

**GAME 9: Marist 35, Marian Catholic 26**

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

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

**2008 records:** Marist 6-2; Marian Catholic 1-7.

**ESCC records:** Marist 4-2; Marian Catholic 1-5 .

**Streaks:** RedHawks- 2 wins; Spartans- 4 losses.

**Week 8:** Marist 31, Benet Academy 12; Joliet Catholic 16, Marian Catholic 7.

**Week 10:** Marist in IHSA playoffs first round; Marian- season over.

**Last year:** Marian Catholic 31, Marist 10.

**The series:** The Spartans have captured back-to-back decisions to improve their overall series command to 14-4.

**Notes:** The RedHawks are one of four ESCC to clinch IHSA playoff berths with two more league squads likely to earn bids as well... Despite a 1-7 mark, Marian has allowed 18 points or fewer in six of its contests... The Spartans captured the last meeting in the series at Spartan Stadium, 12-7... The loser of this matchup as scored 10 or fewer points in six straight games.

Oct. 24	1	2	3	4	Total
<b>MARIST REDHAWKS</b>	14	7	7	7	<b>-35</b>
<b>at MARIAN SPARTANS</b>	7	7	12	0	<b>-26</b>



**Marian quarterback Joey Walker rushed for a first-half score Friday as the Spartans hosted Marist in their season finale.**

## Spartans outlasted by Marist in season finale

Playing his last game in Spartan Stadium on Friday night, Marian Catholic senior Dan Roque was Superman for the Spartans.

He returned kicks and recorded an interception, while his three touchdowns propelled the Spartans to their highest scoring output of the season.

But for the second straight week, Marian pushed a playoff team to the limit... but Marist used a late fumble return and score to clinch a 35-26 ESCC victory over the determined Spartans.

While the RedHawks (7-2, 5-2) will head the IHSA playoffs, Marian concludes the campaign at 1-8 for the first time since 1970.

For the last two weeks, however, Marian didn't roll over like most one-victory squads.

The Spartans hadn't scored a first-half touchdown all season and scored two on Friday.

Much like pushing Joliet Catholic to the limit last week, the Spartans were within 28-26 and owned the ball inside the Marist 15-yard line midway through the final period.

The Spartans were as pesky and spirited in the final two weeks of the season as most any team looking forward to the playoffs.

But when you're 1-8, things have a habit of not going your way.

Through Roque's heroics, the Spartans trailed by just two points and hadn't committed a

turnover entering the fourth quarter. Early in the final stanza, Marian marched from its own 22-yard line to the RedHawk 13 before the potential lead drive fizzled with an interception.

Then Marian's bend, but don't break defense halted a long drive when Roque picked off a pass to give the Spartans one final shot starting at their own 19-yard line.

However, two plays later, Marist's Nabal Jefferson scooped up a fumble and rumbled 22 yards for a score. When Marist kicker Ben Falloon was perfect on his fifth conversion kick, the RedHawks had essentially escaped with a nine-point margin with 2:40 to play.

The final verdict spoiled another valiant effort by the Marian defense, the most inspired effort of the season for the Marian offense and a fantastic finish for the senior, Roque.

A rare component of Marian's offense, Roque wasted little time making an impact on Friday. After Marian returned the game's opening kickoff to the 31, Roque scampered 12 yards on the second snap of the night for a first down. On the next play, he ran around end 57 yards for Marian's initial first-half touchdown of the year. Of course, Roque booted the conversion for a 7-0 Spartan command.

Showing its playoff form, Marist ripped off the game's next 21 points to take a 21-7 command midway through the second quarter.

But before a lightning delay halted the contest, Marian displayed a little lightning of its own. The Spartans marched 67 yards in 11 plays, using an 18-yard connection from Joey Walker to Austin Guaccio for a big first down and gaining first-and-goal after Roque ripped off 6 yards on a counter.

Walker capped off the drive with a 1-yard plunge. Just before lightning struck- literally- Roque booted the conversion to pull Marian within 21-14 late in the second quarter.

That's where the half ended, then Marist used a 47-yard return on the second-half kickoff to ignite it to a quick score and 28-14 command.

Undaunted, Marian scored on its next two possessions to remind the RedHawks they would have no pushover on Friday.

The Spartans went on an 80-yard march, as Walker (nine of 19, 108 yards) sizzled on the drive. He had a huge 33-yard hookup with Armando Lopez (three catches, 64 yards) and culminated the drive with a 9-yard scoring strike to Roque to make it 28-20.

Marian was quickly back in business after Mike Gergel pounced on a Marist fumble to set up the home team at the RedHawk 33. Mixing in Tommy Doane at quarterback to utilize Walker's skills elsewhere, the Spartans were soon faced with fourth down, still at the 33.

Doane lofted a pass to the end zone and found- who else?- Roque for a 33-yard scoring toss. Walker's conversion scramble came up short, leaving Marian with a two-point deficit, 28-26, with more than a quarter to play.

While Marian proved to have four more shots with the ball- one courtesy of a fumble recovery from linebacker Kevin Linde- the advance to the Marist 13 proved to be the lone legitimate scoring opportunity.

On a night where the outcome didn't truly equate to Marian's effort, it was also a night that the Spartans recognized retiring longtime offensive coordinator Ron Guagenti.

Fittingly, Marian turned in one of its top offensive efforts of the season.

Roque finished with 107 rushing yards on 11 carries and Joe Sanfratello rambled 71 yards on 17 totes, as the Spartans rushed for 183 yards. Walker and Doane (three of seven, 64 yards) both had efficient nights throwing the ball, Austin Guaccio was the top target with six catches for 52 yards.

**Freshmen:** Saturday's 9:30 a.m. freshman contest vs. Marist will be played at **Marian Catholic**.

CATEGORY	Marist	Marian Catholic
<b>First downs</b>	14	21
<b>Rush attempts / yards</b>	30-150	42-183
<b>Passing yards</b>	160	172
<b>Pass completions</b>	10	12
<b>Pass attempts</b>	21	26
<b>Had intercepted</b>	1	1
<b>Fumbles / lost</b>	3 / 2	2 / 1
<b>Penalty yards</b>	7-85	6-45
<b>Next</b>	<b>IHSA Playoffs</b>	<b>Season over</b>

#### SCORING

**MC-** Dan Roque 57-yard run (Roque kick), 11:17 first.

**Mst-** Bill Seiler 6-yard run (Ben Falloon kick), 7:32 first.

**Mst-** Adam Lawler 51-yard pass from Dan Piko (Falloon kick), 1:36 first.

**Mst-** Nick Valla 14-yard pass from Mike Perrish (Falloon kick), 9:20 second.

**MC-** Joey Walker 1-yard run (Roque kick), 3:26 second.

**Mst-** Seiler 33-yard run (Falloon kick), 10:34 third.

**MC-** Roque 9-yard pass from Walker (kick failed), 6:27 third.

**MC-** Roque 33-yard pass from Tommy Doane (run failed), 5:12 third.

**Mst-** Nabal Jefferson 22-yard fumble return (Falloon kick), 2:40 fourth.

**Rushing:** Mst- Seiler 26-142 (2 TD), Owen Skalitzky 2-9, Perrish 2-(minus 1). MC- Roque 11-107 (TD), Joe Sanfratello 17-71, Frank Tambrini 4-11, Austin Guaccio 1-4, Walker 6-1, Doane 3-(minus 11)..

**Passing:** Mst- Perrish 9 of 20, 109 yards, 1 TD, 1 INT; Dan Piko 1 of 1, 51 yards, 1 TD. MC- Walker 9 of 19, 108 yards, 1 TD, 1 INT; Doane 3 of 7, 64 yards, 1 TD.

**Receiving:** Mst- Piko 6-63, Lawler 1-51 (TD); Seiler 2-30, Valla 1-14 (TD). MC- Armando Lopez 3-64, Roque 3-56 (2 TD), Guaccio 6-52.

**Interceptions:** Colin Monnier (Mst); Roque (Marian).

