

GAME 4: Nazareth Academy 27, Marian Catholic 7

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

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

2007 records: Nazareth 2-1; Marian Catholic 2-1.

Streaks: Roadrunners- 2 wins; Spartans- 1 loss.

Week 3: Nazareth 36, Benet 14; Carmel 28, Marian Catholic 7.

Week 5: Notre Dame at Nazareth (Sat., 1:30 p.m.); Marian at St. Viator (Fri, 7:30 p.m.).

Last year: Marian Catholic 42, Nazareth 20.

The series: The Spartans have captured three of four games in the brief series, with Nazareth's lone triumph coming with a 26-20 decision in the 2005 season.

Notes: Marian is seeking its first 3-0 home start since 2004, a string that included a 31-27 victory over Nazareth... The Spartans have scored at least 20 points in their four meetings with the Roadrunners... Marian entered the 2007 season with 300 all-time victories.

Sept. 14	1	2	3	4	Total
NAZARETH ACADEMY	0	14	0	13	-27
at MARIAN CATHOLIC	0	7	0	0	-7



Marian defensive coordinator Tim Swanson talks with his troops during Friday's 27-7 ESCC setback to visiting Nazareth Academy.

Marian shut down in ESCC loss to Nazareth Academy

By the numbers, things should have added up more favorably for host Marian Catholic on Friday.

The Spartans outgained Nazareth Academy, 300-227, and tailback Malcolm Allen turned in his third 100-yard rushing effort of the season. Marian's defense also put some serious heat on talented Roadrunner signal-caller Phillip Kaiser.

However, the only numbers that matter are a 27-7 ESCC loss to Nazareth, as the Spartans (2-2) remained winless in two league outings.

Allen's strong effort resulted in a 179-yard night on 23 carries, including a 54-yard touchdown jaunt that pulled Marian into a 7-7 tie late in the opening half.

However, Marian's vice on Friday was missed opportunities.

In the opening quarter, the Spartans advance to the Nazareth 25-yard line before a sack and incomplete pass resulted in a punt and touchback.

After Nazareth took a 14-7 halftime lead, Marian gained the initial possession of the second half. In 15 plays, the Spartans marched from their own 28 to the Roadrunner 4 with a fresh set of downs. But two of the next three plays went for negative yardage, as Marian settled for a missed 21-yard field goal after consuming more than seven minutes of the third-quarter clock.

Keeping good pressure on Kaiser, Marian's defense forced a Roadrunner punt after the visitors collected two first downs.

However, Marian never again got a strong scoring opportunity.

"We knew they were vulnerable, so we put on some pressure and tried to take away their passing game," explained Ikem Anadumaka, who led a group of front of Kirk Roberts, Matt Marquez, Josh Forney and Dominic Corsiglia, along with linebackers Mike Berens, Hugh Reynolds and Joe Swanson.

"We knew we had the speed to get to him. We gave ourselves some opportunities, but we let them slip away. We were just trying to make plays and didn't get it done."

While Kaiser got off to a hot start, the Spartans wound up with three sacks, limited him to 102 passing yards and didn't allow a completion in the second half. Marian also forced three fumbles, but couldn't come up with a turnover on the night.

Kaiser did come up with a big play at the end of the half, hitting Kevin Johnson on a 20-yard scoring toss with 52 seconds left to give the Roadrunners the lead for good.

When Marian sputtered on its second possession of the second half, Nazareth finally gained some breathing room. The Roadrunners advanced 53 yards in three rushing plays to take a 20-7 command with 9:26 to play in the contest.

The visitors gained the final margin when two-way standout La Steven McKinney added to his 27-yard touchdown run with a 53-yard interception return for the final margin.

Along with Allen, Spartan Brandon Sherman had a solid night in the backfield. His 67 yards on 13 carries included a pair of key scampers for first downs- another category Marian won (15-14).

In a relief effort, Tommy Doane clicked on five of eight passes for 54 yards. Julian Williams pulled in three passes for 25 yards to lead the Spartan receivers.

Things don't get any easier for Marian, which must visit St. Viator before hosting Joliet Catholic in a Sept. 28 homecoming matchup.

"We just have to get back to practicing with good fundamentals and put this one in the past," Anadumaka explained. "We need to learn from this and move on. There's a new game ahead now."

CATEGORY	Nazareth	Marian Catholic
First downs	14	15
Rush attempts / yards	33-125	49-244
Passing yards	102	56
Pass completions	11	6
Pass attempts	23	10
Had intercepted	0	1
Fumbles / lost	3 / 0	3 / 1
Penalty yards	8-55	6-60
Next	NOTRE DAME	at St. Viator

SCORING

Nz- Curtis Cannon 1-yard run (Patrick Dunn kick), 7:10 second.

MC- Malcolm Allen 54-yard run (Dan Roque kick), 5:33 second.

Nz- Kevin Johnson 20-yard pass from Phillip Kaiser (Dunn kick), 0:52 second.

Nz- LaSteven McKinney 27-yard run (run failed), 9:26 fourth.

Nz- McKinney 53-yard interception return (Dunn kick), 0:28 fourth.

Rushing: Naz- McKinney 19-101 (TD), Cannon 7-32 (TD), Kaiser 7-(minus 8). MC- Allen 23-179 (TD), Brandon Sherman 13-67, Tommy Doane 2-10, Evan Watson 7-(minus 5); Mark Scott 4-(minus 7).

Passing: Naz- Kaiser 11 of 22, 102 yards, 1 TD, 0 INT; McKinney 0 of 1, 0 yards. MC- Doane 5 of 8, 54 yards, 0 TD, 1 INT; Watson 1 of 7, 2 yards.

Receiving: Naz- Johnson 3-38 (TD), Sean Broderick 3-24, Johnny Nelson 2-20, Patrick Reardon 2-19, Cannon 1-1. MC- Julian Williams 3-25, Scott 2-23, Sherman 1-8.

Interceptions: McKinney (Naz, TD).

