

GAME 7: Marian Catholic 31, Marist 10

Kickoff: 7:30 p.m. Friday at Marist High School.

Where: 4200 W. 115th Street, Chicago.

2007 records: Marian Catholic 3-3; Marist 3-3.

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

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

Week 6: Joliet Catholic 35, Marian 7; Marist 23, Benet 20.

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

Last year: Marian Catholic 12, Marist 7.

The series: Last year's decision snapped a two-game Marist win streak, as Marian improved its series lead to 13-4.

Notes: The winner of Friday's contest should need just a split of its last two games to qualify for the IHSA state playoffs... At 3-3, Marist owns the best record of Marian's three remaining foes... Last year, Marian entered week seven at 3-3 before putting together a four-game winning streak... The Spartans' last visit to Marist resulted in a 10-7 setback in 2005... Marian is 3-1 when it records an interception, including a team-high five by Kevin Kammert.

Oct. 5	1	2	3	4	Total
MARIAN CATHOLIC	3	7	7	14	-31
at MARIST	0	10	0	0	-10



The Marian defense blanked Marist in the second half Friday to key a 31-10 ESCC victory over the host RedHawks.

Marian uses 28-point blitz to turn back Marist in ESCC

After executing the two-minute drill to salvage a 10-10 halftime tie on Friday night at Marist, Marian Catholic decided to get stubborn in its East Suburban Catholic Conference battle.

The Spartans put their outcome solely in the hands of offensive linemen Richard Wilson, Dennis Julliano, Marc Bartolini, Bryan Zavala, John Holzhauser and Dennis Kelly.

Marian threw the ball just one time in the second half, rushing for three scores to complete a 28-point comeback blitz and hand the RedHawks a 31-10 setback.

"We just decided we were going to run the ball until they stopped us," explained Wilson, who helped open holes for a 269-yard rushing attack, with 204 of those coming after intermission.

"And they didn't stop us in the second half. We just decided to run the ball, run the ball, run the ball... and eventually put it into the end zone."

Marian's commitment to the ground game produced three scores in four possessions to open the second half. The one time the Spartans were forced to punt, they forced one of two turnovers when the catch was muffed.

The go-ahead score, the second possession of the third quarter, was grueling and

punishing- particularly for the RedHawks. With a major dosage of Malcolm Allen, the Spartans (4-3, 2-3) marched 88 yards in 15 plays before tailback Allen bulled in from 2 yards out.

Ryan Merriman booted his second of four conversion kicks to give Marian the lead for good at 17-10. Allen followed Wilson and Julliano into the end zone on the 14th rush of the drive.

"We just decided we had to get this done tonight," Wilson explained. "After the second half of the Joliet Catholic game, we knew we had to come out and play two halves."

Marian was blanked, 35-0, in the second half in a 35-7 loss to JCA in week six, but the Spartans turned the tables this time around.

The 21-0 margin in the second half saw the Spartans limit Marist to five first downs and just 61 yards on the ground. After being outgained, 164-147, in the opening half Friday, a Spartan linebacking corps of Greg Janes, Mike Berens, Kevin Linde, Hugh Reynolds and Joe Swanson helped key the second-half shutout.

Any hopes of a RedHawk comeback were dashed on their final two possessions, as Andres Rodriguez pounced on a muffed punt and Bryan Golubski came up with a fumble recovery on a combined sack by Kirk Roberts and Nolan Berens.

After Marian took the 17-10 command, the next two scores came with efficiency. Following a Marist punt, Marian marched 58 yards in just four plays, as quarterback Evan Watson scampered 32 yards on a draw for a 24-10 lead.

Watson also got the icing score after the Spartans opened possession in Marist territory for the first time with just 3:24 to play. This time, Watson needed just three plays to hit paydirt with a 30-yard scoring jaunt.

While Allen was the workhorse for Marian with 120 yards on 27 carries, Watson actually led the Marian ground game with 121 yards on eight totes.

Watson threw for just 76 yards, but started his three-score night (5-yard rushing TD) after he marched Marian 64 yards in just 50 seconds with the help of three key completions.

Brandon Sherman pulled in two passes for 38 yards on the night, while Julian Williams had two receptions for 20 yards. Mark Scott hauled in a key third-down catch for 18 yards on the late first-half drive.

Marian now needs a split in its final two contest to secure a second straight IHSA playoff berth, as the Spartans host Benet before traveling to St. Patrick.

"This was a big step on our way to five wins tonight," Wilson concluded. "It will be easier to go out and get the job done in the next couple weeks because this takes off a lot of pressure."

CATEGORY	Marian Catholic	Marist
First downs	17	14
Rush attempts / yards	43-269	38-190
Passing yards	76	90
Pass completions	6	7
Pass attempts	12	14
Had intercepted	0	0
Fumbles / lost	2-0	1-1
Penalty yards	5-45	3-35
Next	BENET	at Notre Dame

SCORING

MC- Ryan Merriman 30-yard field goal, 1:09 first.

Mst- Matt Mulcahey 35-yard run (Tim Schmidt kick), 11:17 second.

Mst- Schmidt 19-yard field goal, 1:13 second.

MC- Evan Watson 5-yard run (Merriman kick), 0:16 second.

MC- Malcolm Allen 2-yard run (Merriman kick), 2:09 third.

MC- Watson 32-yard run (Merriman kick), 9:32 fourth.

MC- Watson 30-yard run (Merriman kick), 2:37 fourth.

Passing: MC- Watson 6 of 12, 76 yards, 0 TD, 0 INT; Mst- Mulcahey 7 of 14, 90 yards, 0 TD, 0 INT.

Rushing: MC- Watson 8-121 (3 TD), Allen 27-120 (TD), Brandon Sherman 5-21, John DiGiovanni 3-7. Mst- Bill Seiler 14-69, Owen Skalitzky 8-61, Mulcahey 13-48 (TD), Montana Hammonds 2-11, Mike O'Grady 1-1.

Receiving: MC- Sherman 2-38, Julian Williams 2-20, Mark Scott 1-18, Dennis Kelly 1-0. Mst- Colin Monnier 3-43, Adam Lawler 2-37, Seiler 1-5, Hammonds 1-5.

Interceptions: none.

