

**GAME 8: Joliet Catholic 16, Marian Catholic 7**

**Kickoff:** 7:30 p.m. Friday at Joliet Memorial Stadium.

**Where:** 3000 W. Jefferson Street, Joliet.

**2008 records:** Marian Catholic 1-6; Joliet Catholic 5-2.

**ESCC records:** Marian Catholic 1-4; Joliet Catholic 5-0.

**Streaks:** Spartans- 3 losses; Hilltoppers- 5 wins.

**Week 7:** St. Viator 16, Marian Catholic 10; Joliet Catholic 61, Benet Academy 19.

**Week 9:** Marist at Marian Catholic (7:30 p.m. Fri.); Joliet Catholic at Notre Dame (7:30 Fri.).

**Last year:** Joliet Catholic 35, Marian Catholic 7.

**The series:** The Hilltoppers have captured eight straight to take a 26-8 command in the longtime rivalry. Marian's last victory came with a 26-14 decision in 1994.

**Notes:** The Hilltoppers have scored identical 21-14 victories in the teams' last two meetings in Joliet Stadium... The Spartans are seeking their initial first-half touchdown of the season... JCA is hoping to enter the IHSA playoffs on a seven-game winning streak after an 0-2 start... Marian's lone victory this season came on the road (St. Joseph)... Seven of 10 ESCC teams remain playoff eligible.

Oct. 17	1	2	3	4	Total
<b>MARIAN SPARTANS</b>	0	0	0	7	<b>-7</b>
<b>at JOLIET CATH HILLTOPPERS</b>	0	7	6	3	<b>-16</b>



Marian's defense played its heart out in an upset bid Friday, before the Spartans eventually dropped a 16-7 ESCC decision at league champ Joliet Catholic.

## Stubborn Spartans fall shy in upset bid at Joliet Catholic

Although the scoreboard may have read otherwise, the Marian Catholic defense earned a victory on Friday night in Joliet Memorial Stadium.

Facing an explosive Joliet Catholic offense that had rolled up 193 points in five ESCC wins, the Spartan defenders sent a message early and displayed tremendous character for 48 minutes.

It wasn't until a field goal with 70 seconds remaining that Joliet Catholic secured a 16-7 decision.

On Friday, Joliet Catholic (6-2, 6-0) won at least a share of the ESCC championship.

Entering the game at 1-6, Marian Catholic earned the respect of that champion.

"We layed everything out on that field and we can't hang our heads after this," explained senior defensive end Josh Forney after his unit held JCA to its lowest scoring output of the campaign. "We came up a little short, but we played our hearts out. Now, we need to bounce back after this and finish with a victory."

Heart, character, resilience and just plain stubborn.

Not the characteristics of a 1-7 team playing out the string... and Marian wasn't going to allow anyone to accuse it of that on Friday.

The Spartan defense had plenty of chances to abandon that spirited character.

A blocked punt set up the Hilltoppers at the Marian 25-yard line.

A failed fourth-down attempt set up JCA at midfield.

The host squad ran off 59 plays to the Spartans' 42.

Still, the Spartan defense refused to back down.

"Most teams give up on the season when they're 1-6," Forney explained. "Coach (Dave Mattio) always talks about being stubborn. We were stubborn tonight and we left it all out on the field."

Marian's last stubborn stand came at the end of Joliet Catholic's last possession- a 16-play drive. The Spartans forced the Hillmen to settle for a 29-yard field goal from Rob Cranmer. Unfortunately, it provided the clinching margin with 1:10 to play.

The Spartans (1-7, 1-5) were hoping to get one more shot after they opened the fourth quarter by pulling to within 13-7.

Taking advantage of a fumble punt snap that gave Marian possession at the JCA 22, the Spartans converted a fourth-down attempt on a Joey Walker to Austin Guaccio connection for a first down at the Hillmen 11.

Two plays later, Walker found Armando Lopez for a 12-yard score, as the Spartan receiver maintained concentration on tipped ball. Dan Roque booted the conversion, and with 10:25 to play Marian still had its sights on the biggest upset of the ESCC season.

Unfortunately, the scoring drive was the lone time Marian penetrated the JCA 46-yard line for the night (the Spartans had only four other snaps in Hilltopper territory).

That makes the Marian defensive effort all the more impressive.

Although the Hillmen rushed for 221 yards (66 coming on a touchdown jaunt by Tyler Hudetz on the first snap of the second half for a 13-0 command), Marian proved "stubborn" up front behind Forney, Bryan Golubski, Mac Stevenson, Josh Mayers and Michael Foster. Linebackers Joe Swanson, Nate Coburn, Nolan Berens, Kevin Linde and Dan Schmidtke provided strong support.

The defense also rose to the occasion to keep its deficit at 7-0 in the opening half when Dan Vargas picked off a pass after JCA had crept inside the Marian 10 late in the half.

While the Spartan defense earned the respect of most in Joliet on Friday, the Spartan offense made strides as well.

Junior quarterback Walker turned in his strongest effort, clicking on 8 of 18 aerial attempts for 83 yards. Guaccio hauled in six of those for 45 yards and Lopez (two catches, 38 yards) recorded his fourth touchdown in six ESCC contests. Frank Tambrini paced Marian on the ground with 35 yards on five carries.

Among seven first downs, the Spartans also converted twice on third down and twice on fourth down.

Walker also had another couple tosses just roll off the fingertips of receivers for would-be big gains. Ironically, Marian's last three visits to Joliet Stadium as big underdogs have resulted in setbacks of seven, seven and nine points.

"We finally grew up and came to play," Forney assessed.

Marian will get one more opportunity to seek more than respect when it hosts Marist to close out the campaign on Friday at 7:30 p.m.

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>Marian Catholic</b>	<b>Joliet Catholic</b>
<b>First downs</b>	7	12
<b>Rush attempts / yards</b>	24-58	51-221
<b>Passing yards</b>	83	15
<b>Pass completions</b>	8	2
<b>Pass attempts</b>	18	8
<b>Had intercepted</b>	0	1
<b>Fumbles / lost</b>	4 / 0	1 / 0
<b>Penalty yards</b>	2-8	6-45
<b>Next</b>	<b>MARIST</b>	<b>at Notre Dame</b>

#### **SCORING**

**JC-** Tyler Hudetz 1-yard run (Rob Cranmer kick), 11:21 second.

**JC-** Hudetz 66-yard run (kick failed), 11:43 third.

**MC-** Armando Lopez 12-yard pass from Joey Walker (Dan Roque kick), 10:25 fourth.

**JC-** Cranmer 29-yard field goal, 1:10 fourth.

**Rushing:** MC- Frank Tambrini 5-35, Jesse Steward 41-6, Walker 8-4, Joe Sanfratello 7-3.  
JCA- Hudetz 27-141 (2 TD), Calvin Smith 16-71, Dan Janicki 4-6, Matt Ginetti 4-3.

**Passing:** MC- Walker 8 of 18, 83 yards, 1 TD, 0 INT. JCA- Ginetti 2 of 8, 15 yards, 0 TD, 1 INT.

**Receiving:** MC- Austin Guaccio 6-45, Lopez 2-38 (TD). JCA- Smith 1-10, Hudetz 1-5.

**Interceptions:** Dan Vargas (MC).

