

GAME 8: Marian Catholic 34, Benet Academy 13

Kickoff: 7:30 p.m. Friday at Benedictine University.

Where: Maple Road and Yawkey, Lisle.

Overall records: Marian Catholic 4-3; Benet Academy 4-3.

ESCC records: Marian Catholic 3-2; Benet Academy 3-2.

Streaks: Spartans- 1 win; Redwings- 2 wins.

Last week: Marian Catholic 12, Marist 7; Benet 35, St. Patrick 6.

Week 9: St. Patrick at Marian (7:30 p.m. Fri.); Benet at Notre Dame (7:30 p.m. Fri.).

Last year: Benet Academy 29, Marian Catholic 20.

The series: Marian has won five of the last seven, but a two-game win streak for the Redwings has narrowed the Spartans' series advantage to 14-6.

Notes: The teams are in similar position, as a victory likely will lead to a berth in the IHSA playoffs... Marian running back Cliffton Gordon keeps rolling along, as he has rushed for 100 yards or more in 10 straight games... After a rough start to the year, Marian's defense has allowed just 21 and 7 points in the last two games.

Oct. 13	1	2	3	4	Total
MARIAN CATHOLIC	12	16	0	6	-34
at BENET ACADEMY	7	0	6	0	-13



Marian quarterback Jack Krause barks out orders Friday during the visiting Spartans' 34-13 ESCC victory at Benet Academy.

Spartans bounce Benet to secure IHSA playoff berth

"We didn't want to have to come back next week and get that fifth win," Marian senior running back Cliffton Gordon said after the Spartans' ESCC visit to Benet Academy on Friday.

The Spartans certainly didn't play like they had any interest in keeping a fifth victory and virtual playoff berth on hold any longer.

With Gordon leading the charge- 38 carries for 257 yards- Marian Catholic improved to 5-3 (4-2 ESCC) with a 34-13 victory over the Redwings. A win next Friday over St. Patrick in the Spartans' final regular-season home game would send Marian into its first playoff contest since 2003 with a 6-3 mark.

"This was huge," Gordon said. "The fifth win should get us in the playoffs and now we can focus on getting a sixth win and getting ready for the playoffs. This was huge for our program."

Benet (4-4) actually drew first blood on the turf at Benedictine University, taking advantage of a Marian turnover for a quick 7-0 command. However, Marian quickly proved that the visitors would set the tempo on this contest.

The Spartans scored on three of their first four possession and added a score in the two-minute drill to take a 28-7 lead into intermission.

Marian dominated most facets, as the Spartans ran 19 more plays (63-44) than the Redwings. The ball possession dominance (30:38 to 17:24) netted Marian a 341-48 advantage

on the ground. Other than two scoring plays to Redwing receiver Tom Elsner for 112 yards, Benet produced only 123 more yards against a stingy Spartan defensive unit.

The Spartans answered Benet's first score with a 67-yard drive in seven plays, culminated by Gordon's 1-yard scoring plunge. The next time Marian touched the ball, the visitors took just two plays to score as Derrick Middleton scampered 54 yards for a 12-7 lead.

A fumble stopped Marian on its next chance, but the Spartans then came up with their second seven-play, 67-yard drive as Gordon capped it off with a 10-yard run.

Benet gave Marian one more chance 59 yards away before the half. Boosted by a pass interference call, the Spartans finished off a six-play drive when Nnanna Alozie rambled 25 yards for the score. Quarterback Jack Krause hit Alozie for the conversion and a 28-7 halftime command.

By halftime, Gordon had amassed 145 yards for his 11th consecutive 100-yard game, as the offensive front of Jon Jack, Richard Wilson, Rudy Rinas, Marc Bartolini, Brandon Banks and Dennis Kelly opened huge holes.

"The offense came out strong tonight," assessed Gordon, who improved his rushing total for the year to 1,416 yards with 16 touchdowns. "We were able to pick up yards all night. Once I got through the line of scrimmage, I was able to break a lot of tackles. The guys did a great job up front all night."

While Marian racked up points and yardage, the Spartans never allowed Benet to establish a ground game. Sparked by a linebacking corps of Josh Howe, Jack McCormick, Corey and Jared White, the Spartans forced six punts and limited the Redwings to 2.1 yards per carry on the ground.

Marian also got an interception from Matt Dee, fumble recoveries from Corey White, Matt Golubski and Elliott Echols, along with a sack from Hugh Reynolds.

Benet did manage a long pass play for its second score in the third quarter, but Marian added the clincher midway through the fourth period when Gordon dashed 18 yards for his third score. Krause completed his ninth pass just before the score to complete an efficient 9-of-11 night for 66 yards. Julian Williams proved to be his favorite target with four catches for 38 yards.

CATEGORY	Marian Catholic	Benet Academy
First downs	19	9
Rush attempts / yards	52-341	23-48
Passing yards	66	187
Pass completions	9	11
Pass attempts	11	21
Had intercepted	0	1
Fumbles / lost	3 / 1	4 / 3
Penalty yards	6-75	5-47
Next	ST. PATRICK	at Notre Dame

SCORING

B- Tom Elsner 25-yard pass from David Case (Sean Mitchell kick), 9:08 first.

MC- Clifton Gordon 1-yard run (kick failed), 6:00 first.

MC- Derrick Middleton 54-yard run (run failed), 3:40 first.

MC- Gordon 10-yard run (Gordon run), 9:19 second.

MC- Nnanna Alozie 25-yard run (Jack Krause pass to Alozie), 1:03 second.

B- Elsner 87-yard pass from Case (kick failed), 4:41 third.

MC- Gordon 18-yard run (pass failed), 7:09 fourth.

Passing: MC- Krause 9 of 11, 66 yards, 0 TD, 0 INT. BA- Case 11 of 21, 187 yards, 2 TD, 1 INT.

Rushing: MC- Gordon 38-257 (3 TD), Middleton 2-60 (TD), Alozie 6-24 (TD), John DiGiovanni 2-7, Malcolm Allen 1-3, Keithan Hedrick 2-0, Krause 1-(minus 10). BA- John Martin 7-42, Mike Vanchieri 4-8, Bob Brown 6-5, Dan Cannon 2-0, Case 4-(minus 7).

Receiving: MC- Julian Williams 4-38, Dennis Kelly 3-22, Allen 1-4, Marc Bartolini 1-2. BA- Elsner 4-132 (2 TD), Jimmy Schneider 3-40, Brown 1-8, Vanchieri 2-4, Martin 1-4.

Interceptions: Matt Dee (MC).

