

2006 Spartan Football games
CLASS 8A PLAYOFFS: Lincoln-Way East 46, Marian Catholic 6



Kickoff: 7 p.m. Friday at Lincoln-Way East High School.

Where: 201 Colorado Avenue, Frankfort.

Overall records: Marian Catholic 7-3; Lincoln-Way East 10-0.

Class 8A seeds: Marian Catholic #8; Lincoln-Way East #1 (in bottom bracket).

At stake: Winner plays the winner of Bolingbrook (8-2) at Brother Rice (6-4) in Quarterfinals.

Streaks: Spartans- 4 wins; Griffins- 24 wins.

Last week: Marian 20, H-F 14 (OT); Lincoln-Way East 27, Lyons 12.

TICKETS: Marian are priced at \$4.

The series: This will be the first-ever meeting of the schools.

Notes: Marian will seek its first quarterfinal appearance since the Spartans advanced to the Class 5A state title contest in 1999... The Griffins have not lost since a semifinal meeting with Downers Grove North in 2004... Marian running back Clifton Gordon needs 123 yards to become the second 2,000-yard rusher in school history (Terrence Marable's 2,291 in 1993)... Six ESCC teams advanced to the IHSA playoffs, while six Lincoln-Way East opponents did as well... Both teams earned come-from-behind victories in their first-round games, while Marian has had comeback wins in all games of its current four-game win streak... Marian has won its only other game played on artificial turf this year at Benedictine University (Benet)... Head coaches Rob Zvonar (LW East) and Dave Mattio (Marian) have guided their school's to all of their respective playoff appearances.

PLAYOFF HISTORY

Appearances: Marian Catholic 17; Lincoln Way East 6.

Last: Marian lost to Providence, 31-7 in 2003 Class 6A first round; LW East defeated Maine South, 30-24 in 2 OT, for 2005 Class 8A state title.

Playoff records: Marian Catholic 24-15, Lincoln-Way East 12-4.

State titles: Marian beat Geneseo, 13-6, for 1993 Class 4A title; Lincoln-Way East beat Maine South, 30-24 in 2 OT, for 2005 Class 8A title.



Nov. 3	1	2	3	4	Total
MARIAN CATHOLIC	0	6	0	0	- 6
at LINCOLN-WAY EAST	14	15	10	7	-46



Marian's defense had its hands full Friday with unbeaten Lincoln-Way East, as the Griffins eliminated the visiting Spartans from the Class 8A playoffs, 46-6.

LW East spoils Spartans' thoughts of playoff advancement

Marian Catholic's Class 8A playoff visit to Lincoln-Way East on Friday night would come down to an extension of streaks.

With outstanding Spartan tailback Clifton Gordon entering the contest with a string of 14 straight 100-yard rushing efforts, the Griffins limited the Marian standout to 81 yards.

Meanwhile, Lincoln-Way East took advantage of great field position early and limited the Spartans to 145 total yards to extend its winning streak to 25 games and advance to the 8A quarterfinals with a 46-6 victory.

Marian, which had won six of its last seven contests, concluded the year at 7-4. The Spartans fell to 24-16 in the IHSA playoffs, all under current head coach Dave Mattio.

While the Griffins (11-0 heading into a meeting with Bolingbrook) used starting field position of just across midfield on their first four possessions to bolt to a 29-0 lead, Marian never could get its offense rolling.

"All Clifton ever needs is that little crease to make something happen, but we just didn't make that little crease tonight," Spartan Offensive Coordinator Ron Guagenti explained. "Their defensive line, in terms of size, quickness and pursuit, is as good as I've ever seen."

The Griffins' defensive front limited Marian to just more than 2 yards per carry on the ground (33 attempts, 71 yards), while the Spartan passing game netted just six completions and 74 yards.

Despite the difficult start, Marian had chances to regain momentum.

Late in the second quarter, the Spartans marched 77 yards in eight plays to pull within 29-6 at the half after quarterback Jack Krause hit tight end Dennis Kelly with a 12-yard scoring toss.

Back to Marian form, the Spartans were very efficient on the drive. An offensive line of the likes of Jon Jack, Ben McDonnell, Jeremy Hess, Rudy Rinas, Richard Wilson and Kelly opened space for a 42-yard Gordon jaunt inside the red zone. As the Lincoln-Way East defense stiffened, Marian came up with the scoring play on fourth down.

Statistically, Marian was outgained by fewer than 200 yards, but the Griffins made sure Spartan opportunities would be far and few between.

Marian appeared to get a big break midway through the third quarter, as Corey White returned an interception 8 yards to the Griffin 34-yard line. However, a tenacious Lincoln-Way East defense turned the next four Marian snaps into a pair of rushes for losses, an incomplete pass, and finally a sack on fourth down.

The setback concludes some outstanding careers for Marian players, particularly the ESCC Offensive and Defensive Players of the Year.

Gordon finished the campaign with 23 touchdowns and 1,958 rushing yards, the second best single-season total in school history. His 3,274 career yards also place him second on the charts to Terrence Marable, who led Marian to the 1993 Class 4A state crown.

"In all the years I've coached, I've never seen a back hit the hole with so much authority,"

Guagenti assessed. "For a kid who's only about 195 pounds, he's just so explosive. Clifton is a great back and has had a great career.

"I'm very surprised he's not had more people look at him to play on the next level. He's an excellent blocker, he can run with the best, he's a great receiver and he can make plays."

The Spartans will also miss ESCC co-Defensive Player of the Year Josh Howe. Along with his play at linebacker, Howe often punted Marian out of trouble and didn't have a punt blocked all season.

"He's done everything we've asked of him this year," Marian Defensive Coordinator Tim Swanson praised. "He's put people on his shoulders all year and he's carried us through adversity a number of times. He has a stronger will out there than anyone with which I've been associated."

Howe had one of Marian's three sacks on the night, while leading a defense that limited the Griffins to three first downs after halftime.

However, Lincoln-Way East used a 30-yard field goal and a defensive score to expand its lead to 39-6, then held off Marian's last strong offensive thrust.

The Spartans entered the red zone one more time, courtesy of Krause's 33-yard connection to Julian Williams and three Gordon totes that moved the ball to the Griffin 13. However, Lincoln-Way East responded again, this time coming up with a big sack on fourth down.

For the night, Marian managed just six first downs, all of them coming on two drives.

CATEGORY	Marian Catholic	L-W East
First downs	6	15
Rush attempts / yards	33-71	39-202
Passing yards	74	141
Pass completions	6	12
Pass attempts	14	18
Had intercepted	1	1
Fumbles / lost	2 / 1	1 / 0
Penalty yards	7-40	13-95
Next	season over	at Bolingbrook

SCORING

LWE- D.J. Pirkle 1-yard run (Tom Lynch kick), 7:24 first.

LWE- Blake Hammond 39-yard pass from Andrew Remus (Lynch kick), 4:31 first.

LWE- Andy Gerritsen 3-yard run (Sam Prankus run), 10:07 second.

LWE- Gerritsen 24-yard run (Lynch kick), 5:35 second.

MC- Dennis Kelly 12-yard pass from Jack Krause (run failed), 2:40 second.

LWE- Lynch 30-yard field goal, 1:15 third.

LWE- Tom Lilja 22-yard interception return (Lynch kick), 8:19 fourth.

LWE- Dan Cebula 6-yard run (Lynch kick), 5:12 fourth.

Passing: MC- Krause 6 of 14, 74 yards, 1 TD, 1 INT. LWE- Remus 12 of 18, 141 yards, 1 TD, 1 INT.

Rushing: MC- Clifton Gordon 21-81, Malcolm Allen 3-8, Nnanna Alozie 2-3, Derrick Middleton 2-1, Krause 5-(minus 22). LWE- Gerritsen 11-89 (2 TD), Cebula 12-59 (TD), Mike Boettcher 4-29, Lilja 2-18, Gian Angelo 2-10, Jeff Grunwald 1-3, Pirkle 1-1 (TD), Lloyd Burchett 1-1, Remus 5-(minus 8).

Receiving: MC- Julian Williams 3-39, Alozie 1-16, Kelly 1-12 (TD), Gordon 1-7. LWE- Hammond 7-103 (TD), Gerritsen 3-27, Lilja 1-7, Cebula 1-4.

Interceptions: Corey White (MC); Lilja (LWE-TD).

