

GAME 7: Marian Catholic 12, Marist 7 (Homecoming)

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

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

Overall records: Marist 2-4; Marian Catholic 3-3.

ESCC records: Marist 1-3; Marian Catholic 2-2.

Streaks: RedHawks- 1 loss; Spartans- 1 loss.

Last week: Benet 13, Marian Catholic 10; Joliet Catholic 21, Marian Catholic 14.

Week 8: Notre Dame at Marist (Fri., 7:30 p.m.); Marian at Benet (Benedictine, Fri., 7:30 pm).

Last year: Marist 10, Marian Catholic 7.

The series: The Spartans hold an overall series lead of 12-4, although Marist has prevailed in the last two meetings.

Notes: Friday's events will include the unveiling of Marian Catholic's *Courage to Lead* Capital Campaign and plans for the new Leadership Center and Program... Post-game fireworks are planned after the Homecoming contest, as well as the annual Alumni Gathering after the game in the West Gym... In two home games this season, shootouts have produced a combined 128 points and 70 points... Marian running back Clifton Gordon has rushed for more than 100 yards in each game this season, including a pair of 200-yard efforts.

Oct. 6	1	2	3	4	Total
MARIST	0	0	7	0	-7
at MARIAN CATHOLIC	0	6	0	6	-12



Marian's defense had a strong effort Friday, helping key the Spartans to a 12-7 Homecoming and ESCC victory over Marist.

Spartans come back for Homecoming win over Marist

There couldn't have been a more perfect way to seal Marian Catholic's Homecoming victory over Marist on Friday night.

Whether it was pressuring the quarterback, making a tackle for loss or coming up with a game-breaking play, Spartan defenders Paul Zarlengo and Josh Howe were at the forefront of the action all night.

One series after Clifton Gordon had dashed 39 yards to give Marian a 12-7 lead late in the fourth quarter, the RedHawks had one more shot with 1:08 to play from their own 23-yard line.

That's until Zarlengo rushed the Marist quarterback into a hurried throw. Howe found himself on the other end of the errant aerial, as Marian pleased a boisterous Homecoming crowd with the finishing touches on a 12-7 comeback victory.

The win improves Marian to 4-3 overall and one victory away from its first playoff berth since 2003. The Spartans are also 3-2 in the ESCC with contests remaining against Benet and St. Patrick.

"We were attacking the ball well all game," assessed Zarlengo, who also set up Marian's first score with a blocked punt. "I swam on that last play and just got right in there.

"This is just huge tonight. It's the big stride we needed toward making the playoffs."

Marian got its usual strong performance from Gordon (174 yards), who eclipsed the 1,100-yard barrier and ran for 100 or more yards in his 10th straight game. However, the Spartans were still facing a 7-6 deficit after gaining no first downs in the third quarter and squandering a 6-0 halftime lead.

On a night that Marian unveiled its *Courage to Lead* Capital Campaign, it was a turn for the defense and special teams to lead after the offense had put up big numbers all season.

Marist had taken the 7-6 lead with an 88-yard march on its first possession of the second half. But the RedHawks' next three possessions resulted in an interception by Kevin Kammert and two punts.

The Marian secondary had a strong night, as the likes of Kammert, Matt Dee, Andres Rodriguez and Jared White limited the Marist passing game to 8-for-23 for 118 yards.

The last punt was preceded by Howe's punt that pinned in Marist at its own 6-yard line. Four plays later, Marian took advantage of good field position.

Taking control on the RedHawk 42, Gordon went off tackle for 3 yards. He appeared halted behind the line on the next play, then exploded out of the pack to scamper 39 yards for the lead score.

Marist (2-5, 1-4) had two more shots, both resulting in turnovers. After a flea-flicker got the RedHawks to the Marian 24, Howe pounced on a Marist fumble. Then after Howe uncorked a 39-yard punt, one play later he teamed up with Zarlengo on the clinching play.

Marian had moved the ball fairly well in the opening half, but couldn't register the game's first score until Zarlengo ignited things on special teams. With Marist punting from its own 15-yard line, Zarlengo stormed through to block the punt and White's recovery set up the hosts at the RedHawk 7-yard line.

After Gordon exploded for 6 yards, quarterback Jack Krause sneaked the final yard for a 6-0 lead. Extending its string to four straight quarters, the defense did the rest in sending the Spartans into the intermission with the 6-0 edge.

"We're definitely rolling on defense now and we're definitely working as a team," Zarlengo said. "That was lacking in the first few games of the season and we didn't have faith in one another. Now, were starting to play like one big family."

The Spartan defense yielded just 233 total yards, 1 more yard than Marian gained on the ground alone. Marian also forced six punts and a missed field goal to go with the three turnovers.

CATEGORY	Marist	Marian Catholic
First downs	11	12
Rush attempts / yards	29-115	27-174
Passing yards	118	51
Pass completions	8	3
Pass attempts	23	12
Had intercepted	2	0
Fumbles / lost	2 / 1	1 / 1
Penalty yards	8-42	7-50
Next	NOTRE DAME	at Benet

SCORING

MC- Jack Krause 1-yard run (kick failed), 1:36 first.

Mst- Kevin Savage 10-yard run (Tim Schmidt kick), 3:29 third.

MC- Cliffton Gordon 39-yard run (run failed), 3:34 fourth.

Passing: Mst- Zac Ventress 8 of 23, 118 yards, 0 TD, 2 INT. MC- Krause 3 of 12, 51 yards, 0 TD, 0 INT.

Rushing: Mst- Savage 17-73 (TD), Mike Grady 6-24, Ventress 3-13, Owen Skalitzky 3-5. MC- Gordon 27-174 (TD), Nnanna Alozie 8-32, Derrick Middleton 5-20, Krause 5-6 (TD).

Receiving: Mst- Matt Ciara 1-41, Montana Hammonds 2-37, Jack Marks 1-21, Jon Stark 1-21, Grady 1-4, Skalitzky 1-(minus 6). MC- Erik Ramsey 1-26, Alozie 1-20, Julian Williams 1-5.

Interceptions: Josh Howe, Kevin Kammert (MC).

