

**2005
Spartan
Football
games**

GAME 9: Marian Catholic 18, Notre Dame 10

Kickoff: 7:30 p.m. Friday at Spartan Stadium.

Where: Joe Orr Road at Ashland Avenue, Chicago Heights.

2005/ESCC records: Notre Dame 3-5; Marian Catholic 1-7.

Streaks: Dons- 1 win; Spartans- 1 loss.

Week 8: Notre Dame 41, St. Joseph 13; Carmel 56, Marian Catholic 30.

Last year: Notre Dame 21, Marian Catholic 7.

The series: The teams have each won at home in the last two seasons to leave Marian with an overall series lead of 7-5.

Notes: Marian looks to end its regular season with a victory for the second time in three years. . . The Spartans and Dons have played five games decided by seven points or fewer since 1998. . . Marian's Clifton Gordon is one the ESCC's leaders in scoring this season with 58 points scored. . . Marian plans to retire the number and jersey of New England Patriots' standout [Rodney Harrison '91](#) at a March 25 ceremony during the "Legends" basketball weekend in the school's West Gym.

Oct. 21	1	2	3	4	Total
NOTRE DAME DONS	0	7	3	0	-10
MARIAN SPARTANS	0	12	6	0	-18



Marian's Derrick Middleton pulls in a pass during the Spartans' 18-10 ESCC victory over visiting Notre Dame on Friday.

Marian stuffs Notre Dame for win in season finale

Maligned for much of a struggling season, the Marian Catholic defense came up with all of the big plays when need Friday when the Spartans hosted Notre Dame in an East Suburban Catholic Conference season finale.

With the defense forcing three turnovers, Marian used contributions from the offense, defense and special teams to conclude the campaign with an 18-10 victory over the Dons.

Victories in two of the last three contests improved the Spartans to 2-7 for the season.

"Our whole defensive line had a rough season, but we kicked butt today," said an excited Justin Lynch, who had a pair of big sacks for the Spartan defense. "We've been crying at the end of a lot of these games, but this is a great feeling today. I might just cry today too."

Lynch and the defense made things happen Friday. Notre Dame rushed the ball 46 times Friday and gained more than 9 yards on only one occasion.

The defensive front stayed fresh with plenty of substitutions and a combination of speed and size. The likes of Lynch, Andrew Zerante, Jovon Dixon, Nick Clark, John Napoleon, Bryce Horath, Jon Jack and Dennis Kelly had plenty to do up front with limiting the Dons to

just one visit the end zone.

Andrew Eagan also had a sack, while Mike Woodward, Eagan and Morris Pearson pounced on Notre Dame fumbles.

"They just felt great," Lynch said of his sacks. "I just got a big push and wanted to scream when I got near the quarterback."

Along with the strong defensive effort, the Marian offense did its job.

Leading scorer Clifton Gordon didn't get into the end zone, but rushed for 119 yards to eclipse the 1,000-yard barrier for the season. Gordon helped the Spartans with field position throughout the night and aided the home team in setting up the game's first score.

Marian turned the game's initial turnover into a lead it would never relinquish. After Woodward pounced on a Notre Dame fumble, the Spartans drove 71 yards for their initial score. Near midfield, quarterback Zack Stevenson escaped a sack deep in the backfield and eventually scrambled 49 yards for a 6-0 Marian lead with 9:35 to play in the half.

It took the Spartans just one play to find the end zone on their next score, after Pearson's 22-yard punt return gained great field position. Stevenson completed just two passes (seven attempts) for the night, but his second was a 31-yard scoring toss to John Mitrovich for a 12-0 Spartan command late in the half.

Notre Dame answered with a score in the final seconds of the half to trim Marian's halftime advantage to 12-7.

The Dons also scored the initial points of the second half when Connor Flahive booted a 27-yard field goal to pull the visitors within 12-10.

However, Marian couldn't have picked a better time for its first kick return for a score of the season.

Derrick Middleton fielded the boot at the Spartan 9, cut back across the field and raced down the right sideline for a 91-yard score. Marian took the collar for the night on conversion attempts, but the return gave the Spartans an 18-10 cushion with 2:10 to play in the third quarter.

From there, the home squad turned things into the hands of the defense and Gordon, who had consistent holes opened by the likes of Jack, Kelly, Jason Bruno, Rudy Rinas, Marc Novak and John Holzhauser.

Notre Dame advanced into the red zone twice after the Middleton score, but big hits resulted in the fumble recoveries by Eagan and Pearson. Marian also had a big recovery of one of its own fumbles by offensive lineman Novak.

For the night, Marian yielded 118 rushing yards and 160 more through the air, but came up with all the big plays when necessary.

"We just played hard and came out to play our 'A' game," Lynch explained. "I'm not really sure if the game plan worked, but I just know we love to play and play hard."

Sophomores: The Spartans dropped their season finale to the Dons, 23-7.

Freshmen: Jacob Cohn and Keithan Hedrick each scored two touchdowns, but Notre Dame got the final score of the game with 59 seconds to play to earn a 30-29 victory. Mario Earnest booted three conversion kicks and Mac Stevenson hit Joe Swanson with a two-point conversion to give Marian a 29-22 lead with three minutes to play.

CATEGORY	Notre Dame	Marian Catholic
First downs	18	11
Rush attempts / yards	46-118	35-175
Passing yards	160	60
Pass completions	12	2
Pass attempts	21	7
Had intercepted	0	0
Fumbles / lost	3/3	3/1
Penalty yards	5-30	5-25
Next	Season over	Season over

SCORING

MC- Zack Stevenson 49-yard run (pass failed), 9:35 second.

MC- John Mitrovich 31-yard pass from Stevenson (pass failed), 2:02 second.

ND- Jack Cascio 27-yard pass from Jeff Larsen (Connor Flahive kick), 0:16 second.

ND- Flahive 27-yard field goal, 2:26 third.

MC- Derrick Middleton 91-yard kickoff return, 2:10 third.

INDIVIDUALS

Passing: ND- Larsen 11 of 19, 140 yards, 1 TD; Flahive 1 of 1, 20 yards; Tom Sheehan

0 of 1. MC- Stevenson 2 of 7, 60 yards, 1 TD.

Rushing: ND- Matt Jackson 17-57, Tom Sheehan 13-48, Cascio 11-47 (TD), Larry Young 1-1, Larsen 4-(minus 35). MC- Clifton Gordon 28-119, Stevenson 5-55 (TD), Middleton 1-3, Nnanna Alozie 1-(minus 2).

Receiving: ND- Cascio 4-72, Sheehan 5-51, Peter Fudalej 1-20, Dan O'Leary 1-11, Mike Fedoruk 1-6. MC- Mitrovich 1-31 (TD), Middleton 1-29.

Interceptions: none.