance for one of the biggest upsets of the 2004 high school football season on Friday.

The Spartans ventured inside the 10-yard line with less than five minutes to play, putting in jeopardy defending state champion Joliet Catholic's 10-game winning streak.

Despite a second-and-2 at the Hilltopper 8-yard line, Joliet Catholic forced an incomplete pass, then a fourth-down sack to escape with a 21-14 East Suburban Catholic victory.

The Hilltoppers improved to 6-0 with their closest call since a 34-16 week two victory over St. Viator. Marian fell to 3-3 with the loss, but may have gained the necessary momentum for a strong playoff drive heading into its final three tests against Marist, Benet and St. Patrick.

The Spartans were outgained by just more than 100 yards on Friday, but came up with several big plays on offense and defense to keep Joliet Catholic on its heels.

Marian led the contest, 7-6, in the early going, then drove 66 yards early in the second half to forge a 14-14 tie.

Joliet Catholic responded with an 85-yard drive to take a 21-14 command with 6:44 to go in the third quarter, but Marian proved it was in the contest to stay.

When a Marian lateral pass went awry on the next possession and gave the Hillmen possession at the Spartan 12, the visitors' defense responded in a big way. Despite a 6-yard gain on first down, Marian sniffed out a quarterback bootleg for a 4-yard loss on the next snap. After a short gain and a Joliet Catholic penalty, Marian forced an incomplete pass on fourth down.

The Spartans marched from their own 11 to the JCA 33, but a fourth down pass to Clifton

Gordon fell 1 yard short of a fresh set of downs.

Undaunted, the Marian defense again held on a fourth-down play to set up the offense 52 yards away from a tying score.

Marian gained a first down on a 13-yard connection between Zach Denny and Gordon, then earned a first down at the JCA 16 courtesy of a penalty. Denny scrambled 8 yards to the Hilltopper 8 on first down, but that was as close as the Spartans got.

Ironically, a .500 Marian team has likely turned in its two best season efforts against the ESCC's powers and tandem defending state champs. The Spartans also held a 10-0 lead at 5-1 Carmel before eventually succumbing by a 21-10 margin.

Highlighted by Turak's fumble recovery, a huge sack by Mike Izguerra, and two other fumbles forced by a defensive front of Turak, Noe Arroyo, Ron Freeman and Steve Ajdinovich, Marian held the Hilltoppers on fourth down on three occasions.

The Marian offense put itself in a position to pull off the surprise on Friday as well.

After managing a single first down on its initial possession, Marian responded to the Turak fumble recovery with its second chance. Set up at the JCA 32, Denny exploded through the line on a sneak to give Marian a first-and-goal at the 3. Gordon used blocks from Jon Scudella and Patrick McNamara to hit paydirt from there. Arroyo's conversion kick gave Marian a 7-6 edge midway through the opening stanza.

Joliet Catholic forged ahead, 14-7, early in the second quarter, but Marian threatened again before the half. A Denny connection to Sean Whitfield got the Spartans to the JCA 37 and a penalty moved the Spartans 5 yards closer. However, the drive eventually stalled on an offensive pass interference call.

Marian proved it was around to stay when the opening possession of the second half produced three first downs and a tying score. After a key completion to Gordon, Denny found Walter Fisher on the left sideline. The senior took care of the last two-thirds of the play on his own, racing 32 yards for the score that made it 14-14.

Denny finished with 131 passing yards, hitting Fisher five times for 75 yards.

Although Marian was outgained, 259-84, on the ground, Gordon rushed for 44 yards and Denny for 41.

**Freshmen:** Despite a pair of touchdown runs by Mark Scott, Marian fell to 2-4 Saturday with a 53-24 loss to Joliet Catholic. The Spartans also got touchdown runs from Malcolm Allen and Jake Pozywio.

CATEGORY	Marian	Joliet Catholic
First downs	13	15
Rush attempts / yards	32-84	39-259
Passing yards	131	60
Pass completions	12	5
Pass attempts	21	9
Had intercepted	0	0
Fumbles / lost	1 / 1	3 / 1
Penalty yards	4-34	7-55
Next	MARIST	at Notre Dame

### SCORING

**JCA-** Jack Eastman 9-yard pass from John Kiernan (kick failed), 9:35 first.

**MC-** Clifton Gordon 3-yard run (Noe Arroyo kick), 3:55 first.

**JCA-** Joe Benson 3-yard run (Benson run), 9:57 second.

**MC-** Walter Fisher 32-yard pass from Zach Denny (Arroyo kick), 9:46 third.

**JCA-** Benson 3-yard run (Kevin Platt kick), 6:44 third.

### INDIVIDUALS

**Passing:** MC- Denny 12 of 21, 131 yards, 1 TD. JCA- Kiernan 5 of 9, 60 yards, 1 TD.

**Rushing:** MC- Gordon 19-44 (TD), Denny 12-41, Cameron Williams 1-(minus 1). JCA- Benson 12-102 (2 TD), Chris Clancy 7-91, Bill McKeon 12-81, Kiernan 8-(minus 15).

**Receiving:** MC- Fisher 5-75 (TD), Gordon 3-31, Malcolm Parker 2-12, Sean Whitfield 1-10, Williams 1-3. JCA- Eastman 2-32 (TD), Benson 2-16, Clancy 1-12.

**Interceptions:** None.