

CLASS 8A PLAYOFFS: Marian Catholic 20, Homewood-Flossmoor 14 (OT)

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

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

Overall records: Homewood-Flossmoor 6-3; Marian Catholic 6-3.

Class 8A seeds: H-F #9, Marian Catholic #8 (in bottom bracket).

At stake: Winner plays the winner of Lyons (5-4) at Lincoln-Way East (9-0) in Round 2.

Streaks: Vikings- 1 loss; Spartans- 3 wins.

Last week: Andrew 26, H-F 23; Marian Catholic 40, St. Patrick 21.

August 25: Homewood-Flossmoor 42, Marian Catholic 28.

Illinois Times- ["Play it and they will come"](#) (Aug. 26).

TICKETS: The price of \$4 is set by the IHSA.

The series: The Vikings have captured four straight to increase their series advantage to 7-2. Five of the last six meetings have been decided by eight points or fewer.

Notes: This will be the first-ever playoff meeting between the neighborhood rivals... Marian's 31.4 points per game average is 10th best among Class 8A qualifiers... The ESCC has six state playoff qualifiers, including co-champions Joliet Catholic and St. Viator to go along with Carmel, Marian, Benet and Notre Dame... The Vikings' last six contests were decided by seven points or fewer.

PLAYOFF HISTORY

Appearances: H-F 18; Marian Catholic 17.

Last: H-F lost to Stagg, 20-17 in 2005 Class 8A first round; Marian lost to Providence, 31-7 in 2003 Class 6A first round.

Playoff records: H-F 22-16; Marian Catholic 23-15.

State titles: H-F beat Naperville North, 13-12, for 1994 Class 6A title; Marian beat Geneseo, 13-6, or 1993 Class 4A title.



H-F leads series, 7-2

2006- H-F 42, Marian 28

1995- H-F 20, Marian 19 (2 OT)

1994- H-F 20, Marian 18

1988- H-F 27, Marian 22

1987- Marian 14, H-F 6

1974- H-F 8, Marian 0

1973- Marian 14, H-F 3

1965- H-F 13, Marian 6

1964- H-F 24, Marian 6

Oct. 27 at 7 p.m.	1	2	3	4	OT	Total
HOMEWOOD-FLOSSMOOR	7	0	7	0	0	-14
at MARIAN CATHOLIC	6	0	0	8	6	-20



Marian's offense got three touchdowns from Clifton Gordon Friday in 20-14 Class 8A playoff victory over Homewood-Flossmoor in overtime.

Spartan defense keys 8A playoff win over H-F in overtime

Countless times, the Marian Catholic defense came up with huge plays when the Spartans hosted rival Homewood-Flossmoor in a Class 8A playoff game on Friday.

However, the Spartan defense had one more left in it in overtime.

After the Marian defense forced a fumble and subsequent Jared White recovery, Spartan superstar tailback Clifton Gordon rambled 7 yards for his third touchdown to give Marian a 20-14 overtime victory.

The verdict avenged a 42-28 season-opening loss to the Vikings (6-4) and sends Marian (7-3) into a second round contest against top-seeded Lincoln-Way East (10-0) in Frankfort.

A Marian defense that allowed just 150 yards in more than four quarters chased H-F quarterback Mark Wade all over the field on Friday. But twins Corey and Jared White came up with the biggest plays of the night.

With Marian trailing 14-6 early in the fourth quarter, Corey White's second sack of the night resulted in a 13-yard loss and safety to pull Marian within 14-8.

Then in overtime, Marian stuffed Wade 2 yards from the end zone and Jared White came up with the ensuing fumble to end H-F's night on offense.

"Everyone just started yelling 'ball, ball,' and I finally found it and jumped for it," Jared White explained after the Marian faithful stormed a muddy Spartan Stadium field. "The ball just ended up in my hands.

"I just love my team. Last year we were 2-7 and now we're in the second round of the playoffs. That says a lot about our character and our heart."

After forcing the first turnover of the contest on the sloppy surface, Marian needed just two plays to begin the celebration.

Using the IHSA overtime policy of four downs from the 10 for each team, Marian advanced to the H-F 7-yard line on a bootleg by quarterback Jack Krause. Next, Gordon burst through the left side for Marian's first overtime playoff victory since a 14-13 decision over Sandburg 20 years ago.

For the 10th time this season, Gordon eclipsed the 100-yard mark by toting 38 times for 154 yards and touchdown runs of 1, 3 and 7 yards.

But the defense was the story on this night against an H-F team that had scored six touchdowns in the season opener.

H-F managed just more than a yard per carry with 44 yards on 31 rushing attempts, as a Spartan front of Elliott Echols, Paul Zarlengo, Matt Golubski, Josh Forney, Jack McCormick, Jon Jack and Richard Wilson stuffed the Viking running game. While the H-F passing game netted 106 yards, it came with just six completions for the night.

On seven occasions, Marian halted H-F's running game for negative yardage, including five big sacks from Corey White (two), Golubski, Zarlengo and Hugh Reynolds (on a punt attempt). Meanwhile, H-F had several dropped passes, perhaps because of some huge hits by captain

and linebacker Josh Howe, and a secondary of Matt Dee, Andres Rodriguez, Kevin Kammert and the White twins in coverage.

Marian fell behind early in the season-opening contest, but set a different tone on Friday. After the Spartan defense forced a punt on the opening possession, Marian went 68 yards in six plays to take a 6-0 lead. Nnanna Alozie (nine rushes, 83 yards) keyed the drive with a 48-yard burst and Gordon finished it off by following Jon Jack and Rudy Rinas into the end zone from a yard out.

H-F salvaged a 7-6 halftime lead with a 51-yard scoring play. Then the Vikings took advantage of a 43-yard punt return to go just 12 yards for a 14-6 command on their opening possession of the second half. The scoring play would be one of only two first downs H-F got in the second half.

With time beginning to favor the Vikings, Marian failed in the red zone- but the defense quickly swayed the momentum.

Back-to-back sacks eventually resulted in the safety, then Mark Scott returned the kickoff 21 yards to the H-F 46. Gordon carried nine consecutive times before bursting into the end zone from 3 yards away for the tying score.

H-F had three more possessions in regulation, but with Marian chasing Wade all over the field, the Vikings managed just 21 total yards in the second half.

"We got him out of the pocket and scrambling a lot," Jared White said. "We tracked him down all over the field and he wasn't able to get off a lot of those long passes."

The Spartans will play a second-round playoff contest for the first time since 2000.

CATEGORY	H.-Flossmoor	Marian Catholic
First downs	7	12
Rush attempts / yards	31-44	52-244
Passing yards	106	12
Pass completions	6	2
Pass attempts	19	10
Had intercepted	0	0
Fumbles / lost	3 / 1	1 / 0
Penalty yards	4-20	7-52
Next	season over	at LW East

SCORING

MC- Clifton Gordon 1-yard run (kick failed), 8:08 first.

HF- Russell Ellington 51-yard pass from Mark Wade (Andrej Skiba kick), 0:51 first.

HF- Aaron Phillips 7-yard run (Skiba kick), 7:57 third.

MC- Safety (sack by Corey White), 11:53 fourth.

MC- Gordon 3-yard run (kick failed), 7:52 fourth.

MC- Gordon 7-yard run (no PAT), overtime.

Passing: HF- Mark Wade 6 of 19, 106 yards, 1 TD, 0 INT; MC- Jack Krause 2 of 10, 12 yards, 0 TD, 0 INT.

Rushing: HF- Wade 21-29, Mark Franklin 4-12, Russ Ellington 3-8, Phillips 1-7 (TD), Sanni 2-(minus 12). MC- Gordon 38-154 (3 TD), Nnanna Alozie 9-83, Mark Scott 1-13, Krause 4-(minus 6).

Receiving: HF- Ellington 4-96 (TD), Sanni 2-10. MC- Julian Williams 1-6, Alozie 1-6.

Interceptions: none.

